

EGYPT, THE SOUDAN

AND

CENTRAL AFRICA

WITH EXPLORATIONS FROM KHARTOUM ON THE WHITE NILE
TO THE REGIONS OF THE EQUATOR

BEING

SKETCHES FROM SIXTEEN YEARS' TRAVEL

BY

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HER BRITANNIC MAJESTYS CONSUL
FOR THE SOUDAN

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The caravan left at noon in charge of Sheikh Ali, a nephew of the chief, a fine handsome young Bedouin, twenty-five years of age, with dark complexion and coal-black sparkling eyes, dressed in long calico shirts reaching to the ankles, with immensely wide sleeves covering his hands. The under-shirt was white, whilst the upper was dark-blue. When required to use his hands, the sleeves were turned up over the shoulders, or occasionally the extremities were tied in a knot at the back of his neck. He wore red Turkish shoes, and on his head a "tagyeh," a small white cotton cap neatly embroidered, over which was arranged with considerable taste a voluminous fine muslin turban, the folds covering the ears and the entire back of the head, crossing in front, and exposing a high forehead: a large white muslin scarf, with a fancy red border, giving one turn around the body, with the ends thrown over the shoulders, or, in hot weather, thrown over the head, and allowed to cover the whole of the body, completed his costume. By way of arms, like every Arab of his tribe, he wore a long straight sword like a claymore, which, when the owner is walking, is suspended by a strap under the left arm to the shoulder; but, whilst riding, it is hung to the saddle, as was also his shield of rhinoceros hide. In addition, in a holster slung over his right shoulder, and hanging at his left side, were a pair of firelock pistols. Ali Effendi and attendants accompanied the caravan, whilst, with a single "chebouckhi," or pipe-bearer, I enjoyed the shade afforded me by the hospi-

water-melon. After supper, our men being in a merry humour, sang several songs, solos, and duets, and afterwards danced their sword-dance, which amused me exceedingly, never having seen anything so enthusiastic and perfectly wild : no doubt it is, amongst those Arabs, of great antiquity. It is danced in the following manner : A man armed with a sword and shield of rhinoceros leather cries in a high shrill note, "I am brave! I am brave!" then, wielding his sword, jumps violently about ; next, falling on one knee, and covering himself with his shield, he strikes a violent blow with his sword at an imaginary person before him. Another of the party then rushes upon him, disarms him, and dances on in a similar manner, until in his turn he also is bereft of his weapon ; and so on throughout the party.

June 19.—After turning out, I bent my steps towards the well, which, partly enclosed by a crumbling dry-stone wall, I found to be some seventy or eighty feet deep, and fourteen feet diameter, well walled up with solid masonry in an octagonal form : it is descended by an easy flight of steps between the walling-up of the well and the rock. In the former are several loopholes for the admission of light. Near the bottom I found the workmanship of much older date, and some of the steps had given way. I was informed that during the march of the French troops, at the time of their occupation of Egypt, they effectually, in mere wantonness, destroyed this costly pearl of the desert, which has since

CHAPTER XXV.

JOURNEY SOUTHWARD FROM MOORA—THE FOREST ON FIRE—CHARGED BY A RHINOCEROS — TREACHERY OF THE NATIVES — THE DÔR BOUNDARIES REACHED—PROGRESS SOUTHWARD—ARRIVAL AMONG THE NEAM NAM—ENTRANCE INTO THE VILLAGE—AN ANTICIPATED CANNIBAL FEAST—A MEDIATOR—EFFECTS OF A SHOT—THREATENING ASPECT OF AFFAIRS—A RECONCILIATION—TUSK-COLLECTING AND ITS RESULTS—FUTURE PROSPECTS.

As I was now on the most friendly terms with old Medamboodoo, who had accustomed himself to my white skin, and who no longer feared us, I had little difficulty in procuring porters to proceed southwards.

