



AMBATCH CANOE, OMDURMAN.

## BIG-GAME SHOOTING IN THE SUDAN

BY H. A. BRYDEN

SINCE the days when Sir Samuel Baker hunted big game in the country of the Nile tributaries of Abyssinia, and thereafter, making his way to the head waters of the great river of Egypt, discovered the Albert Nyanza, much water has flowed and wonderful chapters in history have been accomplished. Baker, one of the greatest hunters of his time, was among the first to bring before the purview of the British sportsman the wonderful possibilities of big-game shooting in the Nile regions. His "Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia" ranks as a classic of the sportsman's library, and is beyond doubt one of the most spirited and fascinating books on big-game shooting ever written. "The Albert Nyanza" took the reader yet farther into the heart of Africa, and opened another vista of possibilities for the pursuer of great game. In those stirring days of the sixties of the last century another keen sportsman, whose name for various reasons is less well known than Baker's, was Consul Petherick, who began trading from Khartoum in the middle fifties, and saw and shot quantities of game in the Nile and Sudan regions. Schweinfurth, the German traveller and naturalist, penetrated far into the Bahr-el-Ghazal country, and his excellent book, "The Heart of Africa," published in 1873, added yet further to our knowledge of these still little-known regions. Schweinfurth was, however, more of a traveller than a sportsman. Then came the various troubles of the Egyptian Government, the intervention of the British in Egypt, the rise of the

Mahdi's and Khalifa's power, the fall of Khartoum, and the complete abandonment of the Sudan regions to the powers of barbarism. For the better part of twenty years all this vast and interesting country became sealed to Europeans. For many years before the disasters of the Egyptian army in the Sudan there had been a great traffic in live animals, which were captured by Arabs and native hunters, and dispatched by way of Suakin, Port Said, and other ports, to the zoological collections of Europe. All this was, of course, for many years put an end to.

With the breaking of the Khalifa's power at the battle of Omdurman in 1898 came the reopening of the Upper Nile and

Sudan regions and a new era for British sportsmen. Rare beasts of chase, such as the beautiful Mrs. Gray's water-buck, and the white-eared and Uganda kobs, were, so to speak, rediscovered. The leucoryx, the addax, and many rare gazelles were again

