

her own bed. But that brave child, with neither mother nor father, in that dreadful city'—

As Mrs Lawrence spoke all the mother awoke in her. 'Yes, John, you *ought* to go. But, oh, my dear, my dear!' she said—and here Mrs Lawrence's Spartan virtue dissolved in mere tears.

Young Lawrence interviewed his official chief that same day.

'I must go to Paris, sir,' he said briefly, 'and cannot say for how long I may be detained there, and I want you to give me leave of absence.'

Mr Herriott stared. Leave of absence asked by a junior officer, and in such accents of confidence, offended all his official instincts.

'Go to Paris! You cannot go, Mr Lawrence.'

'I must go, sir. I want, indeed, to be authorised to use the agents of the Office in Paris to carry out my plans;' and he briefly explained his object.

His chief smiled satirically.

'This is all very interesting; and you want to use your time and the machinery of the British Foreign Office to serve a private interest. Your request is at least ingenuous.'

'But I can make it a public service, sir. I know Paris better than any of the secret agents you employ. They mislead you constantly.'

'How do you know, Mr Lawrence?'

'The Paris despatches come to me for translation, and so I know all their blunders. I can give you a catalogue of them. They have never been right. They are all Royalists, and their wishes blind their judgment. M. Target is advising you now that the Moderates are certain to triumph over the extreme party. But he is wrong. The Mountain is crushing, and will crush, the Girondists.'

'This is interesting once more, Mr Lawrence; but, again, how do you know?'

'It is a revolution, sir, which is in progress; and history shows that in a revolution—in the earlier stages at all events—it is the extreme party which prevails. Besides, I know Paris, and know many of the men who are coming to the front.'

'You know, I understand, the Paris of the gutters'

'Well, sir, the revolution on your own theory reflects the Paris of the gutters. It is to be interpreted from the gutters. M. Target tells you the Jacobin Club will be suppressed. I am confident it will overthrow all its rivals.'

'You are surprisingly confident on a great variety of topics, Mr Lawrence.'

'I am confident, sir, because I know. Our agents are not in touch with the right men.'

Here was one of the youngest members of his staff talking diplomacy with accents of quite absurd certainty; yet it was with a penetration which made his chief uncomfortable. At that moment the door opened and an attendant entered.

'Lord Granville asks for you, sir.'

Jack waited for nearly an hour until his chief returned. His face was flushed. He plainly had been dealing with some unpleasant business.

'Mr Lawrence,' he said, 'some of your views at all events are right. The intelligence just to hand is that the Jacobin Club has declared itself in permanent session. It is plainly seizing control of affairs. Our secret agents on the spot, it must be admitted, are blundering. Lord Granville has asked me to find some special agent—an unknown man for choice, so that he will escape suspicion, but one whom we can absolutely trust—and send him to Paris for an independent report on the present state of things there. You shall go. It's quite exceptional to employ so young a man on such a business; but, then, you know Paris as nobody else available knows it. You know, too, that side of its life which just now, when all the ordinary landmarks have disappeared, may help to interpret affairs there. The business of that poor girl is a matter of purely personal interest; but our agents shall help you in it, and you may help the Office by getting better information than we now receive.'

Jack took his instructions with a calmness that, somehow, increased his chief's respect for him. This young official, it was clear, had some gifts he had never yet been suspected of possessing.

(To be continued.)



## A CITY OF ETHIOPIA.

### PART I.



IF we look with attention at a map of the universe, we shall find, diverging from that spot where the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, a number of vast areas of land all of which go to make up the formidable whole known as the Mohammedan world. Many of these countries are dowered with Nature's choicest gifts, yet in spite of this, and of their comparatively close proximity to the centre of civilisation, they have for many centuries succeeded in holding aloof from, and often actively

opposing, the progress made by their occidental neighbours. The people who inhabit these lands might be compared to the lonely watchers in a lighthouse who behold through a telescope the festivities taking place on the far-distant shore. Intolerant pride and self-righteousness are the rocks on which their structure is reared; fanaticism is the turbulent sea which bars their passage.

The kaleidoscopic changes which from time to time sweep over other parts of the world, reducing prosperous cities to poverty and decay, and raising up mere hamlets to be great centres of commercial

activity, seem to ignore entirely this region; for hidden away in the uttermost parts of these countries lies many an ancient city, the commerce and prosperity of which are, in spite of the primitiveness of its usages, as assured now as ever they were. The manners, customs, and dress of the inhabitants would appear to have remained the same throughout the ages; and the clamour and turmoil of the great outside world, if it reaches their ears at all, only does so as a distant rumble from a far-off land with which they have nothing in common. In some instances civilisation has stretched out one of its great tentacles in the form of a railway from the coast; but even this has not always made any appreciable change. The histories of these places, if any history is known, are often replete with terrible tales of bloodshed and oppression, of rulers deposed and slain, and of others raised up in their places only in their turn to meet with violent ends.

