

THE VAST SUDAN



*Arabs of the Nuba Mountain Province wearing chain armour
believed to have been taken from the Crusaders.*

THE VAST SUDAN

BY

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etc. etc.



ARROWSMITH :: LONDON :: W.C.1

First published in 1924

*Printed in Great Britain by
J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd., 11 Quay Street, Bristol*

BY WAY OF THANKS

It was at the suggestion of the officials of the Sudan that I undertook the trip through this most interesting country, and thanks to the remarkable courtesy and kindness shown by all with whom I came in contact the way was made easy for me, difficulties so far as possible were swept away, and every facility was given for the carrying out of my programme and accomplishing what I started out to do. It is a pleasure, therefore, to record here my most sincere thanks to all who helped me, and my keen appreciation of their many kindnesses and whole-hearted hospitality. My thanks are also due to Sir Ernest Wallis Budge, whose book *The Egyptian Sudan* has been of so much help in furnishing the facts relating to the history of the Sudan, and to Mr. R. Lydekker, whose works have helped me in the identification and range of certain animals, and finally to the Stoll Film Company for their pecuniary assistance, without which I should not have been able to make the film of the vast Sudan.

A. RADCLYFFE | DUGMORE.

1924.

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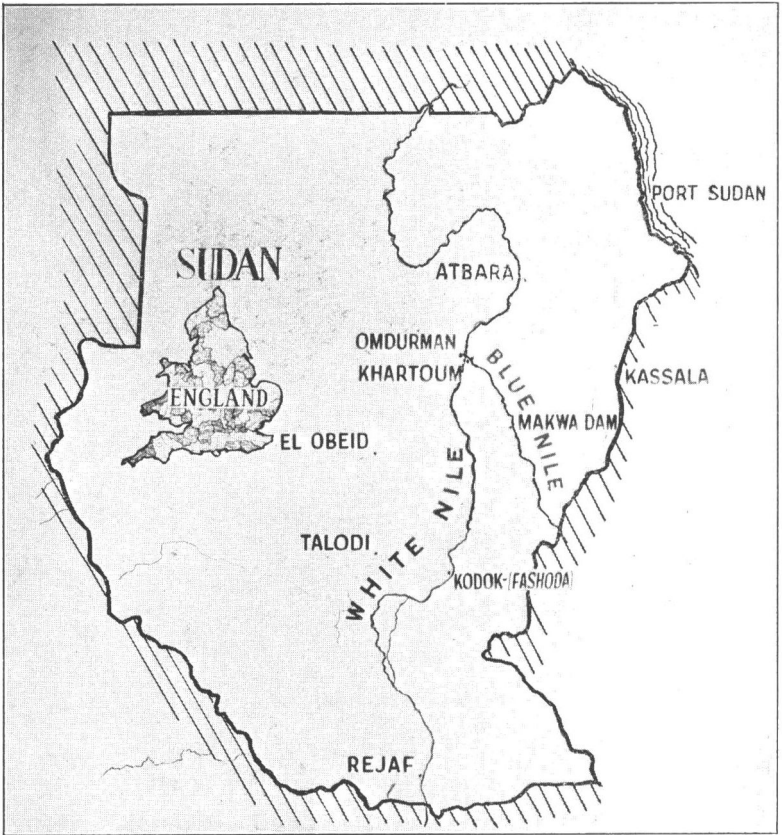
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The Sudan, showing approximate comparative size of England.



Sketch Map of Africa.

Showing approximately the comparative size of Europe.

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CHAPTER I

FOR many years it had been my great ambition to see the Nile, which I always pictured as a river beautiful beyond words, with high banks covered with luxuriant tropical vegetation ; birds and animals abounding everywhere ; in fact, a Paradise for the painter and naturalist. What had given me this impression I do not know, unless it was derived from the works of writers whose imagination was greater than their accuracy.

Fate and my good fortune at last gave me the opportunity of visiting this land of my dreams, and in the early part of the present year, 1924, I landed at Port Said and made my way to Cairo and from there up the historic river. As the first part of my journey was over ground that is familiar to such a large army of tourists I will pass it over with only a few words. As a matter of fact, I saw but little of the Nile, for on the trip from Cairo, which was by train, I travelled

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at night, and only by moonlight could I see the dark fringe of feathery palms and the flat belt of cultivated land which marked the course of the river.

With the first gleam of dawn I was looking through the window of my sleeping carriage. A glorious sunrise made the country very beautiful. Low mists, blue at first, gradually turned to pink and yellow as the sun appeared, and then melted away and left the land clearly showing and far less beautiful. At Luxor we had to change trains, and had a short time in which to visit the great ruins of Karnak, and in the distance, faintly visible in the soft warm light of the desert, were the sunburnt hills on which were turned the eyes of the world, for there was the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen. From Luxor the journey was made in a train which by no stretch of imagination could be called a *train de luxe*. The carriages were narrow and none too clean, and it was just a trifle shaky. Still the run to Shellal was interesting. We kept to the east side of the river, and passed through richly-cultivated flat country near the water, and then through bare, rocky hills in which could be seen occasionally quaint villages of flat-roofed, mud-coloured buildings, scarcely different from the surrounding landscape.

At Shellal I embarked on a comfortable steamer,

ON THE NILE

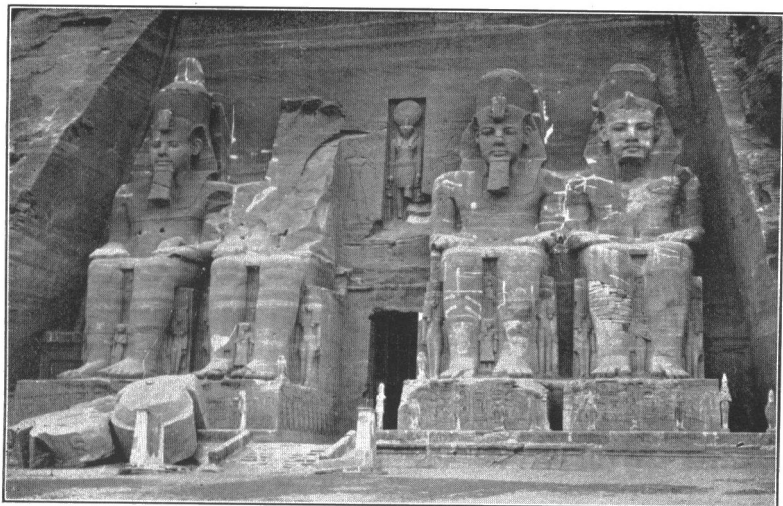
but, strangely enough, our departure was delayed for the night by a cold fog and rain. Not at all what was to be expected on the Nile. With the coming of day we started southward, but the country was not behaving itself in a kindly way. The weather was distinctly cold, and the grey sky reminded one more of England than Egypt. The mighty river, with its slow-moving water, was bordered here and there by submerged date palms, whose feathery tops seemed strangely out of place with the water reaching almost to their leaves. Beyond this there was little or no vegetation, for the hills on either side were bare masses of rock in which, here and there, a few buildings hid themselves, as though ashamed of being seen. Now and then boats passed us, their tall, sharply-pointed, lateen sails the very acme of grace and beauty and so very much what we associate with the Nile. But the day was wrong ; the grey skies and the bitter wind seemed all out of place.

The following morning all this changed. The sun rose as an African sun should, a ball of fire, burning its way through the warm purple haze of the desert. Everything looked different and more what one expected. The bare hills no longer were dreary masses of rock, they were beautiful in their infinite shades of soft colours, the shadows a wonderful range of blues

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and purples, their high lights exquisite tints of warm yellows. Boats drifting lazily down stream, their great sunlit sails crossed, gave them the appearance of strange birds. They fitted the scene to perfection, and I felt at last that the Nile was really a river of mystery and its peculiar beauty all its own. The great temple of Abu Simbel, illuminated by the early sun, gave the final touch to the morning picture. There is something inexpressibly grand about this temple, built out of the living rock, over one hundred feet in height, with the four immense statues of Rameses II, for whom it was built, nearly seventy feet high. Sitting there after all these centuries, with their curiously expressive eyes gazing at the great artery of Egypt, the Nile, which flows unceasingly at their very feet, they seem to speak of the power of the ancient Egyptians; but they say nothing of the horrors perpetrated under the reign of this mighty king, of the treatment of the Nubians, on the edge of whose country this lasting monument was erected to commemorate the deeds of conquest.

In the temple, which goes back into the solid rock one hundred and eighty-five feet, the walls are decorated with beautiful designs, depicting strange battle scenes, But we, who are ignorant of such



The temple of Abu Simbel.

BRITISH LUXURIES

methods of inscribing history, cannot read what is there, and we simply wonder at the craftsmanship of those ancient people whose work has endured, and whose story is still told to those who can read the pages of stone. Time was of little consideration to those people, but to us, who count each hour and each day, the call came from the steamer's whistle telling us that we must return and continue our way up the river to Halfa, which is about eight hundred miles from Cairo. It was nearly noon when we arrived, and I could not help being struck by the quiet, orderly way in which the landing was accomplished and the delightful politeness of the officials. It was easy to see that we were once more in the land of British administration. Everything was done that would make us comfortable, and the train which was to take us to Khartoum was a surprise to me, for it was the last word in luxury.

Curiously enough the weather, though bright, was decidedly cold, and I could scarcely help smiling at myself, for I was dressed in a heavy winter overcoat and wearing a topi (sun helmet), a strangely incongruous combination! The journey from Halfa to Khartoum, a distance of nearly five hundred miles, is across as dreary a stretch of desert as I have ever seen, flat, hard sand, with occasional hills, or gebels,

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as they are called, rising up in masses of dark boulders. Vegetation is very scarce, small thorn trees and brief stretches of scanty dry, yellow grass in which colourless camels and strange-looking goats tried to find food. And yet this desert has a peculiar charm ; its warm colour, running into blue or purple in the distance, seems to tell of illimitable space. The lack of water is, of course, depressing, and one cannot help marvelling at the courage and persistence of those who in 1897 undertook to construct a railway across this desert land, which at the time was almost unknown territory ; and to make matters worse, when the work was begun the Dervishes were but a short distance in front.*

It gave one a curious feeling to travel over this historic ground under conditions of real luxury and comfort, and to think of all that had happened along this line such a few years ago. It had been one long battlefield in those trying days of the re-conquest of the Sudan. Such names as Wady Halfa, Berber and

* The building of the railway was due to Kitchener, who required it in his advance on Omdurman, an account of which is given elsewhere. The line from Halfa to Abu-Hammed, which cuts across the great bend in the Nile, is 231 miles in length, and it saves a distance of 360 miles of river travel. It reached Halfaya, on the north side of the Blue Nile opposite Khartoum in December, 1899.



On the White Nile between Shellal and Halja

KHARTOUM

Atbara recalled the past, and I wished that my memory were better, for many of the details were but misty recollections, dimmed by the passing of over a quarter of a century. What a change had taken place since those days. What a gain to the country! It had cost a heavy price, but surely it was a price well spent, not alone for ourselves and the honour of our name, but for the formerly downtrodden, ill-used, and atrociously-treated people of the country.

As I came into the station of the historic town of Khartoum in the comfortable and punctual train I could not help wondering at it all, at what lay before me and what the past had been. For here was the country whose history, considering the size of its population, was perhaps the most ghastly tale of misery that has ever been recorded. Go back into the darkest ages, back to pre-Dynastic periods and the scanty information we have of those days, and from these to the end of the last century, and we have an almost unbroken story of murder, torture, slavery, with its attendant miseries, official corruption, oppression and, in fact, every form of horror and wretchedness that the most active mind can imagine. Never have a people suffered more continually and more terribly. The wonder is that they have survived at all, let alone

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that their natures have not been warped completely by the sufferings of the past thousands of years.

Of the very earliest days we know but little, except that the Sudan, the Land of the Neshesu, or Blacks, was subject to innumerable raids by the people of Egypt, the object of the raids being to secure slaves and gold. One of the earliest of these raids of which we know anything definite was carried out by the Egyptian King Senefero about the year 3766 B.C. Later the Sudan was conquered by Usertsen III., 2333 B.C. This conquest was only one of many that were made, for the hold on the country does not appear to have been either a firm or lasting one. One ruler would secure what was considered a conquest of a large or small part of the country south of Egypt, while another one, with less ambition, would lose it through uprisings of the various peoples of the Sudan, who, naturally enough, objected not only to the invasion of their county, but to the severity of their treatment by the Egyptians and to the heavy tribute they were forced to pay.

In all the expeditions undertaken by the Egyptians the one idea seems to have been gain to themselves, and little or nothing appears to have been done for the people. Colonisation as we know it was not considered.

SUDANESE GOLD

It was simply a case of the total subjection of the people, so far as it was possible, and by the most severe and drastic methods, so that the wealth of the country, in slaves, gold, ivory and gum, and whatever else could be obtained, should be taken possession of by the Egyptians.

Gold was the greatest inducement for conquering certain parts of the Sudan, and the amount secured must have been enormous; for it is estimated that, in the time of Rameses II. no less than £80,000,000 worth was taken annually. The conditions under which the mining of the gold was carried on must have been too appalling. Except for the head men it was all forced labour; slaves, prisoners of war (captured specially for the purpose), and criminals condemned for real or imaginary offences, men, women and children were worked till death came to them as a welcome release from their misery. But gold had to be secured regardless of human life and suffering. No one knows when the working of the gold mines began. In the earlier days the precious metal was secured from the sand or earth, but actual mining was carried on many thousand years ago.

When Amenemhat I. visited the Sudan, about 2466 B.C., his cupidity was aroused by the possibilities

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of the mines, and he decided to obtain possession of them ; but apparently his task was not an easy one, for we find that his son, Usertsen I., continued the attempt, and about 2333 B.C. Usertsen III., stirred probably by the lack of success of his predecessors, made serious efforts to complete the conquest begun over a hundred years ago, and later he became master of the greater part of Nubia, at least as far south as Semna. South of that his position was apparently one of uncertainty. His cruelty in dealing with the people was about what one might have expected. Everything throughout the country was destroyed in a wholesale manner ; not only were the villages wiped out, but the wretched people slain in countless thousands, and one cannot help believing that those who were killed were better off than those who were carried off as slaves.

It is small wonder that the people combated by every means in their power the advance of the Egyptians. They had nothing to gain by submission, and that they fought strenuously against the invaders is clearly shown by the fact that it was not until the nineteenth year of his reign that Usertsen III. may be said to have conquered the Sudan. How much of the country fell to him it is difficult to say, but it is known that it was at least eighty miles south of

PERSECUTIONS

Semna, and that he secured possession of the gold mines throughout the country.

From what history tells us it is easy to see that though the Sudan had been conquered, at least nominally, it was never a peaceful possession for any great length of time. Uprisings were frequent and often serious, chiefly among the Nubians. When the Egyptians succeeded in subduing these rebellions they punished the wretched natives with terrible severity, frequently cutting off the hands of their prisoners, regardless of sex or age, and torturing them in unspeakable ways. How the country survived the continual destruction it is difficult to understand. There were periods when the Sudan people appear to have completely overthrown their oppressors, but even these were followed by what could scarcely be considered as periods of peace. For peace, until quite lately, seems to have been a complete stranger to the unfortunate land from time immemorial.