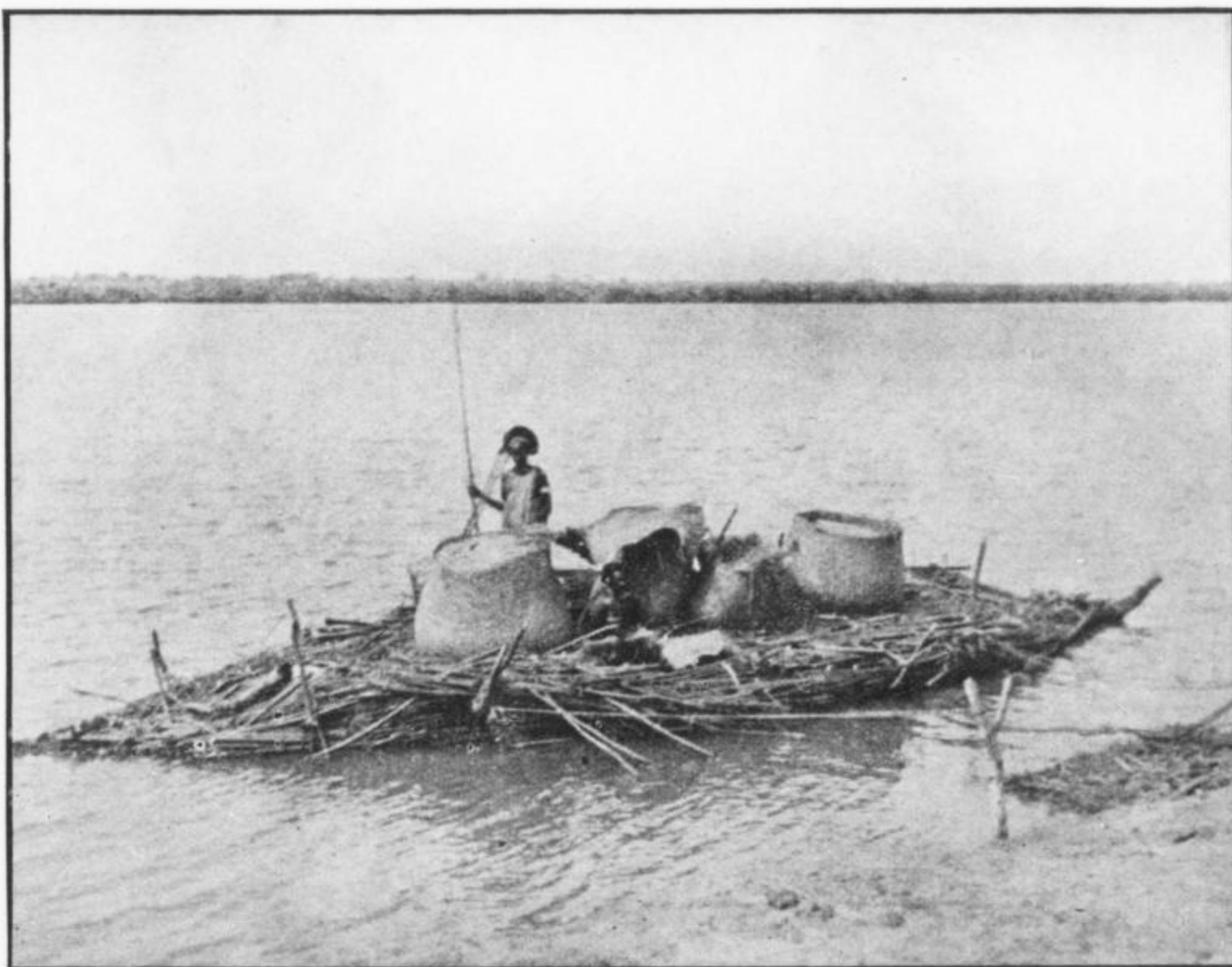


SHILLUK NATIVE, UPPER NILE

accessible in the more desert parts of the country; the kudu, the situtunga, the waterbuck, the noble roan antelope, the buffalo, the giraffe, the various hartebeests and bushbucks, reedbucks and other antelopes, were all to be found in abundance in regions where for so many years the foot of the white hunter had never fallen. Elephants of great size, carrying the finest tusks in Africa, were plentiful in the regions of the Upper Nile, and soon began to attract sportsmen. It was presently discovered that the great white rhinoceros was to be met with in the Lado Enclave, a district at the very extremity of the Sudan, leased till recently to the Congo Free State. Lions, leopards, and cheetahs were always available, hippos abounded, and ibex, Barbary sheep, warthog, and two kinds of bushpig were to be

found and shot within the new territories of the Egyptian Government. Feathered game of many kinds attracted the man wielding the shot-gun, and wild-fowl of numerous species were constantly to be met with in vast numbers.

With all these attractions one would have thought that the Sudan and Upper Nile regions would have been quickly overrun by European, and especially by British, sportsmen. For various reasons this has not been the case. In the first place East Africa, with its marvellous display of wild life, its railway running from the coast to the Victoria Nyanza, and giving easy access to the best hunting-



SHILLUK AMBATCH BOAT

grounds, has been a very formidable competitor. Its attractions are undeniable, and for years the country has been a happy hunting-ground for those sportsmen who can afford the somewhat costly luxury of a big-game expedition. Some few of these hunters have travelled from the Nyanza to the Nile and made their way back to civilisation by Khartoum and Cairo. But for the most part these men have already expended the bulk of their energies in East Africa and Uganda, and have not cared to linger long in the Nile country and the vast Sudan regions. Certainly Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt turned aside to shoot white rhinoceros in the Lado Enclave, and other game in the Upper Nile regions; but they were

peculiarly favoured individuals, and every resource of the Egyptian Government was placed at their disposal. The game of East Africa at last begins to show symptoms of depletion; and good heads are not now procured with the ease of a few years since. Again, the increase of farming is already making an impression on the fauna in the more settled districts; it is clear that the game of East Africa is not going to last for ever.

In the second place two other reasons have somewhat militated against the freer employment of the sporting resources of the Sudan country. One of these is that considerable areas of the territory



WARTHOG

have been declared reserves within which the game are protected against all visiting sportsmen. This is undeniably true; but it is to be remembered that protected areas also exist in East Africa, and after all the country thrown open in the Nile and Sudan regions is so vast that almost every kind of game is to be found and bagged. Again, many people have the idea that the Sudan and Nile countries are unhealthy. The Upper Nile regions lie, certainly, at a lower altitude than the highlands of East Africa, and, situated as they are near the Equator, they are unquestionably hot. But it is to be remembered that the best shooting season—from November to the end of February—falls in the winter months, when the climate is

comparatively dry and bracing and the prevailing wind blows from the cool north.

In the third place sportsmen and travellers who have had experience of the cost of living and hotel life and travel in Cairo and Lower Egypt, so much enhanced at the present day by the extravagances of American and other tourists and globe-trotters, have rather hung back from a Sudan sporting expedition. As a matter of fact, once away from Cairo and its expenditure, the trip need be no more costly than a short expedition in East Africa, while the expense, some particulars of which will be given hereafter, can be exactly