One of the most isolated outposts of this great empire of fanaticism and retrogression is the ancient and populous city of Harar, which has been for many centuries the commercial centre of that lovely and fertile country which lies west of the Somali desert—the land of the Gallas—now forming part of the extensive dominions of the Christian Negus of Abyssinia.

No more convincing proof could be offered of the force and vitality of Islam than lies in the fact that the conquering Abyssinians, steeped as they are in barbarism and superstition, and fiercely intolerant of any missionaries who may come and try to supplant their own ancient form of Christianity, now maintain towards their Mussulman subjects an attitude of complete religious toleration.

The three hundred odd kilometres of desert which lie between the coast and the fertile region are now bridged by the French railway from Djibouti, which goes almost to the foot of the great mountains which border the wilderness. The original intention was to carry the line on to Adis Ababa, Menelik's capital. However, the work stopped where it is nearly three years ago, and does not seem likely to go on. 'Want of funds,' some people say; but it is generally believed that political complications have a good deal to do with the matter. The terminus is at Diré Daowah, in the Dankali desert, a forlorn and wretched-looking spot which owes its being to the railway. A few tin shanties dumped down amongst the stunted thorn-trees, a long, straggling street of miserable hovels—the native village—and the description is complete. The heat is oppressive, the flies plentiful and industrious, whilst the dismal groaning of camels, long trains of which are constantly being loaded or unloaded, forms an almost continual refrain.

There is nothing to tempt the traveller to linger in this spot, so that it is with a feeling of relief that I find myself at dawn one morning superintending the saddling of mules and the packing of

baggage. At last all is ready; and, accompanied by the three or four Abyssinian soldiers who have been provided for my escort and guidance, I start off in the direction of the mountains, determined to traverse before nightfall the forty kilometres which lie between me and the town of Harar.

This refreshing hour lends even to the desert a certain beauty. A slight breeze is stirring; the sky is tinted with violet and gold; and the sun, which later on is to become so fierce a tyrant, is now smiling over the rim of the horizon, picking out the distant scrub in a golden filigree.

Ahead lie the mountains, and somewhere on the other side of those hazy peaks is our destination. The track winds its tortuous way between the foothills, and after crossing and recrossing the dry bed of a torrent, enters at last a deep gorge, and we find ourselves after a ride of two hours at the bottom of the mountains to be ascended.

Increasing signs of vegetation now appear. The trees are larger, the foliage is more vivid, and patches of grass show here and there. The desert is being left behind!

A road was built over these mountains by the railway company for the purpose of facilitating traffic between the terminus and Harar; but either the workmanship was bad, or it was built without due reference to the force of the elements during the rainy season; for it is already so dilapidated and washed away that it is scarcely safe to use it. Therefore we keep to the old track, which has the additional advantage of being shorter.

It is now that that truly wonderful animal the Abyssinian riding-mule shows what he is capable of. He carries me up some of the steepest places without turning a hair. Sharp, loose stones or fallen tree-trunks do not worry him in the least. It is just the same to him if a chasm yawns beneath him or he is on a broad, solid road. His sturdy little feet never slip.

We are now near the top, and the sides of the mountains are covered with vegetation. Most surprising of all is a species of stunted cedar which grows in great profusion. How strange it seems to be standing here amidst surroundings that almost suggest a temperate clime, whilst down there lies the burning waste which we only left this morning—the land where it 'never rains'!

The ascent has now become so steep that we have to dismount and lead our animals. Our exertions are soon rewarded, and we arrive panting on the top.

What a scene of beauty is here unfolded! It is the land of promise, and the ridge on which we stand might well have been the spot from which Moses beheld the inheritance of Israel, only that instead of the country being 'afar off' it is close, and rolls in green undulations up to our very feet. Behind us, deep down and far over the sinuous lines of foothills, stretches the gray sea of desert. In front is a lovely prospect of green hills and dales. Fields of maize and barley wave in the

valleys, and groups of horses, cattle, and sheep are to be seen grazing in the pastures. Here and there a winding line of foliage betokens the passage of an abundant stream of water, whilst clusters of neat-looking huts speak of peace and industry. The shining surface of a lake in the distance completes the picture.

Descending a short and easy slope, we now travel through this Arcadia. The sense of exhilaration is simply irresistible. We are nearly six thousand feet above the sea-level. The air is balmy and full of breezes, and the change of scenery from the desert seems almost magic. The new and varied nature of the passengers encountered forms another source of interest. Hitherto we have seen scarcely any one but the scowling Dankali nomads or the Somali camel-drivers. Now we meet Gallas, Hararis, and Abyssinians, the last being nearly always mounted and armed.

The different ways in which these people greet or fail to greet the European stranger form an amusing study. Some of the peasants accord me a cheerful salaam; others stand with outstretched palm and scowlingly demand *backsheesh*. Most of the Mohammedans, and a few of the Abyssinians as well, are particularly insulting; and as they pass me they cover the nostrils and mouth with a corner of their robe, thus signifying that they consider me to be something unclean!