The path leading to Shembool, as in the preceding year when Daood had traversed it, was so overgrown with long grass and shrubs that it was impossible to force a way ; and, taking advantage of a brisk north wind to blow the flames in advance of us, we set fire to the dry herbage. The conflagration was immense, and almost instantaneous. The fire roared and crackled, seizing the creepers hanging to the trees ; and they in turn igniting their supports, the helpless birds, flitting from the low branches to the top, filled the air with their cries, whilst herds of terrified gazelles and antelopes fled before the devastating flames. The sight was grand ; and, notwithstanding

the light of the sun, the bush was illuminated. Vast clouds of smoke hung high in the air. At night the scene was impressive. Far over the hills we could see the onward and triumphant march of the fiery element; and on the following day, when we reached Modacunga, our dangerous *avant courier* had swept past it, and the village owed its preservation only to the clear space around it. This was the case with other villages farther on. The devouring flames were obstructed at last by a large river at Nearé, the principal feeder of the lake, where hippopotami and crocodiles abounded. Crossing the river, ninety yards wide, in the fragile canoes of the natives, the chief Gâl assisting at our embarkation, we continued our route on the opposite shore, still in the Dôr territory. The country before had been hilly, but we were now in a mountainous region, wild in the extreme. At Gootoo we learnt that my men were stationed at Umbolea; and thence we wended our way through a ravine between two lofty mountains of red granite, in which the mica existed in large shining flakes, two inches and upwards in diameter. At the end of the pass was an extensive and wooded plain; and, bivouacking under the shade of some large trees, one of my best shots and myself went in search of a dinner.

I had marched on for about ten minutes; and, fighting my way through thick bush, a small glade presented itself, in the midst of which stood a large tree, surrounded by a dense mass of underwood. To my intense surprise, from this lair a black rhinoceros

unexpectedly charged me. I instantly fired ; and my man with a spare rifle being far behind, as the brute still advanced, I attempted to back into the thicket. In this I succeeded, just in time to allow the animal to brush past me on his short onward career ; a few paces more he fell, expiring without a struggle ; and I found that the ball had penetrated his right eye.

Encamping at Mungila, we were readily supplied with porters : in the morning they were accompanied by a number of men, bearing, as usual, lances, bows, and arrows ; they formed a temporary escort. We had not proceeded far when it was discovered that one of my Khartoumers was missing. Halting, I hastened back on my mule, and arrived in the village just in time to save my man, whom I found surrounded by an immense concourse of people. Charging them on my mule, I fortunately put them to flight, and returning with him, he explained his absence by the desire of purchasing a skin of honey.

The natives, apparently ashamed of having been so easily deprived of their victim, followed us in large numbers, but another tilt sent them flying to the village. They had never seen a man mounted on an animal before, and to the novelty of my galloping at them must be attributed their fright.

On rejoining my men, and continuing our journey, at the entrance of a narrow ravine another display of treachery exhibited itself, by the withdrawal to a short distance of the escort accompanying us, and our being attacked by an unexpected flight of their arrows. At

the same instant the porters suddenly threw their loads to the ground and bolted. One of my men, detaining two of them by the waist-belts, received an ugly wound from a barbed lance, which, penetrating his back between his shoulders, passed through him, its point protruding about an inch below the collar-bone of the right shoulder. Still the gallant fellow held firm hold of his captives ; and the man who threw the missile was shot through the head, and two or three more were knocked over. Some of the negroes within our reach prostrated themselves on the ground, submitted, and sued for pardon ; but the greater number fled into the bush. Disarming those in our power, I made them resume their loads, and sent them on with a detachment to Ombelambé, to return, if possible, with a sufficient number of negroes to carry our deserted goods. Fearing another attack, I with a part of the men remained on the alert : we had to encamp during the night, and with a few guinea-fowl, which we had no difficulty in shooting, contrived to make a tolerable repast.