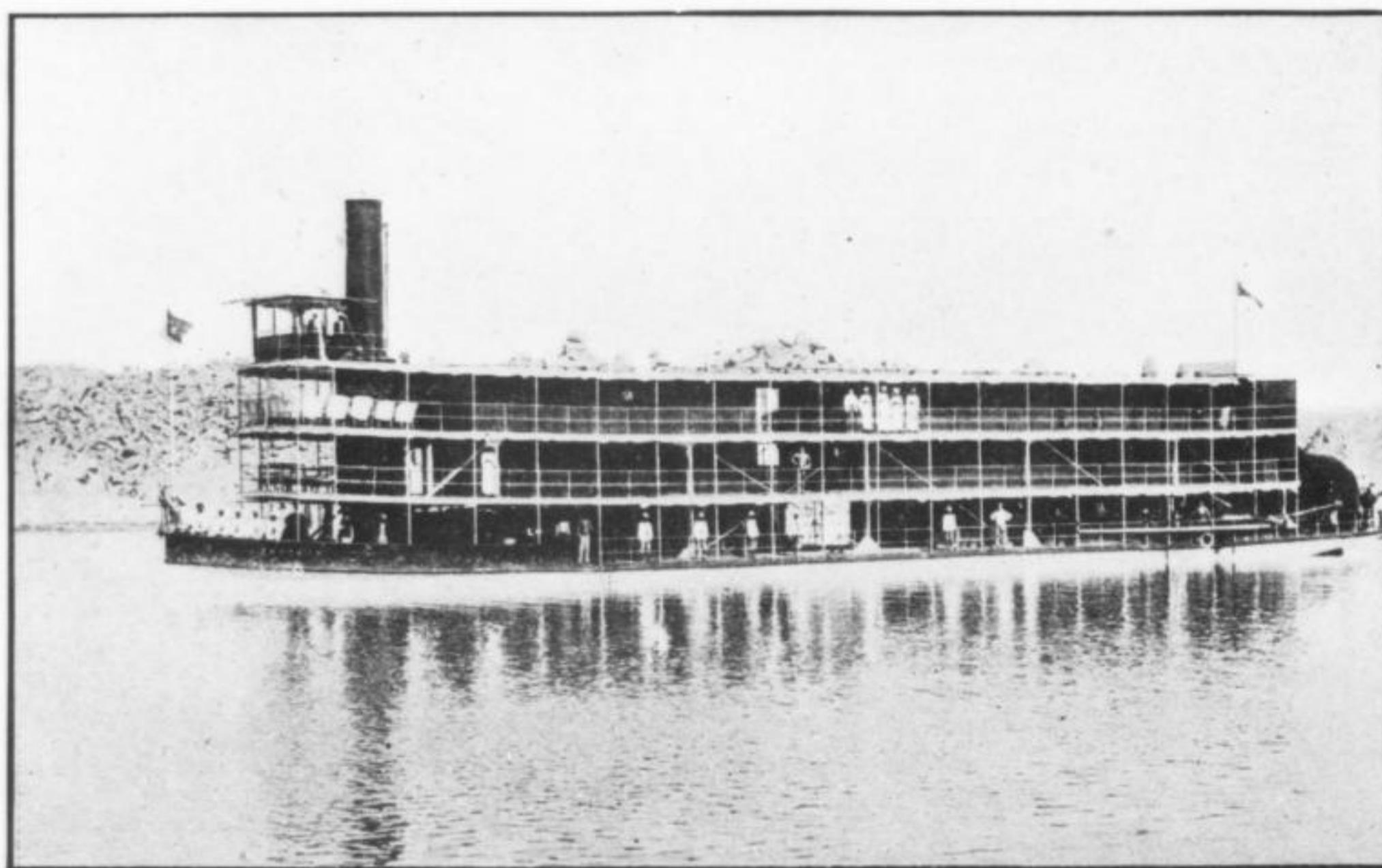


TEMPLE AT NAGAA

ascertained. The Sudan Government Railways at the present time are making every effort to forward the interests of the genuine big-game sportsman. They have now a bi-weekly service of corridor *trains-de-luxe* during the winter season, which connect with the Egyptian State Railways and their own steamship service, and take the passenger from Cairo to Khartoum for the sum of £15 19s. 3d. Egyptian (the Egyptian £ being worth 6d. more than the English), which includes sleeping car. These trains are fitted with every luxury of travel, dining and sleeping cars are there, electric fans and light, special air-cooling apparatus, and other comforts. The Nile steamers, which carry the traveller from Assouan to Wady Halfa, a

distance of 220 miles, are fine vessels, fitted with every modern convenience for voyaging in a hot climate. Travelling by the Monday train from Cairo, the sportsman will reach Khartoum the following Friday; or if he leaves Cairo on Thursday, he will arrive at his destination on the following Monday. An alternative route is to go round by sea via Suez to Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, and thence train to Khartoum. By this route, which costs between £13 and £14, the fine sporting regions of Kassala and Sennar are attained. The round trip from Cairo by these combined routes is performed at a cost of something less than £24, which can scarcely be looked upon as an excessive charge for a long spell of travel into the big-game regions of Africa.

Before reaching Khartoum the traveller, if he so pleases,



SUDAN STEAMER

can betake himself to Dongola, and from there, travelling for some three days on camel-back and carrying water, can reach a region peculiarly favoured by the addax, a large desert antelope, which has fallen to the rifles of but few European sportsmen. During the last twelve months the Earl of Kingston and Sir Robert Harvey penetrated to this piece of country and succeeded in bagging four of these rare antelopes. The addax, which carries fine horns, seems to be a connecting link between the koodoo and the oryxes. Its large, shallow hoofs are well adapted for getting about in the sandy wastes wherein it makes its habitat, and its buff-and-white colouring is also peculiarly suited to its surroundings. In the desert regions of Northern Kordofan, which may be reached from Dongola

or Khartoum, are also to be found the curious leucoryx, or white oryx, whose long horns, with their scimitar-like curve, are an attractive trophy for any sportsman who is not afraid of hard work in a dry and barren region. In Kordofan and the Dongola province are also to be met with a local race of the Tiang hartebeest, as well as the addra gazelle, the red-fronted gazelle, the Dorcas and Isabella gazelles, and some other desert-loving species.

If the traveller betakes himself to the Kassala and Sennar provinces he will find himself in one of the most interesting game countries of the Sudan. Nearly fifty years ago, when hunting among the Blue Nile tributaries of this region, Sir Samuel Baker enjoyed magnificent sport with those wonderful sword-hunters, the