About noon we reach the top of a rise from which we again see the lake, now quite close, winding about in the hollow of the hills from which it takes its shape. Here we are to rest and take refreshment; and, having reached the bottom of the slope, we off-saddle at the water's edge.

The fresh and simple beauty of this place is of an order well calculated to rejoice the heart of a wanderer from a temperate clime, especially if that wanderer has already been satiated with the florid and overpowering magnificence of tropical scenery. With the delicate tints of the verdure, the abundant wild flowers, the noble stretches of greensward, and the gleaming sheet of water girt by the emerald hills, the scene might have been laid in one of the lake districts of England. The flowing and picturesque robes of many of the natives, the wild forms of the half-naked peasants, and the quaint scriptural appearance of the beasts of burden—these details just add that touch of romance and orientalism which makes the scene so perfect and fascinating.

In some places the banks are steep, but on this side a perfect lawn slopes gently down to the water's edge. Quite a number of travellers are encamped or halted along here. White tents are dotted about, and horses and mules are cropping the short, sweet herbage. In the distance a string of camels can be seen sailing along with a dreamy, sinuous movement towards where the track ascends the slope. Some of these travellers have been journeying many days, for we are now on the main route which goes from the emperor's capital

to Harar. That stately Arab, for instance, who is now bowing and genuflecting over his midday prayer, has been trading up to Adis Ababa, and those camels in front are probably loaded with the ivory he has brought down from the interior. If we could take a peep into that tent we might see his women, or possibly two or three little Soudanese slaves whom he has bought for the use of his own household. Yonder are half-a-dozen Galla women resting against the cruel loads of firewood they are taking to the market.

Presently an Abyssinian comes up. He is evidently a person of rank, for he is attended by half-a-dozen armed servants. He is habited in the national costume, consisting of close-fitting cotton garments and a folding mantle ornamented with a broad red stripe. Neither head-dress nor sandals are worn—probably in contradistinction to the Mohammedans. On his breast is a metal cross, together with a few pagan charms; and he carries in the way of arms a long sword curved almost into a semicircle, a revolver, and a belt containing a most prodigious number of cartridges. His colour is very dark, almost black, as is the case with most of the Abyssinians of the south, though his finely cut features plainly bear the stamp of his Semitic origin. He bows with the graceful ceremony peculiar to these people, and offers me his hand. Finding that I cannot speak Amharic, he tries me in Arabic, and we exchange a few remarks. He affects to be greatly delighted on hearing that I am an 'Inglese,' and soon commences to question me about my affairs: Where have I come from? Where am I going? What is my business? &c.—supplementing the information he acquires by addressing occasional interrogations to the soldiers who accompany me. In due course he again bows profoundly and retires.

The most extravagant dreams of a naturalist could not conjure up anything like the scene of bird-life which this place presents. The surface of the lake is literally covered with wild-fowl, including many varieties of ducks and geese; whilst all along the shore there strut in pairs or in troops all sorts of gay-plumaged birds of the stork and crane varieties. Nor are any of these creatures in the least disturbed by the near presence of so many human beings. The ducks, many with broods of little ones, swim about as unconcernedly as those in the parks at home.

After resting for a couple of hours at this spot we resume our journey. The road now begins to give evidence of the enormous amount of traffic which daily passes along it. In some places it is broad and regular, in others split up into four or five tracks, whilst occasionally it runs between banks from ten to fifteen feet high, cuttings actually worn by the feet of the countless transport-animals which have traversed it.

The nearer we get to our destination the more numerous are the passengers we encounter. All

roads seem to lead to Harar, and everything serves to remind us that we are approaching what represents the metropolis of the country. Long trains of camels, horses, mules, or donkeys are either going to or coming from the great market-town; in the one case they are loaded with cotton goods, hardware, and other imports from civilisation, and in the other with coffee, skins, ivory, and other native products destined for the marts of Europe.

Sometimes we pass an Abyssinian lady riding astride, but nevertheless looking quite graceful, and attended by servants or slaves; or, again, we meet a couple of soldiers mounted on the excellent mules of the country, and armed with modern rifles and long scimitars. The horse is apparently very little used for riding in this district, the mountainous nature of the country rendering the mule more serviceable. These animals are trained, like the Boer ponies, to go at a comfortable pace known as the 'triple'—something between an amble and a trot; this they can keep up for long periods, covering great distances.

The sun is nearing the western horizon as we top the rise which brings us in sight of the town. At first I can see nothing of it; my attention is held by the general aspect. Again the scenery has changed, and we are looking down on a wild and rugged landscape. Huge mountains rise up on every side; minor ranges and valleys seem to run in all directions, regardless of the ordinary rules of topographical formation. Here and there a frowning cliff of solid rock stands out in defiance of the all-embracing verdure, the valleys are rich with cultivation, and the thatched roofs of villages show all along the foothills.

