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A CAMPAIGN IN TAKA.

AFRICA, the least explored division of the globe's surface, and the best field for travellers of bold and enterprising character, has been the scene of three of the most remarkable books of their class that have appeared within the last ten years. We refer to Major Harris's narrative of his Ethiopian expedition—to the marvellous adventures of that modern Nimrod, Mr Gordon Cumming—to Mr Ferdinand Werne's strange and exciting account of his voyage up the White Nile. In our review of the last-named interesting and valuable work,* we mentioned that Mr Werne, previously to his expedition up the Nile, had been for several months in the Taka country, a region previously untrodden by Europeans, with an army commanded by Achmet Bascha, governor-general of the Egyptian province of Bellad-Sudan, who was operating against refractory tributaries. He has just published an account of this campaign, which afforded him, however, little opportunity of expatiating on well-contested battles, signal victories, or feats of heroic valour. On the other hand, his

narrative abounds in striking incidents, in curious details of tribes and localities that have never before been described, and in perils and hardships not the less real and painful that they proceeded from no efforts of a resolute and formidable foe, but from the effects of a pernicious climate, and the caprice and negligence of a wilful and indolent commander.

It was early in 1840, and Mr Werne and his youngest brother Joseph had been resident for a whole year at Chartum, chief town of the province of Sudan, in the country of Sennaar. Chartum, it will be remembered by the readers of the "Expedition for the Discovery of the Sources of the White Nile," is situated at the confluence of the White and Blue streams, which, there uniting, flow northwards through Nubia and Egypt Proper to Cairo and the Mediterranean; and at Chartum it was that the two Wernes had beheld, in the previous November, the departure of the first expedition up Nile, which they were forbidden to join, and which met with little success. The elder Werne,

Feldzug von Sennaar nach Taka, Basa, und Beni-Amer, mit besonderem Hinblick auf die Völker von Bellad-Sudan.—[Campaign from Sennaar to Taka, Basa, and Beni-Amer; with a particular Glance at the Nations of Bellad-Sudan.]—Von FERDINAND WERNE. Stuttgart: Königl. Hofbuchdruckerei. London: Williams and Norgate. 1851.

* *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. CCCXCIX., for January 1849.

whose portrait—that of a very determined-looking man, bearded, and in Oriental costume—is appended to the present volume, appears to have been adventurous and a rambler from his youth upwards. In 1822 he had served in Greece, and had now been for many years in Eastern lands. Joseph Werne, his youngest and favourite brother, had come to Egypt at his instigation, after taking at Berlin his degree as Doctor of Medicine, to study, before commencing practice, some of the extraordinary diseases indigenous in that noxious climate. Unfortunately, as recorded in Mr Werne's former work, this promising young man, who seems to have possessed in no small degree the enterprise, perseverance, and fortitude so remarkable in his brother, ultimately fell a victim to one of those fatal maladies whose investigation was the principal motive of his visit to Africa. The first meeting in Egypt of the two brothers was at Cairo; and of it a characteristic account is given by the elder, an impetuous, we might almost say a pugnacious man, tolerably prompt to take offence, and upon whom, as he himself says at page 67, the Egyptian climate had a violently irritating effect.

"Our meeting, at Guerra's tavern in Cairo, was so far remarkable, that my brother knew me immediately, whilst I took him for some impertinent Frenchman, disposed to make game of me, inasmuch as he, in the petulance of his joy, fixed his eyes upon me, measuring me from top to toe, and then laughed at the fury with which I rushed upon him, to call him to an account, and, if necessary, to have him out. We had not seen each other for eight years, during which he had grown into a man, and, moreover, his countenance had undergone a change, for, by a terrible cut, received in a duel, the muscle of risibility had been divided on one side, and the poor fellow could laugh only with half his face. In the first overpowering joy of our meeting in this distant quarter of the globe, we could not get the wine over our tongues, often as my Swiss friend De Salis (over whose cheeks the tears were chasing each other) and other acquaintances struck their glasses

against ours, encouraging us to drink. . . . I now abandoned the hamlet of Tura—situated in the desert, but near the Nile, about three leagues above Cairo, and whither I had retreated to do penance and to work at my travels—as well as my good friend Dr Schleddehaus of Osnabruck, (then holding an appointment at the military school, now director of the marine hospital of Alexandria,) with whom my brother had studied at Bonn, and I hired a little house in the Esbekie Square in Cairo. After half an hour's examination, Joseph was appointed surgeon-major, with the rank of a Sakulagassi or captain, in the central hospital of Kasr-el-Ain, with a thousand piastres a month, and rations for a horse and four servants. Our views constantly directed to the interior of Africa, we suffered a few months to glide by in the old city of the Khalifs, dwelling together in delightful brotherly harmony. But our thirst for travelling was unslaked; to it I had sacrificed my appointment as chancellor of the Prussian Consulate at Alexandria; Joseph received his nomination as regimental surgeon to the 1st regiment in Sennaar, including that of physician to the central hospital at Chartum. Our friends were concerned for us on account of the dangerous climate, but, nevertheless, we sailed with good courage up the Nile, happy to escape from the noise of the city, and to be on our way to new scenes."