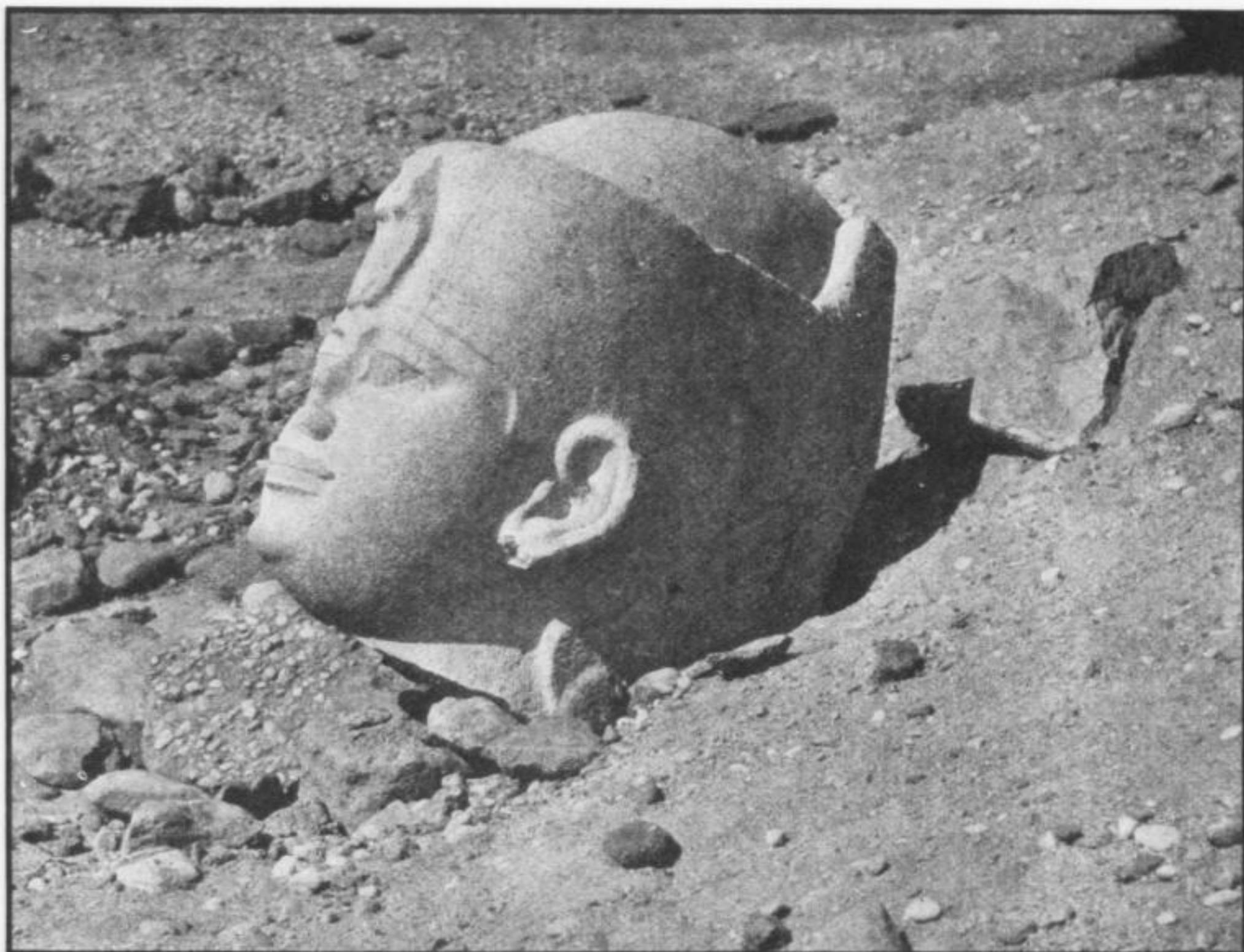


ADDAX

Hamran Arabs, in pursuit of all kinds of heavy game. The sportsman of the present day can hardly hope to vie with Baker's great achievements, but he will still find in these regions such fine beasts of chase as lion, leopard, elephant, giraffe, buffalo, Tora hartebeest, waterbuck, bohor reedbuck, roan antelope, greater kudu, Abyssinian bushbuck, Soemmering's gazelle, the red-fronted and Heuglin's gazelles, the scarce Beira antelope, the Abyssinian duiker, Salt's dik-dik, and other species. Black rhinoceros, so plentiful in Baker's time in this region, are now scarce, and are protected in these two provinces. It is to be noted that owing to its increasing scarcity in the Sudan regions the giraffe is also additionally protected, and a special fee of £20 has to be paid if one of these beasts is shot. Khartoum and the Atbara

Junction are perhaps the best getting-off places for sport in these districts of Kassala and Sennar. The country, especially in the Kassala province, is extremely picturesque, and in some places horses can be fitly employed as in Baker's time.

Certain kinds of hill-frequenting game are to be met with in places somewhat off the beaten track of the sportsman in these eastern regions of the Sudan. Of these the fine Nubian ibex (*Capra Nubiana*), the *Beden* of the Arabs, is to be sought for in the mountains along the Red Sea coast. These wild goats carry good heads, the record pair, obtained by Prince Henry of Liechtenstein,