It is not until the eye has taken in all these details that I become aware of the presence of a great brown smudge which sweeps over the end of the long, winding hill-spur on which I am standing. This is the city of Harar. As we descend the hill the brown smudge appears like a great area of ruins, from the midst of which there rise three or four tall white buildings. Lower down yet, and the ruins begin to take the shape of flat-roofed houses, and the white buildings resolve themselves into the minarets of a mosque, an Abyssinian church, and a large castellated building which turns out to be the palace of the Ras or governor.

We are now in the midst of the coffee-gardens, and are able to observe the clever way in which the slopes are terraced and irrigated. I am reminded, however, by the soldiers that if we are to enter the

city to-night we must hasten on, as the gates are closed at sunset.

Outside the walls is a large enclosure filled with huts; these are the barracks; and close by is an earthwork fortification mounting several fairly modern guns. We soon approach one of the gates, round which is grouped a miscellaneous throng of idlers; and, wending our way through these, we reach the entrance, where the soldiers on guard, having addressed a few questions to my escort, allow us to pass.

Oh, disenchantment! Any lingering hopes that I still entertain of beholding anything picturesque about the architecture now rapidly vanish. Most of the houses are flat-roofed structures of one story, built of sandstone and plastered with mud. The widest street does not appear to be more than four or five yards across, whilst most of them are so narrow that two horsemen can with difficulty pass each other. These thoroughfares wander around with a tortuousness and apparent aimlessness quite incredible, and frequently end in a *cul-de-sac*; they are indescribably filthy, and in places almost precipitous. Thousands of pariah dogs in various degrees of manginess and semi-starvation prowl about or lie in heaps on the dunghills which obstruct the thoroughfares. Lepers in all stages of their horrible disease stand begging at the street-corners and church-doors. Gone is the beautiful landscape! The vision is obstructed by ugly, staring walls, and the nostrils are assailed by foul odours. In place of the smiling and tranquil scene of nature adorned by the unobtrusive works of rural and primitive man, we are faced by the spectacle of unnaturally congested humanity, with all its attendant signs of poverty, disease, and squalor.

After wandering for some time through this maze, I arrive at the one and only hostelry in the place, which is kept by a Greek, and bears the title of *Hôtel de Harar*. It is but a ramshackle place at best, squeezed into a courtyard at the end of a lane which is if anything narrower and dirtier than the others. Nevertheless, the proprietor, with the characteristic resource of his race, has made the place, if not luxurious, at any rate clean and comfortable. And so, having partaken of a meal which is certainly better than I had looked for, I retire to rest, worn out by my long ride, and hoping that a closer acquaintance with the town will reveal something of interest to repay me for my journey.

(To be continued.)



massacre. Round each red speck the black crowds shot with thrusting points of steel.

Jean had watched the sight with clenched hands and compressed lips. His sympathies were with the gallant, betrayed, ill-fated Swiss. He turned to look at his companion. The frown had gone from his brow; he was watching the scene with a curious look. Here was the birth of a new and terrible energy taking place under his eyes.

'If they had a leader!' Napoleone was saying, and somehow Jean divined that Napoleone's words applied to the crowd. He had assessed the two opposing forces. For him they represented not principles but energies. And he was in the last analysis a mercenary, prepared to take the side of the strongest force, and to sell his brains to it, since its service would open the door of the widest future to him. Jean read enough of his companion's thoughts to shrink from him, chilled and disappointed, but he could hardly realise that at the moment Napoleone himself had turned Jacobin.

The crowd by this time had swept into the Tuileries and flooded all its rooms. Wild figures came and went at its windows; the building shook to the sound of musketry-shots and to the crash of shattered doors. Furniture was being flung out on to the garden walks. They were witnessing the sacking of a palace. The two men watched the spectacle for long in silence; then, tired of watching, they forced their way through the crowd. At a street corner they were stopped by a group of citizens drunk with the passion of the fight. They bore aloft on a pike the head of a Swiss; and, stopping passers-by, they compelled them to salute it and to repeat the watchword of the day.

Jean felt his blood take fire at the sight, and he halted with a look of stubbornness on his face. But Bonaparte pulled him on. '*Vive la nation!*' he cried with a gesture of contempt to the wild group with their bloody symbol.—'It is only a phrase,' he said with scorn. 'Would you soil your coat for the sake of a phrase?'

'It is more than a phrase,' replied Lawrence stubbornly; 'it is a sign of sympathy with murder.'

But the only reply of his companion was an impatient shrug of the shoulders. 'I care only for realities,' he said.

They walked side by side for some distance. Napoleone was preoccupied and silent, and Jean felt his companion's thoughts were moving in some field remote from him. He was trying to read the riddle of the tragedy they had just witnessed. What were the forces at work in this wild scene, and whither were they hurrying? Jean lacked courage to break in on his thoughts.

'What are you doing in Paris?' Jean's companion asked suddenly. 'You have no business to be here.'

Jean hesitated as he looked at the passionless face of his old schoolmate. Here was a mind over which mere sentiment had no authority. He felt it would be idle to tell his tale or to ask for sympathy. While he hesitated, Napoleone turned away with an impatient gesture.