With the advent of Christianity the conditions did not improve to any great extent, though there were reasonably long periods of comparative tranquillity, notwithstanding the fact that the slave trade and consequent raids continued to flourish, for Egypt always demanded tribute in the form of slaves. Christianity

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was carried into the more northern part of the Sudan very early in our era, and evidently flourished, for we find that Silko, a Nubian king, established a Christian kingdom, with Dongola as his capital, some time during the sixth century. This endured for six or seven hundred years, and during this time a large number of churches were built in various parts of the country ; but these were destroyed about the beginning of the fifteenth century when Mohammedanism had made a firm footing, and had almost, if not entirely, taken the place of the Christian religion.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, owing to trouble with the Nubian king, an expedition was sent against the Nubians by the Egyptians, which ended in their defeat, and the Sudan was annexed. Prior to this, in 956, the Nubians had invaded Egypt, and again, in 1005, there was an invasion by Abu Rakwa, who, after he had defeated the Egyptian forces, was compelled to retreat to Nubia, where he was finally defeated and the heads of thirty thousand of his people " were sent to Cairo, and thence in procession through all the towns of Syria on the backs of 100 camels, and then thrown into the Euphrates." From then onwards Nubia seems to have been the scene of endless strife. Darfur, farther south, was also in a

MOHAMED ALI

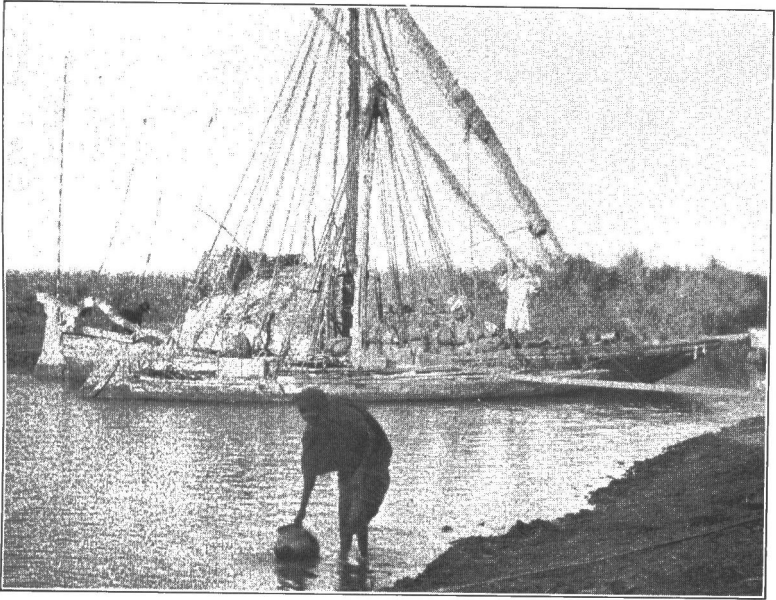
state of perpetual internal war between the sultan and the various sheikhs, usually for the purpose of securing booty in the form of slaves, women, and gold.

Coming to more recent times, we find that once more, in 1819, an Egyptian expedition was sent for the purpose of conquering the wretched Sudan. This time it was undertaken by one Mohamed Ali, who had been among those sent by the Sultan of Turkey (Egypt being then a Turkish province) against the French, who had taken Alexandria in 1798, and two years later had evacuated it. He was made Pasha of Egypt in 1805 by the people of Cairo, and later Governor of Egypt by the Sultan of Turkey. For this reason his former friends, the Mamluks, turned against him. This resulted in a fight, during which they were defeated. Many were killed, others were taken prisoners, and after being tortured were put to death and their heads sent to the Sultan. This act of barbarism aroused the British, and in 1807 troops were sent to Egypt, but in their attack on Rosetta were repulsed with severe loss. The heads of those who had been killed were taken to Cairo and stuck on stakes. In a second attempt the results were even more disastrous. The men who were taken prisoner were forced to march through Cairo between the hundreds

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of heads of their fallen companions. The whole affair was disastrous in more ways than one, and it is scarcely a matter to be proud of when we think that our troops had to leave without accomplishing what they had come to do. Four years after they had left Mohamed Ali, by means of treachery, destroyed several hundred Mamluks. After this he ordered their total destruction throughout the country. The few who escaped this massacre made their way eventually to Nubia. It is because this brings us again to the Sudan that the above has been given, even though it deals with Egypt, rather than the Sudan. Unfortunately, however, the two countries have their history interwoven to such an extent that they cannot be altogether separated.

The Mamluks who settled in Nubia were evidently a most undesirable lot, if we may judge from the atrocities they committed among the Nubians ; however, they eventually paid the price, for in 1820 Mohamed Ali sent a powerful force, under the command of his son Ismail, with the result that the Mamluks were destroyed. After that he took Sennar, and then Fazogli, which is some one hundred and seventy-five miles farther south. But his career of conquest and crime came to an early end (he is said by Cailliaud to have cut off the ears of all the natives, both men and



Nile boats on the White Nile.

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

women, of a tribe who had dared to oppose his advance and sent the ears to his father). He had come from suppressing a rebellion at Fazogli, where he had presumably committed many horrors, and was stopping at Shendi. While there he and his men were invited to a dinner ; during the meal the house was surrounded with brush and set on fire, so that they were all burned to death. Retribution followed swiftly, for the place was destroyed by one of Mohamed Ali's generals and the people massacred. This gives an idea of Egypt's dealings with the Sudan, and shows that the methods of 1820 differed in no marked degree from those of the ancient days. As we follow the history of the unfortunate Sudan the same story is told, over and over again, with variation only in the details.

In 1828 an expedition was sent against the Dinkas, and two years later against the Shilluks, during which great numbers were killed and many prisoners captured and sent down the Nile as slaves. Then came the taking of Taka, under conditions which added, if possible, to the vile methods of conquest carried out by the Egyptians under Turkish rule and administered by the Governor Mohamed Ali, who died in 1849. The way in which he carried on or encouraged slave-trading, under the most appallingly cruel conditions

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had far-reaching effects which actually ended finally in the overthrow of the Egyptian rule, or rather misrule, in the Sudan.

There seems to have been but one real attempt to give the unfortunate country a change for the better, that was when Said Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, paid a visit to the Sudan in 1858. The conditions that he discovered were appalling, owing to the dishonesty of the officials, who were doing all in their power to destroy the country by relentless slave - dealing, absurdly heavy taxation (a large part of which went into private pockets), and by the general mismanagement and corruption, not only of those who were in positions of trust, but even down to the most humble servants of the Government. Everything seemed to have been rotten to the core, and Said Pasha did all in his power to bring about reforms that were so absolutely necessary if the country was to be saved from utter desolation. An order was issued to abolish slavery ; this was a vital step in the right direction, but it was one thing to give an order and quite another to make that order obeyed. Slavery was the chief means of accumulating fortunes ; it had been carried on as a business for thousands of years ; it was, in fact, the very life of officialdom, probably an actual reason

SAID PASHA

for many men taking the various positions of so-called trust. Perhaps one should not blame those in subordinate positions when we consider that the rulers of the country had been, in nearly all cases, the chief offenders, and had looked on the Sudan simply as a country which furnished an almost unlimited supply of slaves, with the least expenditure of time, labour and money. Had the reforms ordered by Said Pasha been carried out, the ghastly story of the following years would not have been added to the already overladen pages of horrors; but apparently the reforms were short-lived, for a couple of years later slavery was flourishing again, and the corruption of the Turkish officials was once more in full swing. Honesty seemed to be non-existent. Even the soldiers who were supposed to keep law and order were a scourge to the country.

Baker says that in the case of the Egyptian and Turkish officials their business is one of forage and plunder, "and the miserable natives must submit to insult and ill-treatment at the will of the brutes who pillage them." Later on Baker describes Musa Pasha Hamdi, a Governor of the Sudan in 1863, as a man "who combined the worst of Oriental failings with the brutality of a wild animal," who, notwithstanding

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the Sultan's order, made a fortune by trading in slaves.

The story of all the horrors that existed is too long to be given here, where I am trying to present a short *résumé* of what the Sudan people suffered under the Egyptian and Turkish yoke. If the reader is interested in the subject he cannot do better than read *The Egyptian Sudan*, in which Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge follows the history of the country with very complete detail, which is the result of the most exhaustive research and study. As he says truly, the "picture is a gloomy one, but the witnesses to the appalling condition of misery in which the Sudan was in 1863 are so numerous and the agreement in their evidence is so universal that there is absolutely no reason for doubting their testimony." Even the efforts of Ismail Pasha, who as ruler of Egypt gave stern orders for the suppression of slave-trading, were of little avail, for we find that Arab traders leased great territories chiefly for the purpose of taking slaves. These Arabs employed immense numbers of men and armed them with fire-arms, and naturally enough the use of rifles involved the wretched natives in still greater difficulties and misery. They were shot down in thousands when they offered resistance. The number that were taken

ISMAIL PASHA

each year was between forty and sixty thousand. How many were killed in these constant raids is of course not known, but it must have been very great. The drain on the population was more than any country could stand, and this, coupled with the difficulties, if not impossibilities, of carrying on the necessary agricultural work, brought the Sudan to a very low mark, and left the people in a frame of mind ready to embrace the first possible opportunity that offered to break away from the hateful conditions.

Everything was working towards the only possible end that held out any hope for the native, and that was the overthrow, by whatever means in their power, of the Turkish or Egyptian rule. It was a case of this or complete destruction, with the one possible and belated (owing to the bad seed that had been sown) alternative that someone, with honesty of purpose and the power to enforce his will, should have the administration of the Sudan. Neither Turkey nor Egypt had been able to produce such a man, so far as we can judge from their repeated failures, even though some of them may have desired the clean and honest government of the Sudan.

Ismail, with an eye to the future, apparently did wish this, even though he had been unable to make

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his officials carry out his ideas. It is scarcely to be wondered, therefore, that he cast his eyes about for someone from another country who was free from the unfortunate failings of his own people. His choice fell on Sir Samuel Baker, and to this great traveller was given the task of reorganising the Sudan, a discouraging task and one which was full of practically insurmountable difficulties. It was at the end of 1869 that Baker started for Khartoum, and the conditions he found existing there must have appalled him. He was, among other things, authorised to suppress the slave trade, and his first discovery was that, as usual, the Governor of the Sudan was doing his utmost to support the infamous traffic in human beings. Not only at Khartoum was there a total disregard of the slave prohibition order, but also in the outlying districts. One official, who assured Baker that he was doing all in his power to carry out the orders, was found actually engaged in "kidnapping slaves," and appears to have been very indignant at being compelled to release them.

In 1873 Baker's service under the Khedive terminated. He had during his term of service annexed for the Egyptians Gondokoro and the adjacent country to within 2° North Latitude, and done all in his power

GENERAL GORDON

to put commerce on a sound basis, and made strenuous efforts to suppress the slave trade and had made himself disliked thoroughly by those who complained, even to the Khedive, that his interference had ruined their trade. Baker's efforts were, as may be imagined, not entirely successful. He had everything to fight against, even those who were supposed to help him were in favour of continuing the trade in slaves, notwithstanding their protestations to the contrary. At least he did all that one man could possibly have done in the time allowed.

In 1874 Gordon was appointed Governor of the Equatorial Provinces of the Nile, with authority over the country south from Kodok (Fashoda as it was then called). Along the White Nile he established a number of posts and so controlled the waterway. He, like Baker, did what he could to suppress the slave trade. His methods were vigorous, but finally unavailing, owing to the corruption of the officials, from the Governor down, and after two years of disheartening work he left the Sudan. Later, however, after much persuasion, he returned, and in 1877 was made Governor of the Sudan. His power as Governor enabled him to take steps which eventually put a temporary stop to the slave trade. At the same time

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he was continually busy in his efforts to establish peace in the Sudan and the adjoining countries and in the promoting of commercial possibilities, among which was the suggestion for a railway from Berber on the Blue Nile to Suakin on the Red Sea which, as he foresaw, would be of the utmost value as an outlet for the produce of the Sudan. This undertaking, however, did not meet with the approval of the authorities in Egypt.

It was about this time that a serious rebellion was started by the notorious Suleman, with the avowed intention of seizing the Sudan and so carrying on the slave trade without opposition. At first Suleman was successful, and captured many thousands of men and women, but in 1879 he was finally defeated by Gessi, and having been taken prisoner, was shot.

In December of this year Gordon left the Sudan, and his place as Governor was taken by Rawuf Pasha, a former slave trader, so it is not to be wondered at that most of the good that had been accomplished by the efforts of Baker and Gordon soon disappeared; and in 1882, in spite of what the Government in Cairo were saying about reforms, the slave trade was flourishing without let or hindrance. The dealers, realising that fresh opposition might at any time restrict their

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR

infamous business, made the most of their opportunities, with results that can be easily imagined. This continued, with slight change, until Gordon's return to the Governorship of the Sudan in 1884. During his absence trouble of the most serious nature had developed. The country, finding itself without the protecting hand of Gordon, was in a condition that required but little to stir the flame of rebellion. The spark was furnished by Mohammed Ahmed, who later became famous as the Mahdi. At this time he was about forty years of age, and was filled with religious fervour of a certain interested nature. Whether his religion was honest at first it is difficult to say; he proclaimed widely his disapproval of dancing and singing as being against the teachings of Islam and his intention of purifying the religion, but later he became obsessed with the idea of power; and though he concealed this under the guise of religion, there is little doubt that it dominated his actions up to the time of his death. Cruelty under the name of religion has, unfortunately, been only too common throughout all ages, no sect or denomination having been free from it; so that even though under the Mahdi's reign of power the cruelties committed were of the most appalling nature, they differ only in degree and kind from what

THE VAST SUDAN

others of different creeds have perpetrated. There is one thing certain about the Mahdi, and that is that he understood very thoroughly the people with whom he was dealing: he knew enough of their past terrible history to realise that, if properly led, they would be ready for almost anything, if it promised freedom from the Egyptian and Turkish yoke. He realised also that if he acted under the cloak of religion he would secure the greatest number of followers. In order to make his position most powerful he must place himself on a pedestal and be above everyone in the country. He must, in fact, represent himself as being inspired by God. He was a keen student of Mohammedanism, and knowing that it was about the right time for the predicted appearance of the promised Mahdi, he decided to impersonate that being, and in 1881 publicly proclaimed himself as such and made the most extravagant promises to those who would follow him. He would take the Sudan and free it from all oppression. Having done this, he would overcome Egypt. There were, indeed, few things that he did not promise, and the people, believing all, rushed to his standard.

Rawuf Pasha, Governor of the Sudan, hearing of the trouble that was brewing, lost little time in sending an expedition against the Mahdi. At Abba Island,

THE MAHDI

at Gebel Kadir, and at various other places engagements were fought, with results usually in favour of the rebel forces. Rawuf Pasha was re-called, and Abd Al-Kader was put in his place. But he had no better success, for the Mahdi continued to gain many victories. He captured, among other places, Shatt, and put all the male population to death. He did not have everything his own way, however. At El Dueim he was defeated with the loss of nearly five thousand of his men. Again at El Obeid, after several attempts, he was repulsed with a loss of ten thousand ; but later, in the beginning of 1883, he succeeded in taking the town and capturing immense booty in the form of arms, ammuniion and money. A new Governor was appointed about this time, and he realised the seriousness of the situation. In response to his appeal, Hicks Pasha was sent to Khartoum with some ten thousand troops, and his first attack on the rebels met with complete success ; but later, in his attempt to reach El Obeid, he met with disaster, scarcely three hundred of his nine thousand men escaped alive, while Hicks himself was killed while bravely leading a charge. The odds were entirely in favour of the Mahdi, who is said to have had some forty thousand men, and who knew the country thoroughly. The result of this

THE VAST SUDAN

great victory was to increase enormously the Mahdi's power and prestige, and to give him possession of practically all the country south of Khartoum. This was in the autumn of 1883. Later in the year Slatin Pasha, who had fought innumerable engagements in Darfur, was finally forced to surrender, as most of his men had deserted him and gone over to the side of the increasingly popular Mahdi. Slatin was taken to Omdurman, and kept prisoner till he made his escape thirteen years later.

After the crushing defeats of the Egyptian armies the position of the Sudan was such that the power of the Mahdi was apparently unassailable, for the people had flocked to him from all directions, so that his army was counted by tens of thousands. Against such numbers the Egyptians were powerless, for they had neither the men nor the money. It was, therefore, decided to withdraw the remaining troops, in other words, to evacuate the Sudan. Gordon was called upon to effect the evacuation in 1884, and he arrived at Khartoum in February of that year. His position was an almost impossible one. He had authority, but was without the means to enforce it, as he had neither money nor men. The people in Khartoum were puzzled by the situation, for they knew that the



A dhow.

Of the kind used by the author. Note the curious shaped tiller.

THE DEATH OF GORDON

Sudan had been abandoned and that the British had taken possession of Cairo.

Unfortunately, the dangers that threatened the Sudan were not appreciated in England, and valuable time was lost before even the decision was made to send a relief expedition under Lord Wolseley, and later still before the attempt was made for the actual relief of Gordon, who in the meantime was practically a prisoner in Khartoum.