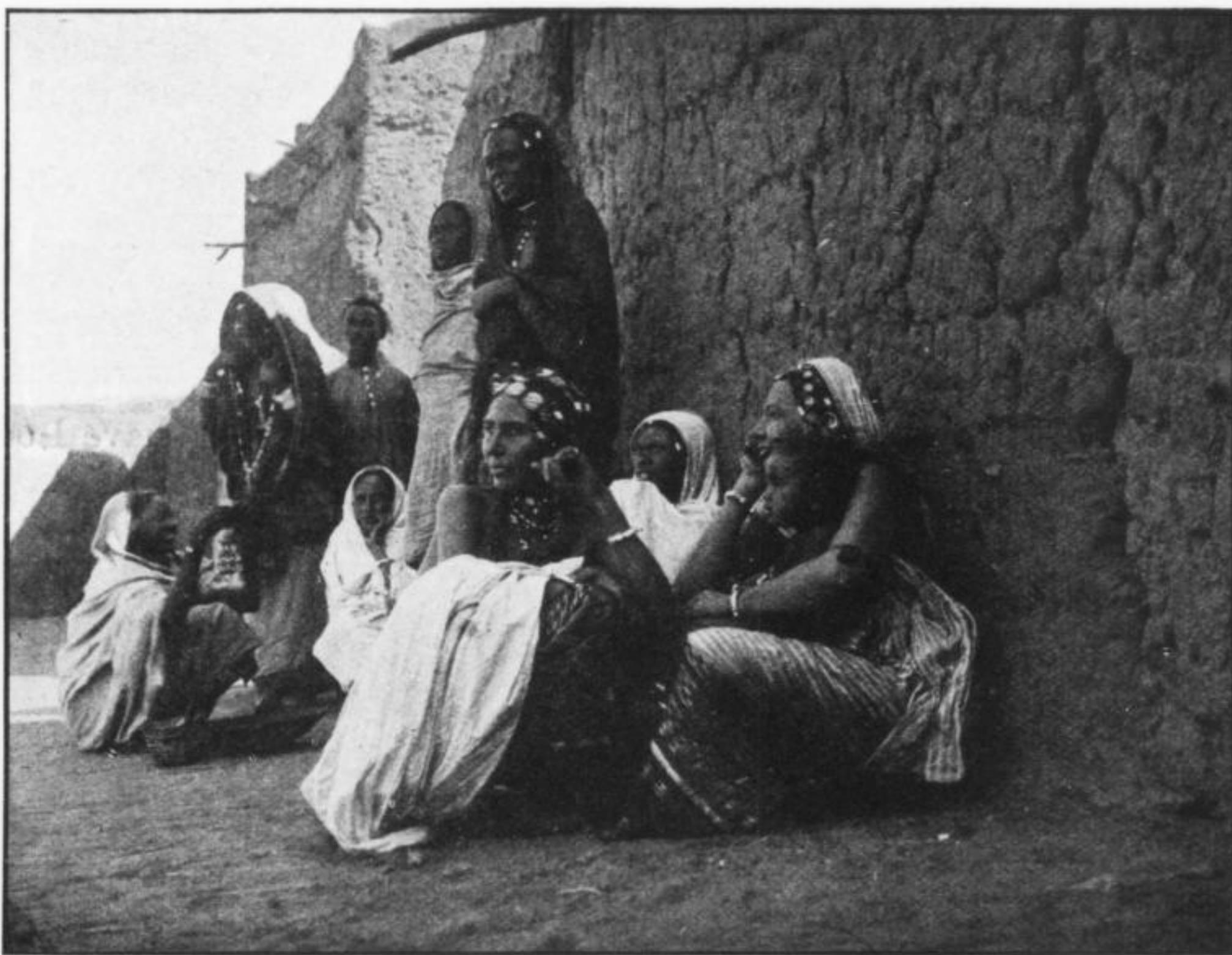


JEBEL BARKEL RUINS

in Upper Egypt, measuring 51 in. over the curve. Suakin or Port Sudan are suitable places from which to begin operations against these mountain dwellers. The great Barbary sheep—one of the finest of the various races of wild ovines—occurs among the desert ranges of the Northern Sudan, from the Red Sea province to Kordofan. It has been quite recently discovered that these sheep are to be found on hills fifty miles north of Khartoum, a point considerably south of any hitherto recorded. It will of course be necessary to obtain special local knowledge of the whereabouts of these sheep. The Abyssinian ibex, of which a number of specimens were brought home some few years ago by Major Powell-Cotton, is, apparently,

only to be obtained in the Simien mountains of Abyssinia. That charming little mountain antelope, the Klipspringer, is to be met with upon certain hills of the Red Sea province. It is, however, somewhat scarce and local, and a certain amount of careful inquiry will be necessary to ensure its successful pursuit. The wanderer in search of Nubian ibex would be certain to be able to obtain trustworthy information of the whereabouts of this antelope.

If the sportsman should be desirous of trying his luck in the wonderful game regions of the White Nile, he will, of course, proceed direct to Khartoum, and from there organise his expedition.



NATIVE WOMEN, OMDURMAN

At Khartoum a comfortable hotel, "The Grand," will serve as head-quarters. For the journey up the Nile native sailing boats, "gyassas" and "nuggers," which can be made reasonably comfortable as house-boats, can be hired for from £20 to £25 (Egyptian) per month. The Sudan Government steamers travel once a month (on the 15th) from Khartoum to Gondokoro, the farthest point attainable, and the sportsman can, if he pleases, be set down at suitable points for hunting. He can arrange to return, if he so wishes, a month or two later by the steamer returning north. In this instance he must of course cast himself loose from civilisation, and be content to depend upon himself and his native followers. The fare

for the round trip to Gondokoro is £65 (Egyptian). If these means of progression are not approved, special steamers are obtainable from the Sudan Development Company, which will render a sporting expedition almost one of luxury. The cost, however, is high, from £20 to £25 per day; and unless a party of hunters combine forces, or the sportsman is possessed of a more than usually well filled pocket, the expense of such a trip would be rather prohibitive. However, many of our wealthier shikaris will scarcely grudge the cost of an expedition which has the merits of much comfort, quick transit, and the inestimable advantage of transporting the party rapidly from one shooting-ground to another. During a month or six weeks' absence from Khartoum, on a steamer trip of this kind, many regions can be

visited and a good variety of game brought to bag. The Sudan Development and Exploration Company have London offices at 13 Austin Friars, E.C., and all inquiries can be answered there. The help of Messrs. Thos. Cook and Son, the well-known tourist agents at Ludgate Circus, will also be



GRAIN BOAT, BLUE NILE

found very valuable upon all points of Egyptian and Sudan travel.