'You have your own secrets; take care they do not cost you your head. I am for Corsica;' and, with a gesture of farewell, he moved away and was lost in the crowd.

(To be continued.)



## A CITY OF ETHIOPIA.

### PART II.

**H**ARAR is one of those places of whose history and origin but little can be stated with certainty. Places of this kind are visited from time to time by travellers of various nationalities, who set forth their impressions in books of travel, memoirs, &c., and who often boldly advance the most glib accounts of their history both ancient and modern. Heaven only knows how this information is arrived at! More often than not it is taken down from the mouth of some old sheik of romantic tendencies and a keen scent for backsheesh; and, after passing through the hands of the merciless dragoman, who gives his version of the matter, it takes its place among the valuable notes of the profound historian, duly to appear in some 'work' dealing with the place concerned.

What seems certain about Harar is that the town and province was for long a free and independent

state. The inhabitants are a distinct tribe, probably of Semitic origin, and use a language of their own, which, though containing many words from the Arabic, Amharic, Galla, and Somali tongues, is not sufficiently like any of them to be intelligible to a stranger from the far provinces.

It was probably during the invasion of Abyssinia by the Arabs early in the sixteenth century that the people of Harar embraced Islam, though what their faith was before that is open to conjecture. It might have been some form of Judaism; certainly there are many traces of this religion in their observances of to-day.

The people have complexions of about the same hue as the Arabs of Arabia, fine-cut features, thin lips, and black, wavy hair. The chief industry is the cultivation of coffee, whilst the enormous trade which flows in from the surrounding districts gives employment to the large population of the town.

In 1875 the place was taken by the Egyptians,

who sent an expedition thither from Zaila, a port on the Somali coast then in their possession. During the events of 1884-85, when the far provinces of Egypt were broken up, and the towns of Zaila, Berbera, and Bulhar were taken over by Great Britain, the Egyptians began to evacuate Harar, and a small expedition was sent from Aden to facilitate the withdrawal of the garrison and to make certain arrangements for the future government of the state. The party, which consisted of three British officers and fifty Indian troopers, arrived safely in Harar, and saw the last batch of Egyptian soldiers on their way to Zaila. The mission then sought out the descendant of the old line of emirs, one Abdullahi, and having set him up as the independent ruler of the town and province of Harar, departed for the coast, leaving the place to its fate. This astonishing act of folly is said by those who are in a position to judge to have laid the foundation for that long series of troubles in Somaliland culminating in the successful revolt of the Mad Mullah. For, whilst we occupied the Somali country from the coast, and thus prevented the inhabitants from arming themselves, we failed to provide them with adequate protection against the well-armed Abyssinians, who subsequently took possession of Harar, and swept down from the highlands upon their flocks and herds. But this is anticipating matters.

The Emir Abdullahi was a mere boy, and became simply a puppet in the hands of his savage and fanatical sheiks; and no sooner had the British officers departed than he commenced a rule under which all non-followers of the Prophet were treated with such severity and injustice that in a very short time scarcely any who were not Moslems would dare to reside in or even visit the place.

At this time there were living in Harar several Greek and Armenian traders, besides a number of French monks under the missionary Bishop Taurin. This zealous and indefatigable priest had been connected for a number of years with the movement which had vainly endeavoured to introduce Roman Catholicism amongst the Abyssinians, and he had arrived anew in Harar in 1881, armed with the special permission of the Khedive of Egypt to establish a mission. The position of all these Europeans was now highly dangerous, cut off as they were from any assistance, and surrounded by bloodthirsty fanatics. The death of the bishop was actually decreed at one time, but his life was spared on the solicitations of the emir's mother, and eventually the Europeans were all sent down to Zaila.

One of the most atrocious acts of the emir was the treacherous massacre of an Italian scientific expedition, under the Count Poro, early in 1886. The party, which comprised nine Europeans, and was accompanied by a large caravan, had reached a point near the town of Guildessa, about thirty miles north of Harar. When the news of its arrival was conveyed to the emir he hastily assembled his advisers, and the result of their deliberations was

that a force should be sent to annihilate the *franghis*. Accordingly, about forty Turkish irregulars, or Bashi-bazouks, as they are called, in the employ of the emir were despatched, together with a vast horde of native warriors. These gentry accomplished their work in a way which did credit to their reputation. They arrived at the encampment of the Italians, whom they saluted with the most profound signs of esteem and friendship, assuring them at the same time that the emir was pleased with their visit, and was then making preparations to receive them with due honour. There was only one thing, however, which they must ask them to do, and that was to leave all their rifles and ammunition behind, and to enter the city unarmed, in order to show the populace that their intentions were peaceful. This was assented to, and the whole concourse set out for the city, the Italians and their servants in the middle. Apparently they were being escorted in honour to the emir.