By January, 1885, Omdurman had been forced to surrender, and Khartoum, having its supplies cut off, was faced with starvation, and still the relief expedition had not arrived. In the meantime fighting was going on to the north of Khartoum, and victories gained both at Abu Tleh and Abu Khrug, but no news reached Khartoum. On January 26th, 1885, over fifty thousand of the Mahdi's men swarmed over the defences of the ill-fated town, and before sunrise of that morning General Gordon fell.

That the death of this splendid man could have been avoided there is little doubt, but it was the unfortunate lack of understanding of the situation and the consequent delays that were responsible for the unnecessary tragedy. Sir Reginald Wingate, who probably knows more about the Sudan than any man,

THE VAST SUDAN

makes the definite statement that "*there were no elements of chance in the success of the expedition to relieve General Gordon. It was sanctioned too late.*" A sad commentary on those who were in power at the time. Had even the advance party of the expedition reached Khartoum less than three days earlier the whole situation would have been different. Not only could Gordon have been saved, but also the thousands who perished in the ghastly massacre which followed the capture of the town and the ensuing years of horror would in all probability never have occurred. Thousands of lives would have been saved, infinite misery avoided, and the history of the Sudan during the latter years of the century might have been altogether different.

The famous Mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed, did not live to see the fruits of his victories, He died in June, 1885, having almost realised his dream of the complete conquest of the Sudan. To his appointed successor, one of the Khalifas, named Abd-Allah At-Taishi, the Mahdi gave his plans and instructions for carrying on the work of conquest, which, as already stated, was to include Egypt. At this time the Egyptian frontier was at Wady-Halfa, and the Khalifa lost no time in starting the campaign northward, for in December

CONTINUAL FIGHTING

he was concentrating his forces less than a hundred miles south of Halfa. Good fortune, however, was not with him, for at Kosha the Dervishes, notwithstanding their great superiority in numbers, were defeated with severe losses by troops under Generals Stephenson and Grenfell. Nothing daunted by this defeat, he made another attempt early in 1886, and actually got to within a few miles of Halfa.

In the summer of the following year the Khalifa found himself in trouble with the Abyssinians, who had defeated his men at Gallabat (on the borders of Abyssinia), and fearing a serious invasion of the Sudan, which would have upset his plans, he sent an immense army of about ninety thousand men and won a great battle north of Lake Tsana, near Gondar. Two years later a large part of the Khalifa's army in Darfur was destroyed by Abu Gameza, an anti-Mahdist. A year after the Khalifa retaliated by wiping out Gameza and his followers.

It will be seen by these events that the country was in a state of constant trouble ; fighting was going on in many parts, not only against native tribes, but also against the troops under the command of British officers. Under General Grenfell the Khalifa received at Tushki, north of Abu-Simbel, a severe defeat in

THE VAST SUDAN

his last attempt to invade Egypt. During the following four years there was a good deal of activity in various parts of the country, and in these fights both the Dinka and the Shilluk were involved; so also were the Italians, who were in the countries to the east of the Sudan, in Eritrea and Abyssinia. They seized Kassala in 1894, and still held it when in 1896 their army met with a crushing defeat near Adoa (in the northern part of Abyssinia, and a little over two hundred miles from Kassala) by the Abyssinians, under Menelek II., and lost about one-fifth of their men. This was disastrous, for at Kassala their countrymen were surrounded by the Khalifa's forces, who made several unsuccessful attempts to destroy them.*

In Sir Ernest Wallis Budge's book on the Egyptian Sudan he gives an interesting description of what occurred in the Sudan at this time. It is interesting from several points of view, especially the part about the money :—

“ Early in March, 1896, partly with a view of assisting the Italians, and partly because it was

* Kassala was finally taken over by the Egyptian troops under Colonel Parsons in December, 1897.

KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM

felt that the time had come when a blow must be struck at the Khalifa's power, the British Government determined to make an advance on Dongola. It was decided that the expedition should consist of nine thousand Egyptian troops under the Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener, who had succeeded Sir Francis Grenfell. On March 12th Colonel Hunter was ordered to advance to Ukâsha. On March 19th the Egyptian Government applied to the Commissioners of the Public Debt to advance £500,000 towards the expenses of the expedition. Four out of six Commissioners agreed, and the money was advanced. In the lawsuit which followed the mixed tribunal in June ordered the Government to refund the money (already spent!) with interest, and this judgment was, on appeal on December 2nd, confirmed. The British Government, at the instance of Lord Cromer, lent the sum due, £515,600, which was paid into the Caisse on December 8th, and subsequently presented the amount to the Khedive's Government."

In considering the present demands of a certain party in Egypt the above makes one wonder at the attitude they take, and at the same time appreciate what our Government has said recently on the subject of our position with regard to Egypt and the Sudan.

The result of the British decision to strike at the power of the Khalifa bore fruit within a very short time. Kitchener carried out the work of the

THE VAST SUDAN

re-conquest of the Sudan with careful deliberation. Step by step the territory was wrested from the enemy. With the steady advance southward each position was consolidated, and railways were built to allow of supplies being brought up. The line from Halfa, cutting across the great bend in the Nile, was pushed forward towards Abu-Hammed, with the result that in August, 1897, the place fell to General Hunter after severe fighting, in which the Khalifa's forces who held the place were practically wiped out.

Slowly and relentlessly the advance toward Khartoum and Omdurman continued, and the Khalifa, in his efforts to stem the tide, took and fortified Metemma, a strategic position on the Nile, about one hundred miles north of Khartoum. The methods employed in taking this town were thoroughly characteristic of the Khalifa and his Dervish followers, for we read that they massacred two thousand men, women and children, while "thousands died through the mutilation of their limbs, which Mahmud (the Khalifa's general) had carried out on every male." And "the Shêkh Abd-Allah wad Saud," who had opposed the Dervish occupation of his town) "was sent to Omdurman, and the Khalifa had him walled up in a hole in such a position that he could neither

THE ADVANCE ON OMDURMAN

sit down nor stand upright, and then starved him to death." In spite of the Khalifa's efforts his forces met with defeat at every point. One of their most serious disasters was when Mahmud was captured and his army of fourteen thousand men completely defeated by General Hunter in April, 1898. The next and conclusive move in the campaign was the taking of the historic town of Omdurman, and to give an adequate picture of the battle I cannot do better than quote directly from Sir Ernest Wallis Budge's account :

"In May, 1898, preparations for the advance on Omdurman were taken in hand, and Fort Atbara was made the headquarters of the Egyptian Army in the Sudan. Here the Sirdar's force of about 12,500 men began to concentrate in August, and by September 1st they had reached a point about six miles north of Omdurman. The gunboats steamed up to Tuti Island and a howitzer battery was landed on the east bank, which soon opened fire on Omdurman. Its guns fired 50-pound shells of lyddite, and after a few rounds the dome of the Mahdi's tomb was practically destroyed. Meanwhile the Khalifa's army, which contained between 40,000 and 50,000 men, was moved out of Omdurman, and it was reported that he intended to attack the Egyptians that very night. It is said that in a night attack lay the Dervishes' only chance of

THE VAST SUDAN

success, for they were only four miles away, and they could have crept up in the dark to the Sirdar's force, and it would have been impossible to fire on them with any effect until they were within 200 yards. The struggle would then have become a hand-to-hand fight, and the Egyptian losses would certainly have been very considerable, in any case very much greater than they actually were.

“The Sirdar's answer to the Dervish night attack was to send into the Khalifa's camp men who pretended that they were deserters from the Sirdar, who was going to attack the Dervishes that night. No night attack then took place. At 5.30 a.m. on September 2nd the bombardment of Omdurman was continued, and a few minutes later the advance of the enemy began. It was a splendid sight. A huge amphitheatre, lit up by a blazing sun, in which a mass of fearless men, clad in gay-coloured jibbabs, waving countless flags, and following reckless horsemen, were rushing forward with absolute confidence of victory, and absolute contempt of death.” (*Sudan Campaign, 1896 to 1899*, by an officer, p. 192.) “At 6.45 the artillery opened fire, and their shells burst in the Dervish ranks, but it did not stop their advance. Whilst one body of Dervishes attacked the southern face of the Sirdar's position, another rushed out from behind Gebel Surgham (Surkab) to attack the left flank. Presently the Guards opened fire, and next the Warwicks, the

THE ADVANCE ON OMDURMAN

Highlanders, the Lincolns, and later on Maxwell's brigade. The Dervishes fell in heaps, but those behind pressed on until the foremost row were only 800 yards from the British force. Whilst the Khalifa was attacking the British position the Khalifa's son, Shêkh Ad-Din, and Ali Wad Helu, with 10,000 men marched out on the Egyptian troops under Colonel Broadwood.

"The Dervishes attacked with boldness, and Colonel Broadwood was so hard pressed that disaster must have followed had not the gunboat opened fire at close range with deadly effect, and so saved the situation. These attacks on the position having failed, the 21st Lancers, about 320 in number, under Colonel Martin, were sent out to prevent the Dervishes from retreating to Omdurman. Soon after they started they saw, as they thought, from 200 to 300 of the enemy concealed on a khôr, and they wheeled into line and charged. As they came near the party of Dervishes was found to be about 3,000 strong, and these suddenly rose up and opened fire. The Lancers, however, rode on, charged through the mass of Dervishes, and fought their way out on the opposite side; then they dismounted, and opened fire on the enemy, and drove them out of the position. The Sirdar then ordered his forces to evacuate the camp and to march on Omdurman. About 9.30, when the leading brigades were close to the west side of Gebel Surgham, the third division

THE VAST SUDAN

of the Dervish army, some 20,000 strong, led by the Khalifa himself, rushed to the attack on the Sirdar's flank. The brunt of the attack was borne by the brigade of Colonel Macdonald, who, whilst carrying out the change of front ordered by the Sirdar, found himself about a mile distant from the rest of the army.

"The Dervishes, preceded by 300 or 400 mounted Bakara, attacked from the west, intending to break Macdonald's line, but never a man got within 300 yards of the fighting-line. The Dervishes drove their banner-poles into the ground, and gathered round them and died. But whilst Colonel Macdonald was still fighting the Dervishes who were hidden behind the Karari hills, to the north of Gebel Surgham, rushed out to deliver a second attack, thus threatening Macdonald both before and behind. The Dervishes were in two divisions, one led by Shêkh Ad-Din and the other by Ali Wad Helu, and they intended to envelop Macdonald. Seeing this, Macdonald coolly moved the men of his brigade into such a position that one portion of them faced north and the other west. When the Dervishes came up they were received with a fire that no living thing could face and live, and at the same time Colonel Lewis's brigade enfiladed the Khalifa's ranks on the left. Colonel Wauchope's brigade then came up, the fight ceased, and the Dervishes broke and fled. The masterly way in which Macdonald handled his force was the theme of general

ENTRY INTO OMDURMAN

admiration. The Dervish loss was 10,800 killed and 16,000 wounded; the Sirdar's entire loss was 48 killed and 382 wounded. About 4,000 black troops surrendered, and some 1,222 of these were wounded, and three of Gordon's old steamers were captured.

"Soon after three o'clock the Sirdar entered Omdurman, and was met by shékhs bearing flags of truce, who said the people tendered their submission. This the Sirdar accepted, and the soldiers laid down their arms, whilst the people swarmed out of their houses and cheered the troops. The Khalifa's house was shut and barred, and was shelled by the gunboats from the river. The Mahdi's tomb was then entered, and it was found to be much damaged by the fire from the gunboats and the howitzer battery; the top of the dome was knocked off, and there were several holes in it. The Khalifa unfortunately escaped before the Sirdar entered Omdurman, and made his way to the west, leaving untouched the dinner to which he had invited the Amirs to come after his defeat of the Anglo-Egyptians!

"As soon as steps had been taken to guard the town, the Sirdar went and set free the European prisoners, Charles Newfield, Joseph Ragnotti, Sister Teresa Grigolini, and about thirty Greeks, and a large crowd of natives, many of whom had been officials under the old Government; the total number of prisoners set free was 10,854. At 5 p.m. five brigades

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reached the north end of Omdurman, but it was nearly midnight before they had marched through the town and bivouacked. The cavalry pursued the fugitives until far into the night, but want of forage and stores then compelled them to return ; the gunboats steamed 90 miles south of Khartoum, but could find no trace of the Khalifa."

Farther on he describes what was done with the Mahdi's body as follows :

"One other important and most necessary thing was done at the request of and with the approval of many Mohammedans. The Mahdi's tomb was destroyed, and his body taken from its grave and burned in the furnace of one of the steamers and the ashes thrown into the Nile. The head, it was said, was taken possession of by a British officer, but subsequently orders were issued to bury it, and a burial ceremony took place at Halfa. Had the building been allowed to stand and the body to remain in its grave the tomb would have become the centre of fanaticism and revolt, and the effect of the victory of law and order over lawlessness, barbarism, and savage despotism on the minds of the tribes for hundreds of miles round would have been ruined—nothing short of the destruction of the Mahdi's body would bring lasting peace to the Sudan, and prove Mohammed Ahmed was, even in the eyes of Mohammedans, an impostor.

THE DERVISH DEFEAT

The ruins of the tomb proclaim to all passers-by the fate of one of the greatest of false teachers, and the lesson which they teach has sunk deep into the minds of the natives."

The taking of Omdurman and the subsequent entry by Kitchener into Khartoum on September 4th, 1898, was the death-knell of the Khalifa's dream of conquest. There was still fighting to be done farther south, but the backbone of the Dervish army was broken and defeat followed defeat until early in 1899, when General Sir Reginald Wingate with a small force gained a decisive victory. The Khalifa and his Emirs, finding there was no hope, are said to have sat down on their sheepskins and calmly awaited the death which soon came to them. Later, by the General's order, they were buried with full ceremony by their own people. In 1903 and 1904 two fanatics proclaimed themselves Mahdis; but the lesson of the past years had shown what a menace such men were to the country, so one of them was hanged and the other killed in a fight.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to give, in more or less chronological order, a bare outline of the chief events in the history of the Sudan up to the time of its re-conquest, under British leadership and

THE VAST SUDAN

the combined forces of British and Egyptian troops. It is not meant in any way to be a complete history, but enough has been written to give the reader an idea of what I said in the earlier pages of this chapter regarding the appalling story of this unfortunate country, and I think it shows clearly enough that the Sudan has been the scene of perhaps more human misery than has ever fallen to the lot of any country. Never has it known any prolonged period of peace or happiness, and the greater part of the suffering was caused by that most terrible of all businesses, Slavery. That and the greed of gold have rendered it for thousands of years a country whose inhabitants could not call their souls their own. Never until the British took the reins of power has the Sudan had a chance to develop its resources, nor has there been fair play or happiness and safety for the people. It was to this country that I went only a few months ago, to travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety and comfort and at times almost in luxury, where but a quarter of a century ago I should have been in constant danger. My purpose was not merely to see the country, but to make a cinematograph record of its people, its animals and, above all, of the development that has taken place under our administration. For

GOOD GOVERNMENT

by means of the film, better than by any other medium, can people at home and elsewhere get an idea of what is going on, thanks to the extraordinary zeal, efficiency and fair play of those who, following in the footsteps of the great men who effected the re-conquest, are devoting their lives to giving the country good government for the first time in its history.

CHAPTER II

THE arrival at Khartoum was much like the arrival at any Eastern station of fair size. One is beset by endless numbers of "boys," each one offering you his brass badge, on which is stamped his registered number, just to show you that he has, or thinks he has, full authority to take entire charge of your luggage. All talked at once, and as I understood not a single word of Arabic, the language of the place, it sounded like a cross between the monkey house at feeding time and a dozen or more gramophones simultaneously delivering an assortment of different music hall dialogues. It was really quite amusing to watch the white-garbed crowd and their good-natured wrangling, and I ended by accepting a collection of brass discs and said, "Grand Hotel," which was apparently the same in English and Arabic, then, jumping into a carriage drawn by rather diminutive and very thin ponies, I started for the hotel, perhaps rather more than half a mile away. The first thing that struck me was the remarkable width of the streets,

KHARTOUM

so unusual in hot countries, but I was told later they were made wide and straight for strategic reasons ; it was difficult to associate the thought of fighting with the good-natured people, but I suppose the past had taught a lesson.