A stroke of the sun, received near the cataract of Ariman in Upper Nubia, and followed by ten days' delirium, soon convinced the younger Werne that his friends' anxiety on his behalf was not groundless. During the whole of their twelvemonth's stay at Chartum, they were mercilessly persecuted by intermittent fever, there most malignant, and under whose torturing and lowering attacks their sole consolation was that, as they never chanced both to be ill together, they were able alternately to nurse each other. At last, fearing that body or mind would succumb to these reiterated fever-fits, and the first expedition up the White Nile having, to their great disgust and disappointment, sailed

For two months he watched the variations of hue of these curious lizards, and found them limited to different shades of grey and green, with yellow stripes and spots. He made a great pet of a young wild cat, which was perfectly tame, and extraordinarily handsome. Its colour was grey, beautifully spotted with black, like a panther; its head was smaller and more pointed than that of European cats; its ears, of unusual size, were black, with white stripes. Many of the people in camp took it to be a young tiger, but the natives called it a *fagged*, and said it was a sort of cat, in which Mr Werne agreed with them. "Its companion and playfellow is a rat, about the size of a squirrel, with a long silvery tail, which, when angry, it swells out, and sets up over its back. This poor little beast was brought to us with two broken legs, and we gave it to the cat, thinking it was near death. But the cat, not recognising her natural prey — and moreover feeling the want of a companion — and the rat, tamed by pain and cured by splints, became inseparable friends, ate together, and slept arm in arm. The rat, which was not ugly like our house rats, but was rather to be considered handsome, by reason of its long frizzled tail, never made use of its liberty to escape." Notwithstanding the numerous devices put in practice by the Wernes to pass their time, it at last began to hang heavy, and their pipes were almost their sole resource and consolation. Smoking is little customary in Egypt, except amongst the Turks and Arabs. The Mograbins prefer chewing. The blacks of the Gesira make a concentrated infusion of this weed, which they call *bucca*; take a mouthful of it, and roll the savoury liquor round their teeth for a quarter of an hour before ejecting it. They are so addicted to this practice, that they invite their friends to "*bucca*" as Europeans do to dinner. The vessel containing the tobacco juice makes the round of the party, and a profound silence ensues, broken only by the harmonious gurgle of the delectable fluid. Conversation is carried on by signs.

"We shall march to-morrow," had long been the daily assurance of those

wiseacres, to be found in every army, who always know what the general means to do better than the general himself. At last the much-desired order was issued — of course when everybody least expected it — and, after a night of bustle and confusion, the army got into motion, in its usual disorderly array. Its destination was a mountain called Kassela-el-Lus, in the heart of the Taka country, whither the Bascha had sent stores of grain, and where he proposed passing the rainy season and founding a new town. The distance was about fourteen hours' march. The route led south-eastwards, at first through a level country, covered with boundless fields of tall *durra*. At the horizon, like a great blue cloud, rose the mountain of Kassela, a blessed sight to eyes that had long been weary of the monotonous level country. After a while the army got out of the *durra*-fields, and proceeded over a large plain scantily overgrown with grass, observing a certain degree of military order and discipline, in anticipation of an attempt, on the part of the angry Arabs, to rescue Mohammed Din and his companions in captivity. Numerous hares and jackals were started and ridden down. Even gazelles, swift as they are, were sometimes overtaken by the excellent Turkish horses. Presently the grass grew thicker and tall enough to conceal a small donkey, and they came to wooded tracts and jungles, and upon marks of elephants and other wild beasts. The foot-prints of the elephants, in places where the ground had been slightly softened by the rain, were often a foot deep, and from a foot and a half to two feet in length and breadth. Mr Werne regrets not obtaining a view of one of these giant brutes. The two-horned rhinoceros is also common in that region, and is said to be of extraordinary ferocity in its attacks upon men and beasts, and not unfrequently to come off conqueror in single combat with the elephant. "Suddenly the little Schaïgië cavalry set up a great shouting, and every one handled his arms, anticipating an attack from the Arabs. But soon the cry of 'Asset! Asset!' (lion) was heard, and we gazed eagerly on every side, curious for the lion's