In the White Nile country many splendid beasts of chase, affording fine trophies, are to be obtained. Elephants seem to thrive hugely in this vast region of tropical heat and moisture; they attain a greater size than in any other part of Africa, and tusks of over 100 lb. apiece are not seldom obtained. Black rhinoceros are occasionally met with. The white rhinoceros is, as I have said, only to be met with in the Lado Enclave, west of Gondokoro. These animals have been a good deal harried of late years, and it is possible that, since the arrival of Captain Stigand, who now has charge of this territory, special measures may have been taken for their protection. The game of the White Nile regions, including the

Bahr-el-Ghazal, Bahr-el-Zeraf, etc., includes also buffalo, giraffe, hippo, lion, leopard, cheetah, Jackson's, the Tora, and Neumann's hartebeests, the Tiang, another member of the great hartebeest family, roan antelope, waterbuck, Mrs. Gray's waterbuck, and the white-eared and Uganda kobs. Mrs. Gray's waterbuck belongs essentially to the group of lesser waterbucks, or kobs; it is a most beautiful and highly prized species, remarkable for its fine, doubly curved horns and the black-brown body colouring of the old rams, strikingly relieved about the head by yellowish ears, a yellowish-white patch in front of and behind each eye, the nozzle, chin, and

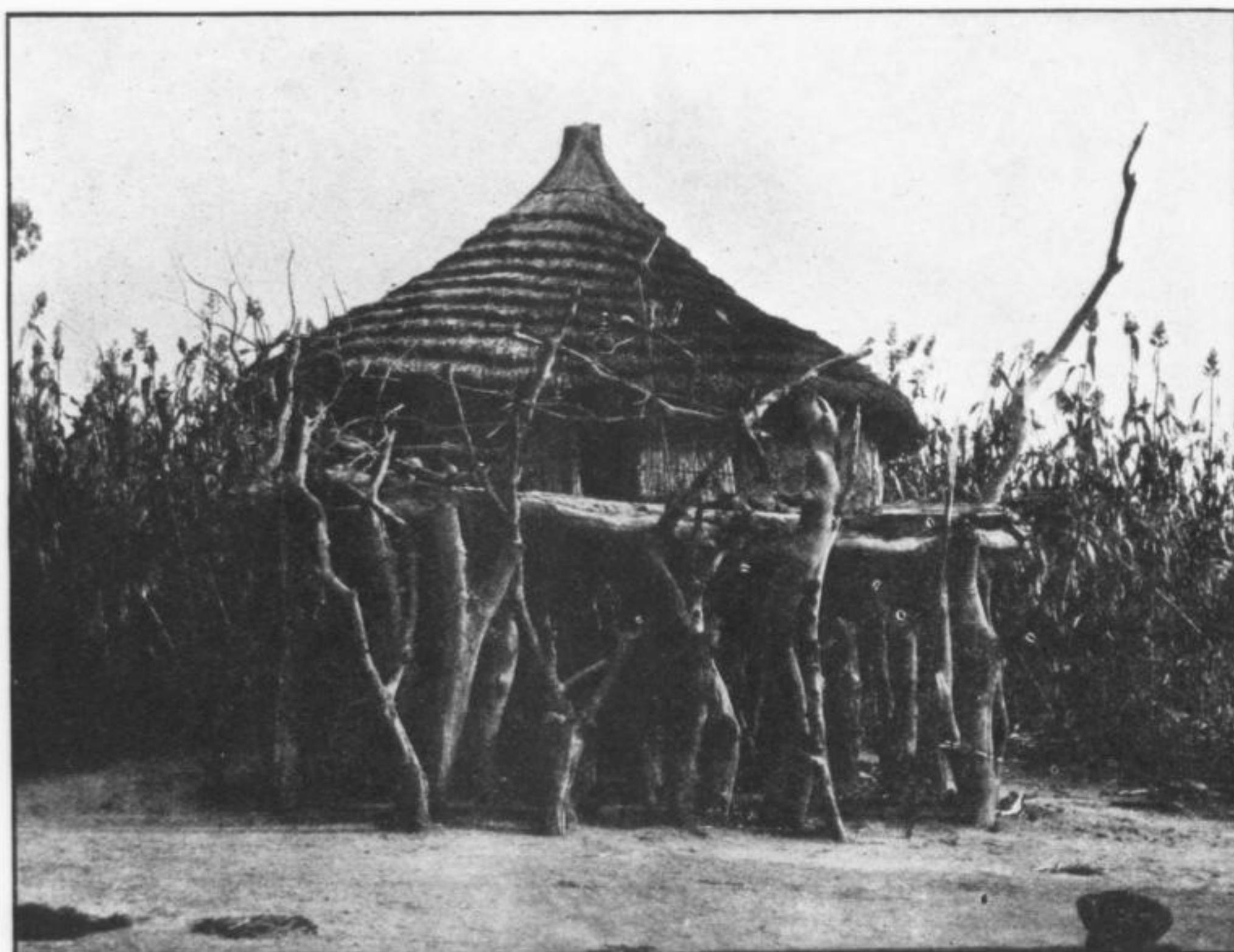


JURS MAKING A GRAIN BIN, BAHR-EL-GHAZAL

throat being of the same yellowish colour; there is also a remarkable whitish patch in front of the withers. Only the males carry horns. This is a good-sized buck, standing about 38 in. at the shoulder. Owing to the keenness of competition for the trophies of this lovely antelope, only one specimen is now allowed to each sportsman under his licence. These antelopes are extremely water-loving, like all their kind, and are to be sought amid the vast Nile swamps and upon open inundated flats, where the shining waterscape is checkered by papyrus beds and palm-clad islets. The white-eared kob, another extremely beautiful species, notable for the snow-white markings about the face and throat, much resembles Mrs. Gray's waterbuck, and is found in a similar habitat in the

same region. Quite recently another of these water-loving antelopes, known as Vaughan's kob, has been found by Captain P. E. Vaughan in the south-west of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province. In this species the full-grown rams, instead of wearing the dark coat of their allies—Mrs. Gray's and the white-eared kobs—are of a bright, foxy-red colour.