The drive took me past the fine statue of Gordon, whose sad fate was so intimately connected with Khartoum, on past ugly, flat-roofed buildings of the "shopping" district or bazaars, where people sat about under the shade of covered arches and sipped coffee and sweet drinks. Then past the imposing Government buildings and through a palm-bordered street to the water front on the Blue Nile. Here we drove through by far the most beautiful street in the town, well shaded by rows of dark thick-foliaged trees on the one side and by fine residential and public buildings on the other. This was the new Khartoum, so very different from what Lord Prudhoe found when he visited it in 1829, that was some seven years or so after its foundation as the chief town of the Sudan ; then it was but a collection of mud houses and straw huts ; to-day it is a rapidly growing modern town. But there was one touch of the primitive conditions that struck me as being strangely out of place, yet very picturesque ; for on the bank of the

THE VAST SUDAN

river, and directly in front of a beautiful building, there was an ancient water-wheel, or sakieh, drawn by a pair of oxen and guided by a boy who spent his life seated on the wooden bar going round and round, spitting frequently and singing, or rather droning, a monotonous song to the accompaniment of the creaking of the wooden wheels. I asked why they did not grease the wheels, and was told that if there was no noise the employer would have no means of knowing whether the work was being carried on. Not such a bad reason in a land where it is easier to sleep than work! The old wheel, groaning and creaking as it lifted the water and delivered it into a mud trough, was of the same pattern that had been used throughout the country for countless thousands of years, and formed a strange contrast to the modern steel bridge which crossed the river but a short distance above, and to the motor-cars which passed along the shady street.

It did not take long to get settled in the hotel. My trust in the numerous "boys" had not been misplaced, for within a short time all my belongings turned up in an absurdly narrow cart, accompanied by the various owners of the brass discs that weighed down my pockets. Several of my cases showed signs



A sakieh or water-wheel at Khartoum.

This method of getting water from the Nile has been in use for countless ages. The machine is made of wood which creaks continually as the wheels go round and enables the employer to know whether the driver is keeping at work.

OFFICIAL HOSPITALITY

of having fallen off into the sand. That was to be expected, when the narrowness of the cart was considered. Speaking from memory, I should say it was two feet wide ; but I may be doing it an injustice, perhaps it was less than that. I believe I was just east of Suez, which is the border-line of the Commandments and consequently of worrying, so I took it all philosophically—*after* I discovered that nothing was broken.

It has been my experience in knocking about the world that the getting ready for starting from the base is usually a trying period. But at Khartoum it seemed different. Everyone was so kind and helpful that the way was made easy and it did not seem like work. The hardest task was trying to accept all the generous, warm-hearted hospitality of the officials and others. So far I have never been able to solve the problem of being in two or more places at once, or of eating more than one dinner on a given evening. Two afternoon teas can be managed with a proper and judicious restraint in the amount of " sundowners " that are allowed to flow down one's throat, but dinners and lunches *must* be limited to one each per day. The week that I spent in this hospitable town passed only too quickly. During this time I was given an

THE VAST SUDAN

opportunity of visiting the Gordon College, and was surprised to find such a fine and well - equipped institution. It was opened in the early part of 1905, for the purpose of fitting the young men of the Sudan to take positions as engineers, surveyors, mechanics, chemists, teachers, and in fact train them to take their place in the skilled work necessary in a modern country. The money for the building was, I believe, originally subscribed in England at the instance of Kitchener, and from what I was told the College has more than fulfilled the expectations of those who were connected with its conception and those who have since carried on the work for which it was intended. I had also the chance of comparing the Khartoum of 1924 with what Baker found in 1862. He described it in the following words : " A more miserable, filthy, and unhealthy spot can hardly be imagined—although containing about thirty thousand inhabitants and densely crowded, there are neither drains nor cess pools ; the streets are redolent with inconceivable nuisances ; should animals die, they remain where they fall, to create pestilence and disgust."

What a contrast to the present day, when cleanliness is almost an obsession with those who have charge of the condition and health of the town. By their

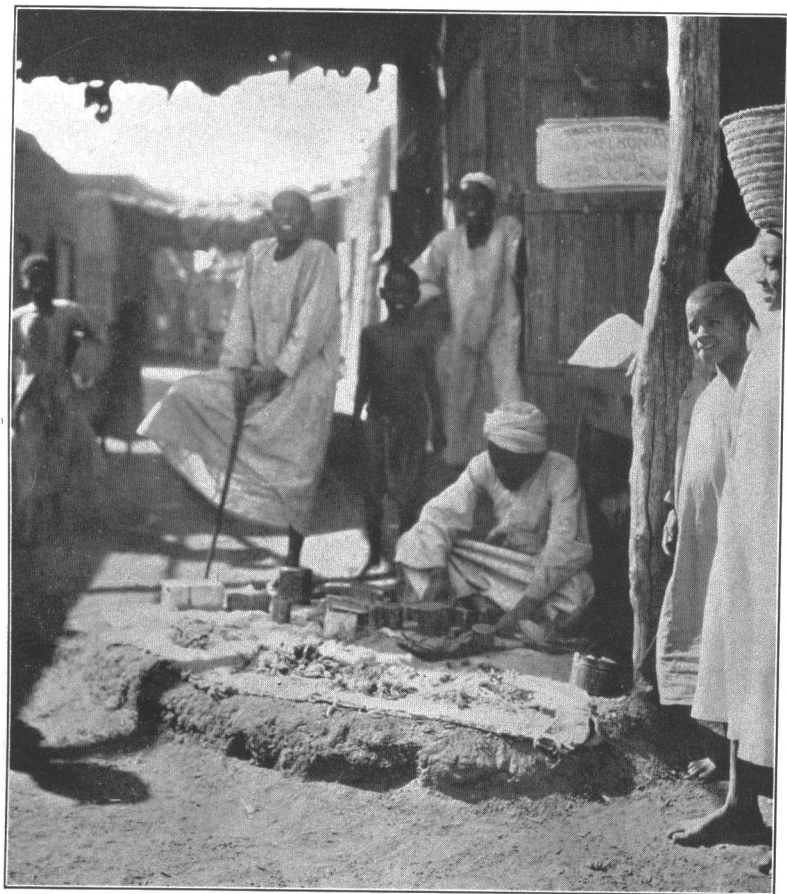
CAUTION AGAINST FEVER

vigorous methods the fever-breeding mosquitoes have been practically exterminated ; anyone who allows stagnant water on his premises is heavily fined ; and inspectors are going about all the time prying into every hole and corner, nothing seems to escape their trained eyes, and woe-betide the man who offends more than once. Even boats are examined, and the owners punished severely if water is found in them. By these effective methods the town, formerly so pestilential, is now as healthy as could be expected in a tropical country, and which is almost perfectly flat and very little above the level of high Nile. I was able to spend an occasional hour in the delightful little Zoo, which is Captain Brocklehurst's particular pet. His interesting scheme of keeping several species of animals together has worked out well. The enclosures are large and well shaded with tropical vegetation, and I have never seen happier or tamer animals in captivity.

As Omdurman was only a very short distance away, I thought it best to take advantage of the opportunity to spend part of one day there. It is a curious and unbeautiful native town. The largest one in Africa I am told, having had in former days a population of about four hundred thousand ; to-day, I believe, it is less than one hundred thousand. It is some seven miles

THE VAST SUDAN

in length and is a typical desert village very much overgrown. It is situated on the west shore of the White Nile below its junction with the Blue. In front of it flow the two streams distinctly separate, the one beautifully blue and the other of a light yellow colour. The houses are low, flat-roofed buildings of greyish sunbaked bricks mud and dull red bricks; the streets are extremely narrow, irregular and very uneven. There are open squares here and there filled with sheds of matting or grass. These squares are the "suk" or markets, where the produce of the country is offered for sale. Heaps of dried dates, well coated with sand and dirt, piles of "dhurra," a grain which is the principal food of the people, baskets of medicinal fruits and seeds, filthy-looking dark brown loaves of tamarind "bread" are among the chief articles displayed. In the streets there is much the same assortment offered, but there are strange contrasts. Side by side with the primitive foods will be a shop filled well out into the street with the blue enamel tinware of Europe; adjoining this a native boot maker with his display of bright red shoes with curious turned-up toes; or perhaps it will be a maker of silver ware who will show you remarkable samples of the most skilful handicraft. Other shops contain gaudy beads and bright-coloured prints so



In the streets of Omdurman.

A MIXED POPULATION

loved by the negro, and in these shops the ubiquitous sewing machine may be seen constantly at work. No invention of the Western world is more appreciated than the sewing machine. But above all things in Omdurman the most interesting is its population. Here we see Arabs of all shades of colour from ebony black to white. Negroes of many tribes. Mohammedans nearly all. The males in almost every case keep their heads covered, either with turbans, white or coloured, or little white caps, or the red tarboosh, and wear flowing robes draped most gracefully round their figures, or nightshirt-shaped garments. White seemed to be the prevailing colour for the men, while most of the women were draped in two-piece garments of a curious shade of soft blue.

The most conspicuous feature of Omdurman is the extraordinary number of young boys, and these same boys nearly drove me wild. I was particularly anxious to secure some good films of the street scenes, with their characteristic groups of various kinds of natives ; this is always a much more difficult task than anyone who has not tried it would believe. Even an ordinary hand camera seems to freeze people into the most unnatural attitudes with true photographic expressions, and everyone, of course, stares hard at the camera.

THE VAST SUDAN

Why, I have never been able to understand. But hand camera work cannot be compared with the difficulties that beset the unfortunate man who uses the complicated looking cinema outfit. The very sight of this strange weapon, on its still stranger-looking tripod, which has the appearance of a machine gun, with all its handles and weird-looking pieces of metal, fills everyone with excitement and curiosity. You plant such a weapon down in a street where there is a picturesque group of people with a beautiful background that you feel would make a fine picture. Before you have arranged things so that the scene is properly placed on the film, and this takes but a few seconds to do, the whole street becomes a seething mass of staring, jabbering humanity, with faces as close as they can get to the front of the camera, while the tripod legs are almost sure to be kicked apart. If you venture to turn one of the several handles you bring the excitement to fever point, and the totally unnecessary audience crowd round even closer. Gone is the beautiful background, hidden behind the crowd, and as you try in vain to drive, urge, or coax the people back you find that your temper is likely to be gone too. Now, in a cool northern place this is bad enough, but in the town of Omdurman it was far worse. First

INTERESTED SPECTATORS

of all there was the heat of the tropical sun. This kept me in a state of streaming perspiration, which ran over my eyes, smeared my glasses, so that I could not see, and generally made me wonder why I had chosen the tropics as a field of operations. Then there was the dust, which got down my throat, into my eyes and, what was still more annoying, into the camera. But worst of all was the mass of boys. There seemed to be millions of them, of all ages, from tiny tots of two or three years, up to grown lads, all possessed with the one idea of interfering with the progress of art by blocking my way, no matter which direction I turned. I tried waiting patiently, doing nothing, hoping my tormentors would move away; but if I had patience, they had more, and, anyhow, doing nothing suits their natures thoroughly. As this method did not work, it occurred to me that if I went through the motions of turning the handle and then stooped and pretended to pack up they would perhaps think I had finished and leave me in peace. Not much. I turned the handle and wasted some good film; but it only whetted their appetite for more, and they seemed to form a solemn resolve that they would never leave me so long as I remained in their town. When they thought I was making pictures

THE VAST SUDAN

they assumed the most ridiculous positions, a favourite one being the holding up of one or both arms perfectly straight above their heads and making horrid faces. Photographing charging rhino or elephant was better than this, and I wished myself miles away from the sight of a human being. In desperation I jumped into a passing carriage of sorts, camera and all, and made a bolt down the streets, scattering the mob in every direction. I directed the driver of the decrepit vehicle to make, what I fondly believed, would be a circle, but I was soon lost in a labyrinth of narrow streets, with all the mob following in a mass. After some time, during which I was nearly jolted out of the carriage, we managed to get back to our starting-point, and so did the crowd, which in the meantime had increased tremendously.

The outlook was decidedly discouraging, but I had an idea which I thought would work. Planting the camera once more on the desired spot, I arranged it so that it would cover the desired scene. Having focused it as carefully as I could under the conditions, I turned it so as to face in the opposite direction, and looked knowingly down the street. Instantly the crowd rushed in that direction. So far so good. I pretended to want them to stand in certain places

A SUCCESSFUL RUSE

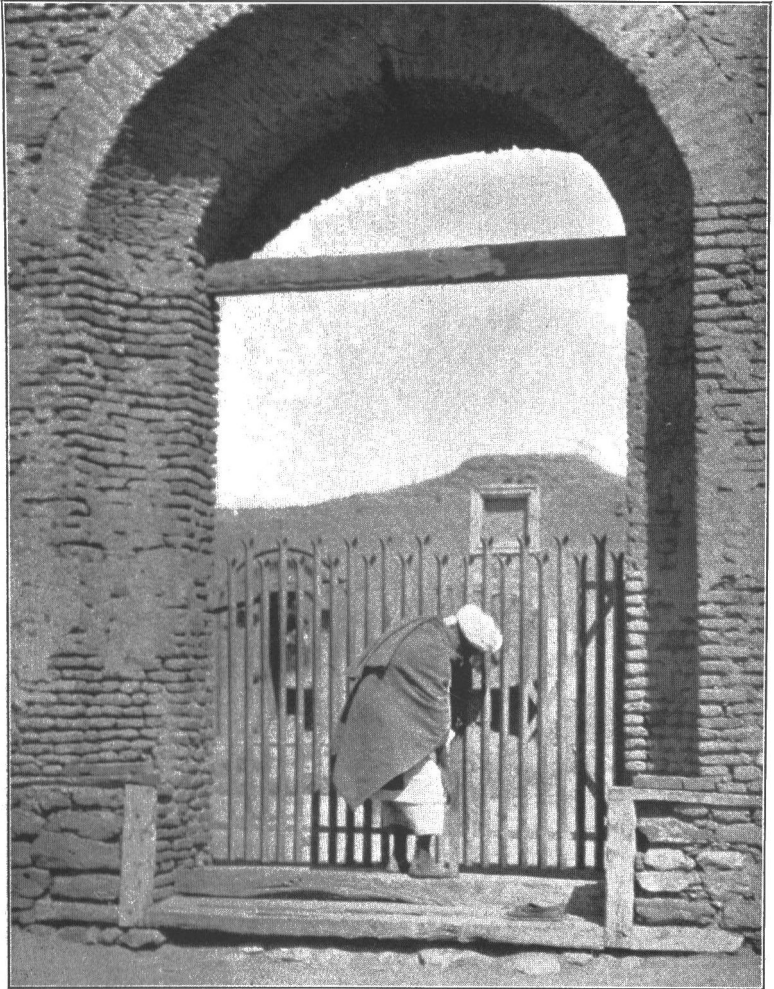
until they thought that at last I was going to photograph them. Then I made believe to examine the camera carefully, at the same time glancing frequently at the mass of expectant humanity. While examining the camera I turned it round several times, and finally had it pointing towards the scene I wanted. The back of the camera, fortunately, has a focusing device which looks very much like the lens at the front, so the change in the position of the apparatus passed unnoticed. Then, still gazing at the hundreds, or was it thousands, of black and brown faces in front of me, I started turning the handle and photographed the scene *behind* me. The ruse was eminently successful and I secured the picture I wanted. Having done so, I turned round and examined the scene, and the crowd discovered, too late, that they had been outwitted. The joke was on them and they roared with delight, for they were a very good-natured though aggravating lot. Incidentally I may remark they had learned a lesson, and the next time I tried to make a film of another street scene they divided their forces and filled the space both in front and behind. Not to be outdone, I moved the camera to a cross street. This rather upset their calculations, for it seemed to them that their number divided by four would be inadequate,

THE VAST SUDAN

so they watched me intently and kept rushing to whichever way they thought the camera was pointing. I gave them a good run for their money, and kept them on the move incessantly. The game was very amusing for a certain time, but eventually they became tired of it, so that in the end I managed to secure some fairly good pictures.

To my mind there are few subjects more difficult to make good film of than native street scenes, unless, of course, one is concealed in a building, and the above account, which is in no way exaggerated, will give an idea of the troubles one meets. The troubles are particularly noticeable in any place which is visited by tourists, and Omdurman, being so near Khartoum, is a sort of show place, and, naturally enough, nearly every visitor takes a camera there. The moving picture camera was, however, a novelty. There is an open-air cinema theatre in Khartoum, so the people realise, more or less, what the camera is for, and, just as with Europeans, they have the same childish pleasure in being, or wanting to be, "in the picture."