What followed may be easily guessed at. At a given signal from the dastardly Turks, the spearmen precipitated themselves upon the helpless little band and slaughtered them to a man. Not one of these brave fellows escaped to tell the tale. Peace to their ashes! Honour to the gallant gentlemen who gave up their lives in the interests of science, and perhaps of their country!

The career of this young man as a sovereign was not of long duration. The Abyssinians, who were never loath to add another slice to their large empire, and to create a new field for plunder and taxation, had for long cast covetous eyes on this prosperous and fertile country, and had only been restrained from seizing it by the consideration of the risk of coming into conflict with Great Britain; but, judging from the apathetic way in which the conduct of the emir had been treated, that risk now no longer existed. This was the very argument used by Monsignor Taurin, who from his retreat in Zaila was in constant communication with the Abyssinians, urging them to go and take Harar. To these counsels were added those of Italy, who gave promise of her moral support and countenance (whatever that might have meant), and at last the Abyssinians hesitated no longer.

In January 1887 Menelik, who was then king of the sub-kingdom of Shoa, led his army against the Emir Abdullahi, whom he encountered on the plains of Chelenco, about two days' journey from Harar. The Mussulman troops were annihilated, and the victorious Abyssinians marched on to the town, which they took after an easy assault.\* Their treatment of Abdullahi, whom they took prisoner, must have been extraordinarily moderate, for he is still to be seen walking about Harar, a sadder and wiser man. He may go anywhere within the walls, but is not allowed to leave the town. He is quite a

\* It has been stated that before taking this step Menelik obtained the consent of Great Britain.

young man still, and of very handsome presence. He generally goes about with a little retinue of Moslems—the shadow of his former state—besides the ever-vigilant Abyssinian soldier, who will not be found far away.

The question might well be asked as to what Great Britain was doing all this time. It was considered by the Ministry of that day to be inexpedient to establish our claims over Harar. We are a strange people, for we have just spent many millions of pounds and hundreds of valuable lives in a prolonged and unsuccessful struggle for a piece of the Somali desert of no earthly use to any one but the nomads who inhabit it, whilst we have twice allowed to slip through our fingers the opportunity of annexing one of the most glorious countries in Northern Africa.

The Abyssinians are represented in Harar by the nobles who hold military rank, the priests, and the common soldiers; these last are said to receive only arms and rations of millet in payment of their services; their other wants they supply by the simple expedient of robbing the peasants, who, knowing that they could never enjoy the full fruits of their labour, do as little as possible, and hide whatever wealth they possess. In the same way the petty chiefs are afraid of their superiors, and dare not display their possessions in case they should be accused of withholding the taxes or otherwise accumulating for themselves that which should flow into higher channels. The same state of feeling is said to exist between the governors of the different provinces and the emperor, who in his turn is always in fear of a plot against the throne, and who has spies in every district.

The present population of the town is estimated at seventy thousand, and the area enclosed by the walls was calculated by Burton to be one hundred and twenty-eight acres. Justice is administered by the Abyssinian chief, the court being held in a sort of open shed—a flat-roofed building which looks as though one side had been taken bodily away—in the main square of the town. It is an amusing sight to watch the process of a case. The vociferation is terrible; every one seems to be speaking at once. The judge sits at the back surrounded by a number of soldiers armed to the teeth and ready to do his slightest bidding—which is, perhaps, to give some one fifty strokes with the *corbask*, or even to cut off a hand or a foot, for punishment is always of a drastic nature in this country. People are imprisoned for debt, or occasionally heresy within the Church; but theft is always punished by the *corbask* or by mutilation. The way in which the latter dreadful sentence is carried out is particularly revolting. The operation is performed by a person of no surgical skill whatever, who simply severs the member with a scimitar or some like instrument; the bleeding stump is then plunged into a vessel of boiling oil, which has a cauterising effect. But even then the unhappy wretch's troubles are not over; he has to sit for two days at the principal

gate of the city with the amputated part placed close beside him, and every person who passes by shows his contempt by covering the mouth and nostrils with a corner of the robe as described before. Murder is dealt with in a peculiar way. The murderer is first given a chance to show reason or justification for his act, and if he cannot do this he is handed over to the relatives of his victim, who may, if they like, accept blood-money, or who have the right to take him outside the city walls and put him to death.

The excise dues of Harar are something like Sam Weller's knowledge of London—'extensive and peculiar'—for not one single article, be it the produce of the country or the imported goods of civilisation, comes into the city without paying duty; from a bale of cotton goods down to the smallest pot of honey or calabash of butter, all add their quota towards swelling this important source of the emperor's revenue. Even the poor women who travel great distances with loads of firewood are stopped at the gates whilst the lazy soldiers rob them of some of their gleanings. The chief articles brought in are ivory, hides, and coffee, besides an enormous quantity of fresh provisions for the consumption of the inhabitants. The method of collecting the dues, though not very up-to-date, is fairly effective. A man comes along with an ox-hide, and he is stopped at the gates; presently another comes with some goat-skins or perhaps a rush-mat, and he also has to wait; after a while these are joined by some more carrying raw coffee; then come women loaded with bananas, honey, milk, butter, eggs, &c. This goes on until a crowd of twenty or thirty are gathered at the gates. Then one of the soldiers in authority gives an order, and the whole motley gang is marched through the town to the custom-house, where they pay their dues according to the nature and quantity of the articles they have brought. How the money received is accounted for it is difficult to imagine; however, a couple of clerks are seated cross-legged before great books, in which they write in Amharic characters. The emperor has a direct representative in the custom-house, as has the local Ras, and doubtless each of these worthies contrives somehow to satisfy his master and incidentally himself as well.