Other beasts well worth the attention of the sportsman in the White Nile regions are the bohor reedbuck, the common reedbuck, the situtunga—another water-loving antelope—the harnessed bushbuck, red-fronted gazelle, Rothschild's gazelle, and the Abyssinian and blue duikers. The warthog, red bushpig, and Sennar pig are found in various parts of the Sudan regions. Striped and spotted hyenas,



DINKA HUT, LAO, BAHR-EL-GHAZAL

wild dogs, jackals, foxes, lynxes, servals, and wild cats are also often encountered. The magnificent Derbyian eland is found in the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, and occasionally near Mongalla. One specimen is allowable to the sportsman under his licence ; but it has to be borne in mind that most of the Bahr-el-Ghazal country is closed to gunners, and a special permit has to be obtained to enter the territory.

Under the £5 game licence the less ambitious sportsman can secure only a limited number of game. He may, however, shoot as many lions, leopards, cheetahs, and other carnivora as he pleases. His bag may include four hippos—south of Kodok or Sennar there is no limit—four ibex, two Barbary sheep, one klipspringer, as well

as warthogs, gazelles, and some of the smaller antelopes. The wealth of wild-fowl in the Nile regions of the Sudan is extraordinary, and game birds of many kinds, including francolin, bustards, and guinea-fowl, are always to be met with. There is a limit of two birds of a particular species in the case of pelicans, flamingoes, storks, herons, egrets, ibises, etc. If, as is most probable, the gunner chooses to take out the full or £50 licence, he may shoot two elephants, one black rhinoceros, three buffaloes, one giraffe (£20 extra), four waterbuck (two only in Kassala and Sennar), four roan antelope, one kudu, one eland, one oryx beisa, one Mrs. Gray's waterbuck, four bushbuck, four tora hartebeest, four tiang, four leucoryx, four white-eared kob, six Uganda kob, four reedbuck