While making the film of the streets of Omdurman I could not help thinking of the history of the place, of all it had gone through in the past, and what a



Entrance to the tomb of the Mahdi at Omdurman.

THE MAHDI'S TOMB

change for the better had come in the few years which had elapsed since the days of the Mahdi and, still later, of the Khalifa. Not much remains to connect the bright, free to-day with the yesterday of darkness, slavery and oppression. The ruined remains of the Mahdi's empty tomb may still be seen on the eastern side of the town, and this is gradually falling apart in its walled enclosure, which is always kept locked. The native Mohammedan still has a certain respect for it, for on entering the place he always removes his footwear. The Khalifa's house, still in a good state of preservation, is opposite the tomb of the Mahdi, and in the courtyard of the house is one of the carriages in which Gordon used to drive. It seems rather a pity that it is not preserved in a suitable building as one of the few mementoes of the man whose name must always be associated with the unfortunate tragedy of his untimely and unnecessary death. But it stands there sadly neglected and inadequately sheltered from the destructive power of the sun and rain.

My brief stay of one week in Khartoum came to an end. It had been a busy time: plans had to be made, outfit overhauled and put into carrying loads, supplies ordered, and a cook and personal servant engaged, this latter being the most difficult. As

THE VAST SUDAN

soon as it became known that I wanted servants—and the news, in that strange way that is characteristic of Eastern places, seemed to have reached everyone—I was besieged by all sorts and kinds of impossible would-be cooks and “boys.” They followed me about wherever I went, telling me of their great virtues, and how they would be quite willing to come on the trip for two or three times the wages that it is customary to pay. They could see I was new to the country and therefore legitimate prey. I referred them all to the Game Warden’s department, where Captain Brocklehurst and his most obliging assistant would look them over and examine their “chits.” Needless to say, this upset their calculations, and very few of them ever risked the interview. But with all my care and past experience in employing natives, I finally engaged as personal servant a man who could only be described by the vulgar name of “wash-out,” and a perfect “wash-out” at that. If he had any redeeming feature neither I nor any of my friends ever discovered it. He rejoiced in the name of Osman Ali, but he had many other names before the trip ended. How he ever secured the splendid “chits” which were the cause of my engaging him is a mystery, and leads me to believe that there is more than one Osman Ali

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

in the Sudan. The cook, a very handsome Arab, proved most satisfactory in all ways but one. To his mind there was but a single way to cook chickens, and, as chickens were my chief article of diet for several months, I had to make him understand that a change of method was highly desirable. It sounds easy to do this, but we had no language in common. Osman, who said he knew English very well, but was shy about using it, proved himself a trifle inaccurate. He may perhaps have known twenty-five *words* of English, but they seldom meant what he imagined they did. His favourite remark was "All right," and that usually meant that he had not the slightest idea what I was talking about. The cook professed to know a little of the language; actually he really did know and understand perhaps twenty words. But it was most unfortunate that none of these words had anything to do with cooking a chicken in the ways I wanted.

On the morning of February 6th I embarked on the post-boat which was to carry me for at least a part of the trip south. These steamers are narrow, stern wheelers, and very comfortable. They are fitted, of course, with electric light, fans, and mosquito-proof sleeping enclosures. Being not only narrow but very high, so that the cabins may be cool and clear of the

THE VAST SUDAN

engines and crew, they have to take with them barges, secured on either one or both sides, in order to prevent their turning over. Violent wind storms come on with such suddenness that it is necessary to take this precaution. These barges are used to carry the greater part of the cargo and supply of wood fuel. A steamer out there may be said to be elastic in point of size ; she is enlarged by means of the barges. Little or no cargo, one barge ; more cargo, a barge on each side ; still more cargo, a barge is placed in front of the steamer and pushed, and so on, up to five or six of these flat-bottomed barges, some of which are "two stories" and fitted to carry second or third class passengers, while as a rule only first class are carried on the steamers themselves. All these craft must be of extremely light draught, for the Nile at low water is very shallow in parts, and any vessel drawing over three feet would be useless. These steamers when surrounded by their barges always remind me of a duck with her young.

Leaving Khartoum and the crowd of white-robed natives who usually come to see the steamer off, we passed on down the Blue Nile and stopped a short time at Omdurman, and then proceeded on the southward journey up the White Nile, passing Gordon's tree

ON THE NILE

after the first few miles. There was very little of beauty in the landscape that unfolded itself as we moved with fair speed against the current. The river was wide, perhaps more than a mile in parts, and the banks flat, sandy, treeless and very dreary. The only signs of life were the cattle—camels, goats and sheep—and the occasional groups of natives. Later, as the miles were passed, small villages appeared, their grass-roofed huts blending in with the general colour of the country. El-Dueim was the next stopping-place, a little more than a hundred miles from Khartoum. There was the usual assortment of native huts, the “suk” or market, and also the loads of gum brought down from Kordofan for shipment. The surrounding country was more or less covered with thorn trees, so that from the steamer the banks were far less dreary than what we had seen throughout the day. Also there were large flocks of water-fowl, chiefly spurwing geese, spoonbills and a few cranes and herons, but no crocodile. This surprised me, for I had always imagined that every sand-bar or mud-flat would be covered with them. From the way in which the natives bathed in the river it was evident that my ideas were entirely wrong.

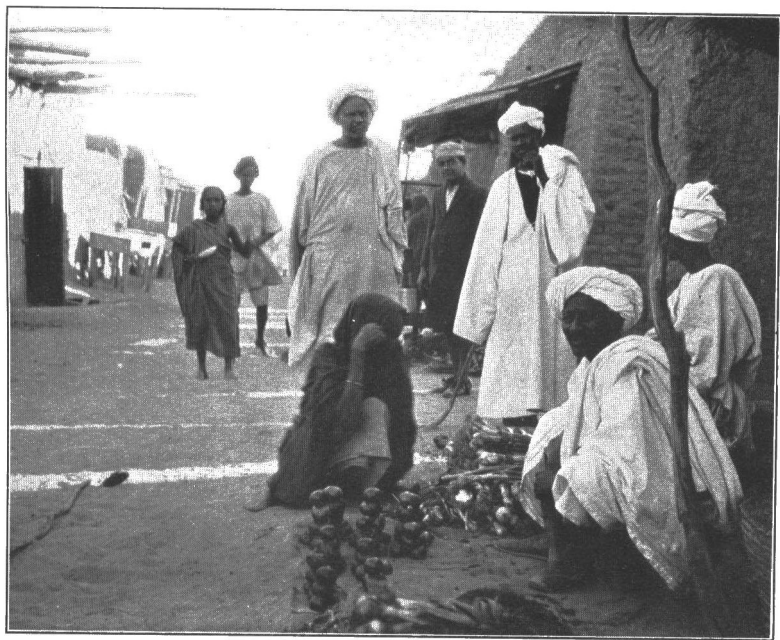
During the night there was the usual disturbance of taking wood on board, for a noisier performance

THE VAST SUDAN

could scarcely be imagined. The steamers have to rely entirely on wood for fuel, and consequently must make many stops on the long journey to and from Rejaf. The drain on the country for the purpose of supplying the steamers is greater than the nature of the land will stand, and the situation is very serious. Whole areas are becoming deforested, and as the months go by, the wood has to be brought from places farther and farther from the river. I understand that steps are being taken now for afforestation. It is late in the day, as it will be a long time before the newly-planted trees will attain sufficient growth to be of any value. The cutting, carrying and loading up of the firewood gives employment to a great number of people, and also is a source of revenue to the different provinces. But it is not adding to the beauty or attractiveness of the Nile country.*

It was afternoon on the third day when we arrived at Kosti, quite one of the hottest places I have ever visited. When I ventured ashore in the early afternoon everybody seemed to be asleep. Curled up in any sort of shaded place were white draped-figures, or very scantily attired black men, lost in the land of dreams.

* It is probable that in the near future the fuel problem will be solved by making carbon from the papyrus sudd.



Onion sellers in the streets of Kosti.

KOSTI

Usually their faces were covered to keep the flies away, but it struck me as being too hot even for flies, for they too seemed asleep. Without the people the place was uninteresting, so I returned to the steamer, where I could enjoy what little breeze there was, and later made another trip ashore. It was not unlike a very small edition of Omdurman—the same sort of shops and shapeless buildings, the same dust, only more of it, the same odour of the East, and the people were for the most part much the same, except that here one saw the Dinka, a tall, rather well-built lot of black men from the more southerly regions of the Nile. They are a lazy lot as a rule, disliking work and inclined to look down with disdain on those who indulge in manual labour.

As it was impossible to finish the unloading of cargo before dark, we were compelled to remain at Kosti all night, owing to the fact that the railway bridge, which crosses the river a few miles south of Kosti, does not open to let steamers through after sunset. It was a hot night, with not a breath of wind to afford relief, and we were all glad when daylight came and we were able to start on our way. After passing through the bridge the river became far more interesting; not only was it for the most part much

THE VAST SUDAN

narrower, but the vast numbers of birds gave life to the scenes. On every sand-bar and island there were great flocks of geese, both spurwing and Egyptian, whistling teal, handsome crested cranes and demoiselles, black and white storks, herons of several species, egret, spoonbills, ibis, marabou, pelican and a variety of smaller birds, such as ruff, plover, stilts and others; and to add to the picture, and make it more what one expected of the Nile, there were great crocodiles basking in the sun, with their yellow mouths always open. The patch of bright colour makes them very conspicuous; they appeared to be asleep, but actually were keenly alert, for on the approach of the steamer they glided quickly into the protecting water. They knew from experience that danger lurked in the puffing craft; men armed with powerful rifles were on the look-out for them, for they are the only creatures that may be shot from the steamers.

Time was when so-called sportsmen kept up a perpetual blazing of shot-gun and rifle from the upper deck of moving vessels. Anything that was not within range of the shot-gun was fired at with a rifle. Birds were killed or wounded and left where they fell, and the same was true of animals. Game that ventured near the shore paid the price. Hippopotamus dared

BIRDS AND ANIMALS

not show their heads above water for fear of the bullet. It was a strange and very perverted idea of sport, and one that had absolutely nothing to recommend it. Not by any stretch of the imagination could it be considered sport. No skill was required, except that of holding the rifle straight—no stalking, no knowledge of the habits of the animals, and there was no danger or risk to the “sportsman.” Altogether a one-sided game without a single feature to redeem it. The greatest pleasure and interest in a trip on the Nile is the bird and animal life that is to be found along its shores.

Probably no other river navigable for steamers for any great distance can offer such a picture of the wild creatures; other rivers might have grander scenery, but the bird and animal life of the Upper Nile is, I believe, unique; and yet all this was threatened by those few thoughtless, or selfish, persons who would destroy this wonderful panorama of natural history for the sordid gratification of making a “good shot.” Fortunately the authorities at Khartoum have taken the matter in hand, and at first made the firing of a shot at anything from a steamer illegal. This seemed the only really effective means of putting a stop to the practice, for if a man was allowed to use fire-arms who was to say what he was firing at. It happened,

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by bad luck, at the time when there was a controversy on the subject that a steamer ran ashore on a sand-bar in the Upper Nile. The crew had to get into the shallow water to run out kedge anchors in order to warp her off. Unfortunately, one or two, I forget which, were taken by crocodiles. This gave material for those who were against the new order, and they pointed out that crocodiles could only be protected at the cost of human lives. Against this argument little could be said, and so in February of this year, steamboat engineers, who really command the boats, were given discretionary powers to allow or forbid the shooting of these creatures. If they considered that shooting was a cause of annoyance or danger to other passengers, or that there was risk to the natives, or their cattle, on shore, they could forbid it; but in any event a licence was necessary, and there are few people who are willing to put their hands in their pockets to satisfy their desire to do this sort of shooting. Their wish to save human lives is not as great as they imagine.

In the past a certain type of man used to do his "shoot" without leaving the comfortably shaded deck of the steamer. Seated there with a cool drink at his elbow, reading a novel, he would have his gun-bearer

GAME PRESERVATION

keep a look-out and report the presence of any game. If and when it was within range the noble sportsman would shoot. It was all delightfully simple, and so very safe. Thank goodness, that has been stopped, and we may hope that the game will gradually learn that they have nothing to fear from the passing steamer, and will, by staying near the shore, give pleasure to those who like to see animals in all the beauty of their natural life and surroundings. The number of people who derive the keenest enjoyment from such sights is steadily on the increase. A wild animal is no longer considered solely as something to be killed, it is something that when alive adds immeasurably to the beauty of the country, and gives pleasure not only to the naturalist, but to every healthy-minded person, regardless of age or sex.

It was rather a surprise to me that the birds were not more tame. They usually took flight long before we were within shot-gun range, showing clearly what they had experienced in the past. With the hippo it was even more noticeable ; we saw a fair number, but they were extremely shy, seldom exposing more than the eyes and nose as they came up to breathe and look about, and when the steamer was within a couple of hundred yards or so the great heads would

THE VAST SUDAN

disappear silently and without a ripple on the smooth surface of the water. Now and then one who happened to be filled with curiosity would put his head up at close quarters, but a very brief glance at the noisy steamer would satisfy him that danger might be there, and the hasty disappearance was usually very amusing ; a huge splash, with sometimes the greater part of the body showing and down he would go, to appear again far astern of the boat for a final look. No unnecessary chances were taken, for they had in the days gone by been the favourite target for the deck-chair sportsman. That they were no longer fired at seemed to surprise them. A steamer and rifle shots were the inevitable combination ; but now, though the steamer continued to disturb their slumbers at irregular intervals, there were no shots to dodge, no wake of wounded or killed companions. It will take time for them to adjust themselves to this new condition of life, but eventually they will dissociate the appearance of the steamer with death, and will, perhaps, allow passengers to have a closer view of their peculiar type of beauty.

The country through which we were making our way appeared to be fairly well wooded, chiefly with thorn trees, but the land was still flat and dry. Little



Dinka canoe made of ambach.

THE SHILLUK TRIBE

or no cultivation was to be seen and few native villages. The chief interest was centred in the bird and animal life, without which it must be very dreary. On the third day from Kosti we saw a small herd of water-buck. They were very shy, and trotted off into the thick grass while we were still several hundred yards away.

On the seventh day since starting, when we were about four hundred miles south of Khartoum, we entered the country of the Shilluk, a curious, warlike tribe of fine appearance and conspicuous for the remarkable way in which the men do their hair. Years of patient training are devoted to this characteristic adornment. The hair, or wool, is made to grow like a piece of felt, about half an inch thick, which projects from the head perhaps eight or nine inches; this flat mass is curved in a graceful way, and gives the appearance of the brim of a large felt hat rising high above the forehead. The size of this coiffure is a matter of great pride among the men, who are willing to sacrifice their comfort to satisfy their vanity. In sleeping a block of wood is placed under the neck to prevent the hair being damaged. Needless to say, carrying loads on their heads is not done, in fact all forms of work are unpopular with the men of this

THE VAST SUDAN

tribe. Later on I saw a good deal of them, and will therefore leave any further description of this strange tribe till then. We passed many of their villages of grass-thatched huts, and saw their skill in handling their dug-out canoes, which are made of the trunks of palm trees, very narrow and varying in length from eight to perhaps twenty feet. Also their frail craft of ambach. These are made by lashing together the tapered stems of the ambach tree, so that the bow is pointed, with an outward curve. These small trees grow in the water on the edge of the Nile and the wood is of extraordinary buoyancy. The canoes made of this material are adapted only to people who do not indulge in clothing, for though buoyant, the amount of material used is not sufficient to keep them above water when occupied by one or more persons; frequently the little craft is completely under water except for the bow. Bailing is not necessary, for there is no attempt made to make them watertight. In a river where hippo and crocodiles are numerous these canoes do not impress one as being possessed of a very great margin of safety, and it is surprising that there are not more accidents in them.

On arriving at Kodok, on the thirteenth of the month, I was interested to learn that it was the famous



A Shilluk selling bottles of oil.