In the morning the return of my detachment, accompanied by the chief Bujoo and many porters, enabled us to proceed. We at once discharged the treacherous men of Mungila, who were laughed at by Bujoo and his party as they decamped with the loss of their arms. A few poles tied together formed a couch for my wounded follower, on which he was carried to Ombelambé. The spear, detached from the handle, had to be thrust through the shoulder of the poor.

man, as its barbs prevented its direct withdrawal; and, with the simple application of diluted sulphuric acid, to keep the wound clean, in the short space of a month the man recovered.

Without farther adventure of note we joined my garrison at Lungo, and found all in excellent health and spirits, anxiously awaiting our arrival with supplies.

We had now reached the southern confines of the Dôr territory, which, from north to south, extends about three hundred and fifty miles. The language, habits, and customs of the various communities of this tribe were similar to those described on its northern frontier and Djau, the only remarkable difference being in the mountain-district traversed between Nearé and Umbolea, where the women did not distort their features by the use of the ornament worn in the under-lip.

At feud with their southern neighbours the Baer, we could not procure as porters more than a dozen negroes adventurous enough to accompany us into that district. With them, an interpreter, and a party of twenty Khartoumers, after a few days' rest, I set out.

The country during the last few days of our journey had been undulating; but now we were again amongst granitic mountains. Our first day's march brought us to Umbolea, and thence, another day's march to the south, to another village of the same name, situated at the base of a high mountain: the inhabitants fled up its steep sides at our approach.

Seating ourselves quietly at its extremity, the interpreter proceeded after them, and reassured them ; and, with the aid of a few presents, we soon succeeded in establishing a good footing. Ivory, they said, they had none, but promised to collect some during the following rainy season, when elephants would arrive in their country ; these had now migrated to the north, where water was more abundant.

Our usual talisman, glass beads, provided us with a new set of porters ; and after one night's sojourn only, we proceeded to Baer, a good day's journey, through mountain-passes farther south. Our reception was marked by the flight of the inhabitants ; but, as at the last village, there was little difficulty in gaining their good-will. We remained here a day, and our attempts at procuring ivory were fruitless. Their fields were on a far more limited scale than those in the Dôr country, as they said they were troubled by foraging parties of their southern neighbours, the Neam Nam, who pillaged their villages, and committed great slaughter and devastation, their object being to carry off the youth into slavery. They described these uncomfortable neighbours as warlike and savage, invariably feasting on their fallen enemies. They implored us to return, as they said so small a party as we were would certainly be overpowered and eaten.

They told us they had nearly been exterminated by these cannibals, of whom they professed the greatest horror ; and stated that many of their communities had been obliged to fly, and establish themselves in

2. *Bubalus Caffer*, Gray, Cat., p. 28. Horns.
3. *Adenota Lechèe*, Gray, Cat., p. 98. Male skin, in a bad state; skull of half-grown male and female. Awan and Raik.
4. *Kobus Maria*, new species. Two heads, male and female. Awan.
5. *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*, p. 99. Head of male and female Raik.
6. *Alcelaphus Bubalis*, p. 123. Several heads of both sexes. Djour.
7. *Damalis Senegalensis*, p. 126. Heads of male and females. Ajack.
8. *Tragelaphus sylvatica*, p. 139. Head of male.
9. *Giraffa camelopardalis*, p. 181. Head of male; pale variety.
10. *Rhinoceros bicomis*. Skull, with horns of a large size; half-grown.
11. *Hippopotamus amphibius*. Skull. From Sennaar, lat. 12° 13' N.

The new species Dr J. E. Gray proposes to name after his wife, who has assisted him in his studies, "*Kobus Maria*."

In the Bahr-il-Gazâl I was joined by a sandal (a boat with one mast only, smaller than a Dahabyeh) from my hunting station at Gaba-Shambyl, which contained several rare specimens of natural history, the most notable being a young elephant, a juvenile rhinoceros, and six shoe-birds, so called by the Arabs, or royal balaeniceps. These birds are but rarely seen on the banks of the Nile, which, shelving off more or less abruptly, furnish but few favourable spots for its wading propensities in search of food. Although seen in the Bahr-il-Gazâl, they prefer the natural