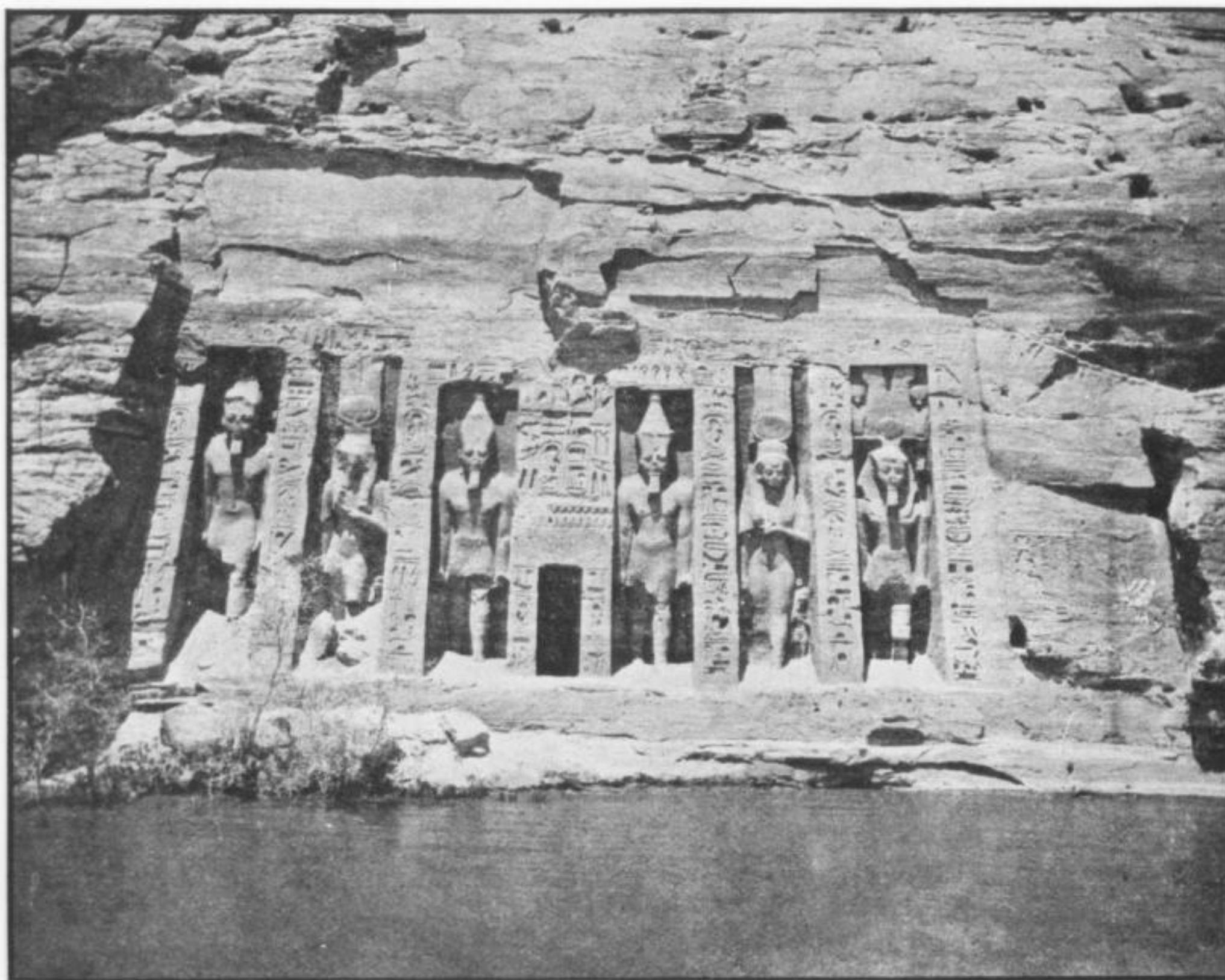
LOADING SENNAR FERRY-BOAT

(eight in Kassala and Sennar), six addra gazelle, six addax, and four Jackson's hartebeest; lions, leopards, and other carnivora are, of course, free. From this list it will be seen that the fauna and the game laws of the Sudan and White Nile regions compare not unfavourably with any other part of Africa; in some particulars, as in the case of the leucoryx, addax, Mrs. Gray's and the white-eared kobs, and the various desert gazelles, these countries can exhibit species which are quite unattainable in other regions.

Owing to local conditions shooters, unless provided with a special permit from the Governor-General of the Sudan, are not allowed to enter the following districts:—(a) The Kordofan Province

south of a line connecting Sherkeila, Rahad, Abu Karaz, Abu Zabbat, Nahud, and El Eddeiya. (b) The Bahr-el-Ghazal Province. (c) The districts south and west of a line drawn from Nasser on the Sobat to Fading on the Khor Filus, thence to the mouth of the Zeraf River (which the steamers or boats of private parties may not enter), and thence to the western end of Lake No. With the exception that parties using a steamer or boat as a base, and not proceeding more than a day's march inland from it, may shoot on either bank of the Nile north of Shambe, and on the east bank south of Shambe to the Uganda boundary.

Permits to enter these closed districts are occasionally granted,



TEMPLES OF ABU SIMBEL

under special circumstances, by the Governor-General. Such special permits are obtainable at the office of the Secretary-General, Khartoum.

As regards land transport, especially in the Dongola, Northern Kordofan, Sennar, Kassala, and Red Sea regions, camels are to be hired at about 10 piastres a day for baggage animals, and 12 piastres for riding beasts; 97½ piastres go to the English sovereign. Donkeys can be purchased for about £3, and mules for £9 or £10. On desert expeditions water is usually carried in "girbas" (skins), or "fantasses" (galvanised iron tanks), each holding 10 gallons. These

latter weigh 27 lb. empty and 122 lb. full. "Girbas," which are best obtained in Cairo, have some advantages; they are light and handy, and keep the water cold by evaporation; when new, however, they impart an unpleasant taste to the water, and require to be well soaked and washed before using. In bush country they are liable to the danger of puncture by thorns, but are very handy for short trips. When the very life of the sportsman and his attendants depends upon the priceless supply of water, the galvanised iron "fantasses" are to be recommended. It is advisable always to boil water before drinking. Canvas water-bottles and canvas buckets should also be included in the outfit.

As regards servants, a good dragoman, preferably a man who has been in the Sudan before, should be brought from Cairo to act as interpreter. His remuneration will be the subject of a special



DINKA TRIBE

bargain before starting. Ordinary servants receive from £3 to £5 per month; cooks the same wage. Native skinners, for preserving heads and trophies (usually obtainable at Khartoum), will receive from £3 to £4 per month. Native shikaris, obtained, of course, locally, will be fairly remunerated at the rate of 5 piastres per diem, with a small gift by way of "bakshish" thrown in, if they perform their duty satisfactorily.

It ought to be remembered that the .303 rifle is barred in these regions. A suitable battery would be a .450 cordite rifle for heavy game, such as elephant, rhinoceros, and buffalo. If a weapon of heavier calibre is deemed necessary for dangerous game at short ranges, one of the improved ball-and-shot guns of 10 or 12 bore would be most suitable. Westley-Richards's "Explora" is a first-rate weapon of this type. It has great smashing power, good

penetration, and carries accurately up to 300 yards. It can be used as a shot gun if required. For other game, especially for antelope and gazelle, a .318 or a Mannlicher or Mauser rifle would answer every purpose. A 12-bore shot gun, with some heavy cartridges for wild geese and the bigger waterfowl, should not be omitted.

In this brief article I have done little more than hint at the possibilities of a big-game shooting expedition to the Sudan and White Nile regions. Apart from the actual sporting interest of a trip which can now be easily accomplished in the short space of three or four months, a journey to the Nile sources, still as mysterious, almost as little known and explored as they were a thousand years ago, is in itself worth the accomplishment. The



CAMELS DRINKING, ROSEIRES

wondrous spell of the Nile in its mysterious upper regions; the illimitable country, still teeming with game, stretching on either hand of the river; the vast expanses of desert; the lakes, lagoons, and minor river systems, many of them to this day almost unseen by European eyes—all these things are full of attraction to the sportsman of British blood. Ladies now penetrate to these far-off and fascinating places, and, thanks to the comfortable steamers of the Sudan Development Company, which ply south of Khartoum, see and share the sport of their male fellow-travellers. In coming seasons it cannot be doubted that the Sudan and White Nile countries will become each year more and more popular with British sportsmen.