There is not much of interest about the Abyssinian church in Harar; it is a fairly large building of recent construction, circular in shape, and having a sort of dome roofed with tin, which has only too obviously been cut from kerosene-cans. The inner wall, however, which divides the priests' compartment from that assigned to the worshippers, is covered with very quaint paintings depicting scenes in the life of Christ and of the saints, as well as likenesses of kings and princes of Abyssinia both living and dead. These works of art recall in a most astonishing manner some of the old masters; there is the same lack of perspective and the same brilliant colouring.

Amongst the curious relics of Judaism which seem common to the Abyssinians and the Moslems of this place may be mentioned circumcision (which is a solemn rite of the Abyssinian Church, taking precedence even of baptism) and the prayer (differing, of course, in form) which must be uttered as the throat of an animal intended for food is cut. Besides this is the custom of assembling to wail at a house where some one has died. I was very much amused one day watching one of these performances. Two long rows of women were squatting on either side of the lane leading to the house. Evidently a solo was on, for a young girl was walking up and down, wringing her hands and giving vent to the most dismal cries of lamentation, and so well did she do it that tears were actually coming from her eyes. After a while she sat down quite composed, and another took her place. I felt strongly inclined to laugh, but remembered in time that Abyssinia was not the only place where crocodile tears were shed.

Let us take a stroll down into the principal market-place.

Crossing the square, which lies in the centre of the town, we pass the great gateway which opens on to the first courtyard of the Ras's house; above the portals crouch the carved lions of Egypt, relics of the Egyptian rule, and over these waves Menelik's banner—red, green, and yellow in horizontal layers—with the Conquering Lion of Judah set in the middle.

We now descend a street which resembles a mountain donga more than a thoroughfare; nevertheless, its sides are packed with booths, on the counter of each of which there sits cross-legged a Harari, an Arab, a Somali, or even an Indian. The whole stock-in-trade of one of these 'merchants' is not worth more than a few pounds. Notwithstanding this, however, trade is brisk, the street is completely blocked in places, and the air is full of the sounds of the bargaining and haggling which is the essential part of any transaction amongst these people.

At the bottom of this well-like passage is the market-place, a large open space literally crammed from end to end with the buyers and sellers, the latter squatting in long rows with their wares arranged in little baskets and trays in front. All those of a trade sit together. In this corner, for instance, are the money-changers (who are shouting out their rates of exchange); yonder are the butter-sellers; then come the grain-dealers, the vendors of spices, and so on. In one corner is a large group of Galla girls all standing together chattering. These are water-carriers, and they are waiting for some one to come and hire their services.

Leaving behind us the deafening babel of tongues which fills the market-place, we pass through a succession of mean streets shut in by the high stone walls characteristic of Mohammedan residential quarters, and presently arrive at another of the city gates. Here we find an open space devoted to

the sale of *kat*, a shrub the leaves of which when chewed produce a stimulating and in many cases an intoxicating effect. *À propos* of the use of this narcotic, to which all the Hararis are strongly addicted, we read in one account: 'The inhabitants often sit together reading the Koran and enjoying the drug for ten or eleven hours at a time'—surely a rather curious combination of piety and dissipation! Throughout the Mohammedan world the use of pernicious drugs is terribly prevalent; in some places it is *kashook*, here it is *kat*, but the result is always the same, and the much-lauded abstention of these people from the use of alcohol does not prevent them from seeking other and equally injurious forms of indulgence.

Let us stand at the gates for a few moments and watch the varied and ceaseless tide of humanity which surges past. Slave-women are constantly toiling up the slope with their loads of water. The doleful chant of a beggar just outside strikes the ear with well-timed and irritating repetition. This old leper has been here for years, and has a very good 'stand'; he possesses a valuable asset in the shape of a particularly revolting sore, and he lies there all day exposing this and fanning away the flies with a bunch of leaves, and calling out that God is great, and soliciting the charity of the passers-by. It is here that we are able to observe something of the unpitying brutality with which a native treats dumb beasts. Horses and mules pass with the most fearful 'sore backs' ever seen. Judging from appearance, when an animal is seen to be chafed it is not relieved of its burden, but simply worked until it drops. In no other way could these terrible ulcerations be accounted for.