KODOK

Fashoda, the occupation of which by Major Marchand in 1898 had caused such strained relations between England and France. Probably with the idea of obliterating the memory of that unfortunate event the name has been changed. There is nothing now remaining of Marchand's house, nothing, at least, but a few bricks strewn about the ground. To-day the chief interest in the place is that it is the headquarters of the Shilluk tribe and the residence of their king. On the river edge below the landing there is a stretch of swamp bordered by a sand-bar where there was the largest flock of ruffs I have ever seen. The ground looked as though it was covered with grey stones, which from where I stood seemed to be moving. On closer approach they proved to be ruffs, thousands and thousands of them ; as they took flight it sounded as though a great squall of wind was passing. While at Kodok I heard accounts of the remarkable dances of the Shilluks, and determined if possible to see them on my return trip. At present my plans admitted of no delay, and I was in a hurry to get to Malakal, the headquarters of the Governor of the Upper Nile Province. There I was to receive information about a sailing dhow I wanted to try, and also about my intended trip to Talodi, in the Nuba Mountains.

THE VAST SUDAN

On arriving at Malakal I was received by the Deputy Governor, with the information that I should proceed by the post-boat to Tonga, where I would find the Governor, also that my dhow would be found waiting for me. It was only a few hours' journey to Tonga, and a more desolate, unprepossessing place I have never seen. It did not seem to possess a single redeeming feature—absolutely flat, treeless, hot and with an abundance of mosquitoes. Its only excuse for existence was that it was the starting-point of the road into the Nuba Mountains. I found my dhow moored alongside the bank, a strange-looking craft, about as broad as she was long, with an immense lateen gaff and short, thick mast. For my comfort she was fitted with a thatched shelter over the aft half. It did not take long to transfer my outfit on board, after which I lunched with the Governor and his wife on their steamer, and immediately after my boat was taken in tow and I was very kindly conveyed to a place on the Bahr el Zeraf, where they told me there were great numbers of water-buck and tiang (a sort of hartebeest). On the way up the river, which is really a branch of the White Nile, I saw a fair number of birds, and for the first time had an opportunity of observing the fish eagle, one of the most strikingly

ANIMAL PHOTOGRAPHY

beautiful birds of the country, also a number of guinea fowl, herons and various other birds. The river itself was narrow and crooked, its banks lined with masses of the beautiful feathery papyrus, back of which were trees as far as the eye could reach, and, best of all, in a swampy khor, or river course, there were the water-buck, the first large herd of animals I had seen in the country.

As it was late in the afternoon when my boat was secured against the bank there was no chance of any photographic work. The only thing to do was to look over the country and select a suitable site for my blind or hiding-place. The water-buck, not liking my appearance, made off as fast as they could. This left me free to examine the ground and select my position. A small thorn tree was found near where the animals were evidently accustomed to feed; under its scanty shade my blind was built of branches and grass, and everything made ready for work. By the time this was accomplished the sun had set, so I returned to the boat. With the coming darkness the hum of mosquitoes warned me that my meal must be eaten with all possible speed, and that I must seek the shelter of the mosquito net with which my bed was covered. It seemed to me that I had never seen or

THE VAST SUDAN

heard so many of these pests, but I was to discover before many days that this was only a mild example of what the country could furnish. As I lay in bed a couple of lions serenaded me with their weird calls, and it made me feel that I was really back in Africa.

Long before daylight I routed out the men, had a hurried breakfast, and started with the day's supply of cinema cameras. As I approached the blind in the soft light of early morning dim, ghostly figures could be seen moving away from the neighbourhood of my hiding-place. They appeared to be water-buck, and I wondered if they would come back. Conditions seemed promising, and I made myself as comfortable as the conditions would allow, with the camera ready for whatever might come my way. The morning passed slowly, a light breeze made the heat bearable, but the flies nearly drove me mad. They were small flies, but there were thousands of them, and they possessed what can only be described as adhesive qualities—they simply stuck wherever they chanced to land. Killing them was easy enough, but it had no effect on their numbers; and when the breeze died away shortly after noon and the heat became almost unbearable the perspiration streamed down my face and hands, and the flies, nothing daunted, slid down

WATER-BUCK

with the stream into my eyes and my mouth. Life was made absolutely miserable by the tiny pests.

About the middle of the afternoon a herd of water-buck appeared in the distance. They were feeding along very slowly in my direction. At the rate at which they were coming it would take seven or eight hours for them to reach my hiding-place. However, I hoped for the best, as I wiped the flies from my face. By five o'clock the animals were about five hundred yards away, and there they stopped. The height of the grass prevented my seeing them properly, but from their actions I judged they were near water. If so, I had chosen the wrong place for my blind, and yet the ground in front of me was cut up like a barn-yard by the hoofs of both water-buck and what I believed to be tiang. With the whole country to choose from it is always a most difficult thing to settle on *the* place. So many conditions have to be considered. First of all, whether it is a place to which the animals are attracted either by food, water, shade, or such a thing as a "salt lick." This one decides by the tracks. Then the question of background must be taken into account, as it often means the difference between a picture in the correct sense and what would be merely

THE VAST SUDAN

a photograph of animals. The direction of the light is also important, and to secure the best lighting one must know the time of day when the animals would be most likely to come to that particular place. Experience alone tells that. But, when all is said, the question of the direction of the wind is the most vital. No animal will come to a place, no matter how great the attraction may be, if he gets the scent of a human being, and even with the lightest breeze they can smell a person nearly half a mile away. So the blind must be built not only down wind of the attractive spot, whether it is water-hole or feeding place, but also down wind of the track taken by the animals in approaching. This sounds easy enough, until it is realised that in their cleverness they usually approach such a place up wind. The site for the actual blind must be selected with care. A hut-like structure of grass, however carefully made, so that it will completely conceal the person, is of little use if it makes a conspicuous spot in a bare landscape. The best blind is one made by bending down the branches of a tree, so that a screen is formed. To this grass or leaf-covered branches may be added to give it the necessary denseness. But whatever is used it must correspond with the surrounding vegetation.

WATER-BUCK

In other words, it must not be conspicuous. The whole work requires care and experience. I knew a man who built a beautiful stone house, with well-thatched roof, near a likely water-hole, and he was quite surprised that the animals would not come within several hundred yards of it. He told me naively that he could not understand it, "as he was absolutely hidden." He was, but his blind was not, and the one is about as important as the other. But to return to the water-buck.

There was evidently no chance of my obtaining any photographs of them for this day, at any rate. The light was becoming both yellow and weak, while the flies retained their full vigour. In despair I decided to return to the boat, but it was necessary that the animals should not see me leaving the blind, for they would then connect it with their enemy, man, and would give the place a wide berth. So I crawled out, and did not show myself until I was some distance away.

The following morning I was back at my hiding-place long before daylight. As on the previous day, the morning passed without my seeing anything, but about one o'clock I observed several water-buck moving among the trees in front of me and only three

THE VAST SUDAN

or four hundred yards away. They were feeding slowly in my direction, and though the sun was rather high for effective pictures, I was greatly excited at the prospect of securing film of the beautiful creatures, for it seemed certain that they would come within range of my cameras. Already they were appearing outside the belt of trees and scrub, and at the rate at which they were moving it would be only a matter of half an hour or so before they would be near enough ; but suddenly I saw them all look up in a startled way. Instinctively I knew that people were in sight, and sure enough there were seven or eight Dinkas coming directly towards me. When I looked back to see what the animals were doing they had all disappeared. It was very aggravating, but it was one of those things which so often happen to the wretched camera man. If natives appear on the scene it is always at the wrong moment. Such at least has been my experience. These Dinkas, without knowing that I was there, came straight to my tree, evidently with the idea of taking a rest in the shade. Their surprise at seeing the long shining lenses protruding through the grass and then of seeing me was most amusing. At first they showed signs of fear, but when I offered them some cigarettes they became most



Water-buck.

DINKAS

friendly, and jabbered away at a great rate. In vain I tried to make them realise that I could not understand a word of their language. The cameras were things of mystery to them, and were regarded with great suspicion. I would have liked to make some photographs of the fine-looking men, but unfortunately they were absolutely devoid of clothing, so that any film would have been quite useless, as our peculiar ideas of modesty forbid such films to be shown. While the men were still with me several water-buck came in sight several hundred yards away, and then there was great excitement. By easily-understood signs I was informed that some meat would be much relished. The men pointed their spears at the animals and pretended to shoot, then rubbed their stomachs and smacked their lips, all the time talking incessantly. I showed them that I had no rifle with me, and that shooting, therefore, was out of the question. They then pointed to where the dhow lay, and made me understand that they would go there and bring my rifle. Of course, I could not explain that any shooting would spoil all chances of my making photographs. What they thought of me I cannot say. My strange behaviour was put down, I presume, to the peculiar ways of the white man. When they all sat down on

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their heels my heart sank : time means nothing to such people, and they might stay there for the rest of the day. Eventually, however, I made it clear that I wanted them to depart, and at last I was left in peace. But luck was against me, and the day passed without my using my cameras.

Towards evening I decided to take a look at the place where the water-buck had stopped the previous afternoon, and see whether it would not be better to move my blind. I found, as I expected, a small pond, the banks of which were well stamped down by animals' feet. It appeared to be a most likely place, so I lost no time in building a suitable blind about forty yards from the edge of the water. By the time this was completed it was dark, and I returned to the boat and hoped that the morrow, which was to be my last day here, would prove more successful.

As on the previous mornings I breakfasted in the dark and was in my new blind before daylight, and within an hour or so of sunrise my first visitors arrived, a pelican and a white heron. It did not take long to make a film of them ; a little later a small flock of stilts came to the pool. From where I was they were too far off, as they are small birds, and consequently the camera must be near them, so after taking a careful

ORIBI

look about to see that no animals were in sight I left the blind and made my way with due caution towards the birds. While in the act of turning the handle of the cinema camera I noticed a little oribi coming silently through the grass scarcely a hundred yards away. It was very doubtful whether I could get back to my blind without being seen, but eventually this was accomplished by my moving only when the little creature had his head down. On he came to the edge of the pool and was photographed. Soon his mate appeared, and I made a film of them both together. This was a satisfactory start, and it filled me with hope that more luck was in store. Occasionally one has a day when everything goes right and numerous photographs are made, but unfortunately such days are quite the exception. In a five months' trip in Kenya I have had four or five completely successful days and thought myself in luck.

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon when, to my delight, the water-buck could be seen in the distance, coming to pay their regular daily visit to the khor. While watching them, filled with hope of what might happen before evening, I was astonished to see a kite perch on my hiding-place not more than eight or nine feet away and directly over my head.

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Here was something to photograph, so I tilted up the camera and made some film, to the great surprise of the bird, who stared down at the strange instrument for quite a long time before taking fright and flying away.

In the meantime the animals were steadily approaching. Nearer and nearer they came until they were perhaps two hundred yards away, the finest herd of water-buck I had ever seen, numbering about seventy-five altogether, and among them were some unusually fine bucks carrying splendid horns. Behind them another lot of animals appeared from the thick growth of low bushes. At first I was rather puzzled as to what they were, but soon recognised them as tiang, a fair-sized herd of about sixty or seventy. My excitement at seeing this large number of animals may be well imagined. I had come here hoping to find them, and there they were ; a trifle far away, it is true, but there was every reason to expect that they would come within close range. To make sure of them I made some film with my longest focus lens, and then waited patiently for developments. For an hour or more they came scarcely any nearer, but at last an old buck headed towards the pool ; apparently he wished to see that all was safe, for he came very

WATER-BUCK

slowly and did not feed. After a careful scrutiny of the surroundings he seemed satisfied that all was safe, and began feeding on the short grass not far from the water. To have frightened him would have been fatal, so I remained absolutely still, and soon the remainder of the herd moved in my direction. The moment I had longed for and waited for, under the very trying conditions of heat and flies, had come. Again and again I examined the cameras to see that everything was in perfect working order, and at last, when the beautiful creatures were well grouped and in the direction which made the soft sunlight most effective, I began turning the handle, very gently at first for fear the sound would alarm the herd, and then at normal speed. Foot after foot of film was exposed until a complete reel of four hundred feet had been used. It was a wonderful opportunity, the best I have ever had, for the animals behaved as though they knew exactly what I wanted. They seemed actually to pose for me. Some would lie down, which showed conclusively how completely unsuspecting they were. Several of the finest bucks displayed their graceful horns as though for my especial benefit. Some tiang, for they were mingling with the water-buck, indulged in good-natured fights, and the striking of their curious

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horns was the only sound, save the noise made by the camera, that disturbed the quiet of the afternoon. For fear that any accident might happen to the one reel of film I decided to expose another one. It was nervous work changing film boxes, as it is difficult to do it without making some noise, and the flies buzzing about my eyes and in my mouth made the task all the more difficult. In the end, however, I succeeded in reloading and in exposing the second reel. The nearest animals were not more than forty or fifty yards away, so that I was able to make really satisfactory pictures. Such an opportunity was beyond my wildest expectations, and I need scarcely say that I felt thoroughly happy and at peace with all the world, except, of course, the wretched flies.

To make a good finish to the film I wanted the water-buck and tiang to run away. In the hope of accomplishing this I shouted to them, but they scarcely looked up. I kicked the empty fibre camera boxes with no better results. This is what might be called the "cussedness" of things. Had I made the slightest noise accidentally *before* the pictures had been made every animal would have bolted without a moment's hesitation, but now, because I wished them to be frightened, they paid not the least attention. I had



Water-buck and Tiang.

DRIFTING ON THE WHITE NILE

to keep one hand on the turning handle, to be ready to start the film the very instant they began to run, so I had only the one hand free. With that I threw out of the opening, through which the lens protruded, a large red cloth, and even this did not really frighten the creatures. Still, they thought that something was wrong, and as I shouted they finally condescended to move off, but in a very leisurely manner, instead of with a great rush as I had hoped. However, I had nothing to complain of, and I thought while packing up my outfit how very kind Fortune had been to me.

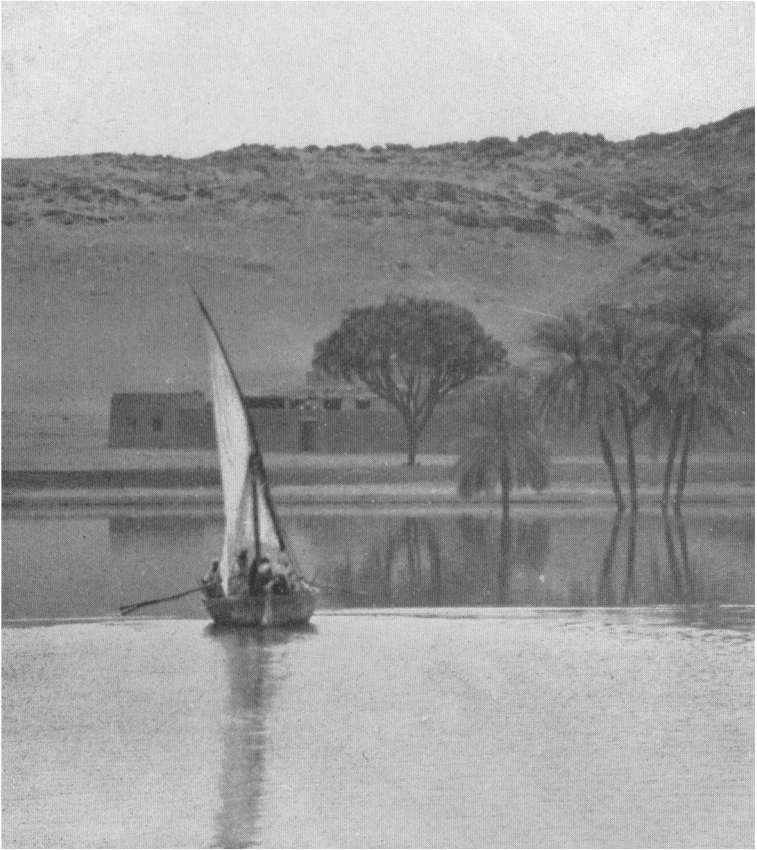
It was necessary for me to get back to Tonga the following day, as a car was to take me up to Talodi, where the Governors of the Southern Provinces were to meet for an Empire Day celebration, and there was to be a great meeting of the Arabs, which I particularly wanted to see and photograph. To get back to Tonga with my sailing dhow I should require a fair wind, but the prevailing wind, when there was any during the day, was north, directly against me, till I got clear of the Bahr-el Zaref. At night it was usually calm, so I decided to start immediately after the sun had set and drift downstream to the White Nile, tie up there, and wait for the morning breeze. It is easy to

THE VAST SUDAN

make plans, but when one of the component parts of the plan happens to be a Nile dhow the carrying out of those plans is in the hands of the gods. Man has apparently but little to say in the matter.