All of a sudden a great shouting is heard, and, looking back, we see a compact mass of soldiers sweeping down the street. Urchins are cuffed, and market-women scuttle out of the way with their wares. The Ras is going for a ride! As the course approaches we perceive the great man in the centre mounted on a truly splendid mule, and accompanied by his little son and two or three minor chiefs. On seeing us he bows courteously, and the whole procession passes through the gates, all the bystanders bending almost to the ground.

We now ascend the street leading from this gate; it is comparatively quite a broad street and is roughly paved with cobble-stones. What a strange medley of people it shelters! Here is a steaming cook-shop presided over by a couple of Turks who are most palpably deserters from the Turkish army; they still wear their tattered and greasy uniforms. They are probably from Yemen, across the Red Sea. The adventures they have been through before reaching here would form an interesting narrative. Here is an Armenian standing at the door of his drink-shop; inside, the shelves are filled with bottles containing all sorts of vile poison labelled 'Mastic,' 'Arac,' 'Three-Star Brandy,' &c.,



most of which is manufactured on the premises and sold to the Abyssinians at about elevenpence a bottle.

We now wend our way towards our quarters again, for it will soon be dark; and wandering about the streets after that is by no means an agreeable occupation; there are absolutely no lamps whatever, and the thoroughfares are so rocky and obstructed by filth and garbage that it is necessary to feel one's way very carefully, and to take servants carrying lights, the law as well as prudence making the latter precaution necessary. At ten o'clock a call is sounded on a trumpet, which means that all respectable citizens must be within doors; from that time the only sounds which break the silence of the night are the long-drawn cries of the watchmen, who pass the call at intervals, and the howls of the hyenas that prowl round the walls of the town.

It is the last evening of my stay, and I am sitting high up in the balcony of my quarters gazing across the city into the green country beyond. The air is full of the droning cries of the *muezzins* calling the people to prayer; and, looking across the roofs, I

see many a white-robed figure turned towards Holy Mecca with bowed head and hands outstretched. '*Allahu akhbar*,' they cry ('God is the greatest'). 'I witness that there is no God but God. I witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of God. Come to prayer! Come to salvation! God is the greatest.' How strange that these simple and touching sentences should form the basis of a creed which has the power of turning men into devils and keeping nations in darkness and ignorance! Yet has not this been the case with all the religions? Have they not appeared full of noble sentiments and lofty aims, only to become later the vehicles of the worst passions of mankind? How many there are of them even to-day! They could scarcely be counted. May there not have been a message from the Supreme Being everywhere, though the pride and selfishness of man has since stepped in to mutilate or destroy it? Perhaps in that more perfect world which we are told is to be the reward of the orthodox righteous many shall meet and commingle who are now at bitter enmity. Let us hope that it may be so.

## TONELLI'S GOLD.

### CHAPTER III.



**E**IGHT weeks had gone by since the accidental meeting of Carlo Tonelli and his nephew. Much had been accomplished in the interim. Santi had visited Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam, and in each of those cities he had managed to get rid of a thousand of his uncle's sovereigns by changing them into the notes of each country in turn, rechanging the latter into English notes after his return to London. Berlin was the next place to be visited by him, and after that Hamburg. London was reserved by Tonelli for the last venture of all.

Santi, who had considerable natural audacity, was by now quite as eager as his uncle to carry on the adventure, and he could not see why the latter need have decided to bring the affair to an end with the disposal of the sixth thousand of his sovereigns. As he argued, feebly enough, by the time the early thousands began to change colour they would have been scattered broadcast, and mainly in dribblets, over Europe, so that it would be impossible to trace them back to the hand that had first put them into circulation. But Tonelli could not be moved from his original determination. As soon as the sixth thousand of his coins should be disposed of he and Amata would vanish and be seen in England no more. Santi cursed him in his heart for an old fool, while accepting his decision with a smile and a shrug of seeming resignation.

Well might Santi feel desirous of prolonging his

present mode of life till the last possible minute. Never before had Fortune smiled so graciously upon him. He was well and fashionably dressed at his uncle's cost, with an expensive fur-lined overcoat to keep him warm during the winter months; he was wearing a gold watch and chain; and if the two rings that adorned his fingers were paste, they had all the appearance of being worth twenty or thirty guineas apiece. When on one of his journeys he was now in a position to be welcomed as a guest at any of the hotels at which in bygone years he would have been glad to accept a post as *garçon*. Finally, there was his commission as agreed upon between himself and his uncle, which the latter had not failed scrupulously to pay him. Very sorry was he to think that an existence so pleasurable should be condemned to come to so speedy a close.

His uncle's words as they sat alone on the night of their coming together—'Amata would make thee a good wife'—had sunk into his mind and seemed as if written there in letters of flame. They had burnt into the texture of his being. Whether waking or sleeping, even when engaged with the special purpose that had taken him abroad, his thoughts were subconsciously coloured by them. What a superb creature she was! The joy of life seemed to glow in her veins. How was it possible to see her and be near her without falling passionately in love with her! For him, he told himself, it was not possible. Yes, he would make love to her, and try his utmost to win her for his wife.