As soon as my camera outfit had been brought on board and stowed away we cast off from the shore, for the breeze had gone completely. A more perfect evening I have never known. To the west the sky was still glowing with the warm colouring of the sun that had vanished some time before; to the east the full moon, faintly yellow in its brilliance, was clearing the dark horizon. Its beauty was reflected, unbroken, in the still water. Not a sound disturbed the silence of night except the occasional talking of the crew. The dhow, sailless and powerless, was attached to a large mass of "sud" which for some magic reason kept her in midstream.

As I sat at the stern of the boat enjoying my delicious Abyssinian coffee and the accompanying cigarette and with the comfortable feeling of having had a most successful day, I was filled with contentment and quite at peace with the world. As the moon rose higher with the passing of the hours it bathed the country in its bright soft light. Everything was made beautiful by its enchantment. Trees which by



Evening on the Nile.

PEACE

daylight were uninteresting were now something to wonder at ; strange forms were revealed, strange values of colours, and above all, dominating the whole scene, was the peaceful silence. Slowly, and so very quietly, the land of mystery passed, constantly changing its outline : now the foreground was of sturdy pampas grass, with its pale plumes touched by the moonlight ; again masses of the feathery papyrus, so soft and delicate against the sky ; then vine-covered trees overhanging the water and reflected darkly in the rippleless surface. Sometimes the strange calls of the roosting birds, disturbed by the passing boat, broke the almost overwhelming silence of the night. The scintillating light of myriads of fireflies added to the beauty of the scene. It was all so wonderful that words seem totally inadequate to describe it.

What a contrast to the glare and turmoil of our London streets ! It was another world altogether. It seemed wrong to go to bed and leave all this beauty ; but sleep was necessary, for I had been up since four o'clock that morning, and I had had a day of keen excitement, so shortly before midnight I turned in, to dream of the handsome water-buck whose latent images were hidden on the hundreds of feet of film

THE VAST SUDAN

so carefully packed away. My sleep was disturbed a few hours later when the crew made the dhow fast to the bank at the mouth of the river, where we must wait till the morning breeze came to take us to our destination.

It was nearly eight o'clock before the ripple on the water proclaimed the arrival of the wind, and we discovered to our dismay that it came from the wrong direction. Instead of a fair wind we would have it on the beam. I had never done any sailing in a dhow, and I trust sincerely that I shall never have to do it again, for if ever a boat was designed *not* to sail it is the dhow of the Nile. This boat of mine was nearly round and drew very little water, and apparently was innocent of any suggestion of a keel. She carried a lateen sail, which towered, I should say, full forty or fifty feet above the half-decked hull. The gaff was made of a number of odd pieces of spars and sticks spliced together with scraps of rope and hoop-iron, and the immense sail was of very heavy cotton canvas, covered with innumerable patches. Steering was accomplished more or less, chiefly less, by means of a gigantic rudder and a queer-shaped tiller of great weight and curious form. In fact, the entire craft was really most picturesque—that and the roominess

HARD AGROUND

were her only virtues. Her sailing qualities simply did not exist. If the wind was directly behind her she moved along at a fair speed, but if the wind was in any other direction she still showed a marked determination to go in the direction the wind blew, utterly regardless of the way the bow pointed, all of which I learned by sad experience.

It happened that after we came to the first bend in the river, and it bends frequently, we struck a beam wind, and it was blowing with rapidly increasing force. Had we been on the weather side of the river we might, perhaps, have been able to reach the next bend. This, however, is only a question of surmise, and anyhow the Arab apparently does not worry his handsome head about such trifles. Time is of little value, and it is easier to tie up to the bank than sail, so why should he bother himself by looking ahead. We were close to the lee bank when we came to the bend, and without wasting any unnecessary time we barged heavily into its grassy side. In vain did the crew try to push her off with long poles. She was a very clumsy craft, and if they did succeed in getting away from shore, the moment the sail filled back she went with a wonderful determination. With a delightful lack of imagination and originality, this operation was

THE VAST SUDAN

repeated many dozens of times and always with exactly the same result.

Time was going, and the wind had increased to half a gale. The chances of reaching Tonga that night, or at all, seemed unpleasantly remote, and it looked as though all my plans would be upset. I urged the captain and crew to greater efforts. This was an unfortunate move on my part, and showed my lack of knowledge of the people and their ways. If they go at their own speed, I should say *lack* of speed, they will sometimes do things correctly, but when hurried they do everything wrong, and that is what they now proceeded to do. The heavy but still picturesque craft was pushed clear of the bank; but two of the men on one side used their strength to such effect that the bow was swung round until the wind caught the huge sail on the wrong side with such a blast that the boat listed over in an alarming way, and before anything could be done to prevent it simply flew *sideways* towards the shore and struck with such terrific force that the tall gaff smashed in a dozen places and the heavy sail came tumbling down, a tangled mass of flapping canvas, and thrashed about in a dangerous way, with a noise resembling the firing of guns. It was fortunate that the bank was bordered

A STORM

by a broad belt of reeds and papyrus, otherwise our condition would have been serious. As it was, beyond the fact that we were completely crippled we were perfectly safe, but Tonga was on the other side of the river up stream and many miles away ; the water was too deep to allow of poling, and the swamp, against which we were adhering in such an affectionate way, was too deep to wade through, so the shore, though not far off, was inaccessible. Altogether we were in a most awkward predicament. If only we had a small boat which could be rowed all would have been well, but we had not. After the sail had been unbent and put away, the crew, with delightful equanimity and implicit trust in Fate, were quite willing to go to sleep. They had done all they could, in fact they had worked *too* hard. The results had not been highly successful, but there was now nothing to do about it. Therefore, why not make the best of things and sleep.

After much difficulty I made the captain understand that he must send a man up the river to Tonga by the first native canoe that passed. But it was several hours before one came near. Eventually, however, a couple of Dinkas came along in a narrow dug-out and took the man who carried with him an S.O.S. letter. The rest of the day passed very slowly,

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there was absolutely nothing to do but wait patiently for some result from the letter. About sunset, when the wind had died down and the heat was intense, I thought a bath would add to my comfort, and gave orders for it to be placed on the after deck. When it was ready I undressed and was about to step into it, but I was greeted by an alarming noise as ten thousand million (I did not have time to count them, but feel sure that that was about the number) mosquitoes came from the swamp. Never have I seen or heard so many of these pests. They were small, but they made up for their diminutive size by their abnormal voracity. I was threatened with the awful fate of being eaten alive. There was nothing to do but bolt, and I ignominiously fled to my bed and the protection of the mosquito net. Later I ate my dinner there, and then settled down to sleep, thoroughly discouraged that no results had come from my note.

About eleven o'clock the faint and welcome sound of a coming steamer awakened me, and I jumped out of bed. Fortunately a cool night breeze had driven most of the mosquitoes back to the shelter of the swamp. The steamer was in view, her red and green sidelights and the dark column of spark-filled smoke made a cheerful sight. The question of whether she

RESCUE

was coming for us was answered by her long, piercing whistle. The S.O.S. had produced help, and I would be able to reach Tonga in time to start inland in the morning, if all went well. The steamer turned and drew in close to the bank astern of us, and my messenger, standing on the rail, became so excited, as he explained how successful he had been in bringing help, that he lost his balance and tumbled into the river with a mighty splash, to the immense amusement of the crew. There are crocodiles in these waters, and I have never seen a man climb up the side of a vessel with greater speed than was displayed by the successful messenger. Little time was lost in making fast to the side of the steamer and we were soon heading up stream, to my great relief.

At Tonga news of my mishap had resulted in everything being made ready for my departure immediately after breakfast. The motor lorry was brought to the landing-place, and as soon as it was loaded up with my outfit we started on our hundred mile run to Talodi. Our first stop was for water, at a swamp an hour or so from Tonga. It was still quite early when we arrived there, and a more extraordinary sight I have seldom seen. The swamp, which was a few hundred yards long and perhaps

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two hundred yards wide, was occupied by thousands of birds, chiefly marabou storks, who strutted about in their strange, dignified manner. There were several species of herons, egrets and cranes and smaller waders. It was a wonderful opportunity for photography, but I was working against time and must reach my destination as quickly as possible, so I did not even take out the camera. On my return I made up my mind to spend a few hours at the swamp and make some film of the interesting scene.

For some miles the country, though very dry, was well wooded and in places quite beautiful. Guinea fowl and spur fowl were abundant, also birds of the smaller kinds, but animals were very scarce. A few wart-hog, some red hussar monkeys and the occasional distant glimpse of a small gazelle, and that was all. It was very disappointing, as I had expected to see game fairly numerous. Up to the time we reached Eliri, which is the half-way station, the country was more or less level and uninhabited, but after that there were numerous villages, and hills, rocky and bare, relieved the monotony; but the heat was so intense that I could not derive much pleasure from whatever beauty there may have been. To add to the discomfort we ran through swarms of locusts. Every

DESERT

tree was stripped bare of its scant foliage, and in place of the leaves millions of locusts clung to the branches in solid masses. As the car came near they would all take flight in great clouds, the purple or rather magenta colour of their wings giving a curious effect. They usually flew across the road in front of the car, many of them striking our faces and tops with unpleasant force, so that frequently the driver would have to all but stop in order to protect his eyes.

About three o'clock we arrived at Talodi, the headquarters of the administration for the Nuba Mountains Province. Everywhere on the flat, sandy, desert-like land at the foot of the high, rocky hills, there were Arab encampments, and great numbers of their horses tethered to the scanty low bushes. To most of the horses a motor-car was a decided novelty, and apparently it was something of which to be afraid. The result was that we left a trail of galloping horses, who to add to their terror were dragging bushes behind them, stirring up clouds of dust that could scarcely have been appreciated by the campers.

My first duty on arriving was to call on the Governor, who received me with the same delightful kindness and courtesy which seems to characterise the officials of the Sudan. He informed me that I was to be

THE VAST SUDAN

the guest of the Officers' Mess. I had brought everything with me ready to camp, food, cooking outfit and all, but on no account was I allowed to even consider such a thing as camping. A large comfortable room was given to me, and I was made to feel at home immediately by the whole-hearted hospitality of these officers of the 10th Sudanese Regiment. A jollier lot of fellows I have seldom met. They worked hard, played hard, notwithstanding the heat, and made the best of everything, and in their rooms were the little things, photographs, pictures, books and suchlike treasures to remind them of homes so many thousands of miles away. After we had had tea I was taken down to the grounds, where the meeting was to be held the following day in order to go over the arrangements and select suitable positions for doing the cinema work. Everything that could possibly have been done to make my work easy had been arranged. A car was placed at my disposal and troops told off to carry my cameras and assist me in any way I wished, and an English officer promised to stand by me to give the necessary orders, as I was unable to make myself understood. We had an extremely jolly evening at the Mess, dinner being served outdoors owing to the intense heat.



A Sudanese Regiment in the Empire Day celebrations at Talodi.

A MILITARY PARADE

The following morning I was up before sunrise, so that I could get my outfit in readiness before the heat of the day. Soon after eight we went to the grounds. Already there was a good-sized crowd of natives, chiefly composed of Arabs and Nubas, and horses in elaborate trappings were kicking up the dust everywhere. Smart-looking police were all at their posts, flags flying, and coloured prints decorated the grand stand and the whole place had a most festive air.

The first item of importance was to be a speech by the Governor; that was to start at 9.30, by which time everyone had gathered on the grounds. In the covered grand stand all the officials and the ladies made themselves comfortable under the welcome shade, for the heat had already begun to make itself felt. Outside were the people on horseback and on foot, a strange gathering, dressed chiefly in white, while here and there were patches of vivid colours, and of the khaki of the troops and police. The Nubas, naked as the day they were born, mixed with the crowd, utterly unconscious of their lack of clothing; finely-built men they were, their well-developed muscles gleaming in the powerful sun. Altogether there were many thousands of people, and there was

THE VAST SUDAN

the largest number of Britishers, both men and women, that had ever collected in the Nuba Mountains, probably thirty-five or forty all told. They had come not only to see the great Arab exhibition of horsemanship, but the Governors of the Southern Provinces and the Commissioners of the districts were there to discuss various problems connected with the administration and development of the country. There were also men from the cotton districts of Lancashire who were interested in the growing of cotton in the Sudan.

Shortly after half-past nine the band of the 10th Sudanese marched smartly on to the ground, followed by the regiment, and formed up in their proper place. Then hundreds of picturesque Arabs on their gaily-caparisoned horses drew up in front of the saluting posts, on which were the flags furled ready for hoisting. In front of the mounted Arabs stood the more important sheiks, magnificently dressed in their flowing white or richly-coloured robes. Nuba chiefs, either dressed or nude, had their places too. Everything was arranged most admirably; the settings were perfect, a broad expanse of flat, sandy ground with the two high gebels, great masses of sun-scorched rock, towering above the whole scene; it was a perfect

THE NEW CONDITIONS

African setting, even the dust, kicked up by the restless horses, added an effective touch. Suddenly the band stopped, the Governor with several of his staff made his way between the two posts. The speech was given in Arabic, and at its conclusion the two flags, the Union Jack and the Egyptian, were unfurled and hoisted ; at the same moment "God save the King" was played by the band, followed immediately by what I was told was the Egyptian anthem. All stood absolutely still during these few minutes at the salute and with hats lifted.

It was very impressive. Here we were in the Nuba Mountains—the Nubia of old, the scene of every form of misery, of slavery, of fighting, of distrust, in fact of everything that was wrong, in the days gone by. Was it possible that such a change could come to a country and come so quickly? And the cause of the wonderful change? Simple justice and fair play; that and common sense, and this was the result—contentment and a loyalty bred of understanding, not blind loyalty born in the people and not questioned or even understood. These people, at times the oppressed, at times the oppressors, but at all times the unsettled, insecure, had at last learned, and were still learning, what decent government was.

THE VAST SUDAN

It may take them years to overcome the desire to settle disputes by fighting (*we* have not yet got over the habit), but it seems fairly certain that they will settle down to living with a proper understanding of what goes to make a people prosperous and contented. If we have taught them that, we have at least something to our credit. But to return to the day's programme.

No sooner had the anthems been played than the band started a good rousing march. The Governor took his place at the steps of the grand stand, while the Arab horsemen, formed into fours, marched past, saluting with rifle, flag or the hand; they made a splendid picture in their picturesque garments. I was particularly struck by the strange glittering of steel coats of mail worn by some of the riders. In the sunlight this steel shone with dazzling brilliance, and was a curious contrast to the flowing white robes of the other riders. A few of these steel-coated Arabs wore a metal head-dress with steel bars projecting over the face. It seemed scarcely a fitting costume for a tropical country and must have been intensely hot, yet the black-faced men looked perfectly contented and very proud of their appearance. On inquiry, I learned that this armour is supposed to have



An Arab of the Nuba Mountains with coat of mail and rifle.

MEDIÆVAL ARMOUR

been taken from the Crusaders of the Middle Ages, and it is greatly prized by its present owners, who have had it handed down to them from their ancestors. The remarkable state of preservation shows what care has been taken of it for all these years. Needless to say, it cannot be purchased, at least so I was told. Following after the Arab horsemen came men of various tribes, on foot and in every sort and amount of clothing, from nakedness, some painted, others in their natural shining blackness, to the richly dressed. Here and there was a group of Nuba wrestlers, with bodies decorated with white paint and hung about with strips of animals' skins or tails. After passing the saluting-point, and here each saluted according to his fashion, these wrestlers danced along wriggling about in a most comical way. Following the march past came the trot past of the Arabs and finally the canter, to no less a tune than "The bonnets of Bonnie Dundee" played by black men who but a few years ago had probably never even heard European music. For the Nuba Arabs to canter past our flag to such a tune seemed very strange — Scotch music for the people of what was a part of really Darkest Africa little more than a quarter of a century ago!

The next and most exciting part of the day's

THE VAST SUDAN

programme was the charge of the Arabs. This was likely to be quite a sensational event, and was bound to be interesting. According to the plan arranged, the mounted men were to line up in a quarter circle at the farther side of the grounds. At a given signal they were to ride at full speed directly towards the grand stand, but on reaching a line some twenty yards before coming to the flag-staffs they were to rein in suddenly and come to a halt, for they rather pride themselves on the sudden way in which they can make their horses stop. This plan sounded well, and promised to give me an opportunity of making quite an interesting film. I am of a confiding nature, and fully believed that all would go as planned. Twenty yards from the arranged stopping-line I placed my cinema camera, and was all ready when the master of ceremonies gave the signal to the long line of eager horsemen, who were about four hundred yards or more away. A cloud of dust announced the fact that they had started, and I began turning the handle of the camera. In the view finder I could see the figures rapidly increasing in size as they got nearer and nearer. They loomed out of the yellow dust like phantom riders, their white robes blowing about, their right hands raised above their heads. It was a beautiful

CHARGING ARABS

sight, and as I gradually changed the focus of the camera while still turning the handle I wondered whether after all they would stop at the line. The speed at which they were coming was terrific, closer and closer and yet no sign of reining in. If it had not been so intensely hot cold shivers would have run up and down my spine, and if my hair had not been dripping wet I am sure it would have stood on end, for I was growing more and more frightened. I have always had a fear of horses, and to see this mass of them, ridden madly by excited Arabs, all heading straight for me was rather trying. Should I run while still safe? But almost before the thought was formulated the time to take such action had passed, and therefore I continued to turn the stupid little handle of the camera and expose film; there was really nothing else to do. I had not time to wonder whether I was going to be killed, all I remember thinking was "what an interesting film would result." I am not sure that I thought it, because everything was in such a blur of excitement, but I think I did. The wild cries of the men, the snorts of the horses, the pounding of their feet in the frantic gallop and the seething mass of man and horse filled my view. The sky was blotted out, when I stopped turning the

THE VAST SUDAN

handle, threw my arm round the camera just as the leading horse struck me a glancing blow which spun me and my camera round and into another charging mass. Back and forth I was thrown, stars, contrary to the proper order of things, were dancing before my eyes as I was bumped about, and then suddenly all the excitement had ceased. There were horses to the right of me, horses to the left of me, horses everywhere, sweating, foam-flecked creatures, pawing the ground, picturesque black men in their various effective costumes laughing at some big joke apparently, a joke which I did not share, for truth to tell I was a trifle dazed and very sore, and from head to foot I was badly bruised, but my camera was safe and I had secured a good film ; it had nearly been my last, just the luck of my not having fallen had saved my life.

I was suddenly seized with the idea that this was a good opportunity to get some good character studies, so, quickly focusing on the nearby group, I made some exposures, and was thus busily engaged when I was conscious of several khaki-clad men making their way through the crowd of horses and using what sounded like very vigorous language. Just then they caught sight of me, dust covered and dishevelled, but

AFTER THE ATTACK

turning the handle of the camera. With a look of relief they rushed towards me, wanting to know whether I was killed or hurt. To the former question I replied in the negative, to the latter a qualified positive. Beyond the bruises and the shaking up I was little the worse for the experience, but I was hot to the point of suffocation and my throat was choked with dust. My request for a drink was quickly answered, for several large glasses of lemonade appeared as though by magic. I found on going to the grand stand that everyone believed I had been killed when they saw me disappear among the charging Arabs. I was very sorry to have frightened them, but I assured the good people that they had not been half as much frightened as I was. The one disappointing thing was that two of the people had promised to make photos of the scene, but in the excitement of what seemed to promise an impending disaster they had forgotten completely to use their cameras.

I was anxious to secure a slow motion film of a charge, but not at all anxious to repeat my recent experience; somehow the grand stand looked more comfortable and shady and so very much safer. As soon as the camera was ready the signal was given for the charge, but the men having been severely

THE VAST SUDAN

scolded for their former disregard of orders stopped short long before they reached the line, and were too far away to give a good picture. So the performance had to be repeated, this time with complete success, and the resulting film showing the horses galloping in slow motion proved very interesting, for it revealed the extraordinary grace and ease of the riders. A number of other charges were made, as it was a form of amusement greatly appreciated by the Arabs.

After this had finished there was a display of decorated oxen ridden by Arab women. The amount of material piled on to the animals was beyond belief—gaudy clothes, ornamented gourds, blue enamel cooking utensils, beads, wire, bells, in fact everything that could be gathered together was attached to the steeds; even the long horns were concealed by some sort of decoration, and unless one knew that the oxen were beneath the load, it would have been difficult to guess what was the motive power of the queer assortment. These oxen were marched past accompanied by all the women friends of the owners. Then came the judging by several of the English ladies. I did not envy them their task.

After this had been completed, we will hope with satisfaction to all concerned, there was the ceremony



Nuba Mountain Arabs.

FIRE-ARMS

of presenting gifts to the chief sheiks by the Governor. I was interested to see that among the presents were some good-looking guns in fitted cases. This giving of fire-arms was certainly a display of confidence that was as surprising as it was gratifying. It appears that these Arabs make their own powder, and are quite adept in the use of fire-arms. Many of them are armed with good rifles, purchased, I believe, from the Belgians or smuggled in by traders, and some date from the time of the Mahdi and the Khalifa. The question of the arming of natives is always a serious one, not only on account of the risk of uprisings, against which our small force of troops might be easily overwhelmed, but also the danger to the game of the country, which is being preserved under conditions of the greatest difficulty. As soon as the presents had been distributed there was the judging of the Arab horses. This was no easy task, for there were a number of splendid animals, and all in perfect condition, groomed to the last point of perfection; never have I seen such glistening coats or more beautiful horses.

This ended the morning's programme; it had been intensely interesting, and my film was, I believe, the first that had ever been made of these people; but I

THE VAST SUDAN

was pretty thoroughly exhausted by the heat, which had been terrific, and by the nervous strain of the work. The comparative cool of the Mess was more than welcome, so also was a good wash, and after lunch a well-earned siesta. Later in the afternoon there were races, but I had had quite enough for the day, and was feeling the effects of the knocking about I had received. In the evening a big dinner was given by the residents of Talodi to the visitors. As I had not brought evening clothes, having been told they would not be necessary, I declined the kind invitation, but my refusal was not accepted. Clothes could be borrowed I was told, but none of the officers had my circumference, so eventually the Governor, who was about my size, though much taller, very kindly came to the rescue, and I attended the dinner in my borrowed plumes. Dinner was served outdoors, according to the custom of the country. All the residents had contributed what they could to the feast in the way of lamps, silver and china, and we sat down about thirty in number to a most excellent dinner, while the regimental band played, and played very well too. Very few of these negroes could read music, so the teaching of them must have been a difficult undertaking. They had no lights or music,

NUBA WRESTLING

but played from memory. It was altogether a strange experience listening to selections from the Gilbert and Sullivan and other light operas played by natives and sitting down to well-appointed tables in this far-away land of the Nuba Mountains. Everything was done thoroughly well, and reflected great credit on the ladies who had arranged it. Seldom had I had a more delightful evening, and I was glad and grateful to have had the opportunity of being present at the largest and most successful dinner party ever given by Britishers in Talodi.

The next morning was to be devoted to Nuba wrestling, their famous sport, which I was most anxious to photograph. A large circle was roped off for the performers, who were a remarkably fine-looking lot of men. Their costume, as already described, consisted of their own bare skin, more or less daubed with white paint, while round their waists were hung the tails of leopards, pieces of monkey skin and other strange articles which, while they ornamented, did not conceal. Before beginning the wrestling each man was well powdered with wood-ashes, shaken over him from a gourd. Then, after trotting about with a curious wriggling motion, each pair of men would take their position opposite one another, bending

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down with hands resting on knees. For a long time they would stare at one another, watching for a chance to close, and after several feints they got to grips, the arms placed round one another's backs. I cannot describe all their antics, but the idea was to make a throw, and as they strained to do this their well-developed muscles stood out conspicuously and showed their great strength. Several couples were engaged at the same time, so the umpire had his hands full. Rules are conscientiously observed, and the umpire's ruling is never questioned. They are thoroughly good sportsmen and always surprisingly good-natured. When a man has thrown his opponent he dances round the ring in a most amusing way looking entirely pleased with himself, and enjoying to the utmost the applause of the large and interested audience. Then, after being well dusted, he looks about for another antagonist, and when he has found one the performance is repeated. Having secured all the film I wanted of this form of sport I returned to the Mess, and after paying my respects to the Governor, I packed up, ready to start back to Tonga immediately after lunch.

It was my intention to spend the night at Eliri and leave there very early next morning, so that I



Nuba wrestlers.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

should reach the pond where I had seen the large flock of birds as soon as the light would allow photographic work to be done. Then, after spending an hour or so there, proceed to Tonga and wait the arrival of the Governor of Mongalla, who had kindly promised to take me on his steamer up the Bahr el Zeraf. The plan was perfect, but spoiled completely by the fact that the birds failed to keep the appointment. Not only was there no sign of birds, but no chance of their coming, because a large party of natives was encamped on the shore and were busily engaged in trying to spear fish. As they intended to stay several days in order to dry the fish they hoped to catch, there was nothing for it but to go on to Tonga. It was very disappointing, and only goes to show how risky it is to let an opportunity for photographing wild creatures go by. Opportunities seldom repeat themselves.

CHAPTER III

THREE days were spent at Tonga; they were dreary days, for I was feeling very seedy and the heat was insufferable during both the day and night, and the mosquitoes added to the discomfort as soon as the sun set. The Governor, Mr. Woodland, did not arrive till the morning of the fourth day, as he had been delayed in leaving Talodi. Shortly after noon we left Tonga, for which I was delighted—a more wretched place I have never seen—and made our way up the Bahr el Zeraf. As we passed the place where a few days before I had photographed the water-buck I saw the herd that had behaved so well. Beyond this there was little game to be seen either on this or the following day. This was most disappointing, as I had expected to find the rare Mrs. Gray's lechwe besides many other, but a few white-eared cob and an occasional hippo were the only animals I saw. Birds were numerous, jaçanas, herons, storks and others, and I saw three shoe-bills, the rare and curious large-billed stork known by the natives as the "father of shoes."

HERONS

We were much amused by the squacco herons, which we called the "disappearing herons" on account of their habit of almost completely vanishing from view immediately they perched on the reeds or papyrus. In flight they are very conspicuous, with their white and soft buff colour, but as soon as the wings are closed the white is hidden. They would let the steamer come to within a few yards, and then suddenly make their appearance as they flew, usually in flocks of four or five, for a hundred yards or so and then alight and vanish from sight. It was about the best protective colouring I have ever seen. The jaçanas, in their beautiful rich chestnut colouring, ran along on the floating water plants, always keeping within a short distance of the steamer's bow. Scarcely a piece of floating sudd passed on its way to the White Nile that did not have several of these birds on it. Their long toes enable them to walk with ease, even on the most delicate water-borne leaves.

The river was as a rule very narrow and crooked, the banks low, with swampy shores. Now and then we would come to stretches of dry, desert-like country, covered with innumerable ant-hills which gave it a most peculiar appearance. In order that we should not risk passing anything that might prove of interest

THE VAST SUDAN

to me, the Governor thought it better that the steamer should tie up for the night. As we were about to get under way on the third morning since starting we noticed a number of hippo in the river a few hundred yards down stream. In the hopes of a chance to photograph them, the steamer was allowed to drift down in their direction. The herd, numbering about a dozen, were very shy and disappeared before I was within photographic range. We were about to turn and continue our journey up stream, when we discovered a dead hippo near the shore in a little back-water. The pink-coloured body was floating high, and seemed to be moving about in an unaccountable way. On examination with the glasses I found that a number of crocodiles were trying to tear the thick skin and get at the meat. This was an unexpected opportunity for a photograph, so the steamer was headed towards the back-water, but unfortunately a sand-bar brought us up abruptly while we were still about a hundred yards or more away. As this was as close as we were likely to get, I had to make the best of things and do some long-range photography. It was quite interesting to watch the efforts of the crocodiles to get at the meat. So far as I could see they had torn off a fore-leg and were burrowing in.

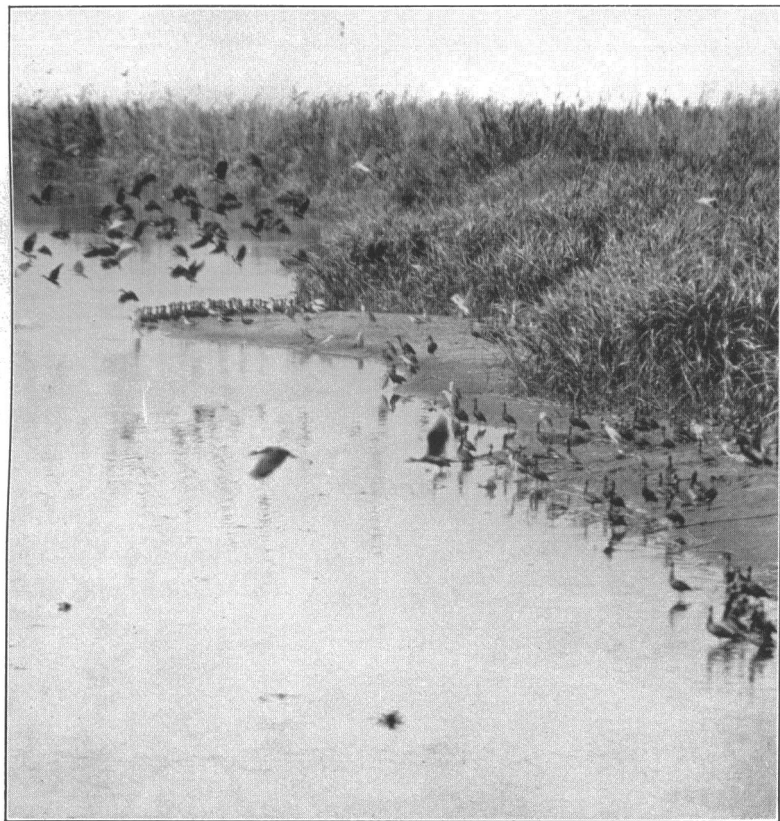
CROCODILES

Each time they secured a mouthful they would hold their mouths straight up in the air in order to swallow the food. The reason for this may be that having practically no tongue they have to use this method to get the food down. All about the carcass were many jaçanas, probably eating the insects that were attracted by the flesh. While we were wondering what could have caused the death of the hippo two dug-out canoes came in sight, each occupied by a couple of naked Dinkas. The man in the bow was armed with a clumsy-looking harpoon, and it was evident from the way they acted that these people had killed the hippo on the previous evening, and had waited over night for the carcass to float. They were fortunate in arriving before the crocodiles had devoured it. In a few minutes, having driven the disappointed crocs away, they towed the prize out to the river, where the current took them rapidly towards their home and the feast that was in store for them.

During the rest of the day we made our way up the winding river against the current and floating sudd. A fair number of birds were seen and an occasional small herd of water-buck. This was most disappointing, as we had expected to find game very plentiful ; usually giraffe, elephant, antelope of many kinds and even lion

THE VAST SUDAN

are to be seen along the banks of the Bahr el Zeraf. Toward night we entered the cut, or canal, which led us into the main river at a point nearly nine hundred miles from Khartoum. The Nile from now on for nearly two days' steaming is simply a tortuous channel through a veritable sea of papyrus. As far as the eye carries there is nothing but the soft green velvety papyrus. At first it seems so beautiful, but after a time it becomes monotonous and dreary. This is the region known as the Sudd, and is where the early explorers of the Nile experienced such difficulties. At times the river was blocked completely for great distances, and all communication with the south cut off. Gessi Pasha, in 1880, lost a large part of his force by being caught in the mass of papyrus. Several serious attempts have been made to clear the sudd from the river channel, but it was not until 1904 that this was finally effected, though the main part had been cleaned out under the direction of Colonel Peake a few years before. Now, owing to the constant passing of steamers, not less than two each way every month, with the wash they make, the forming of the sudd is prevented to a great extent. There is little to be seen in going through this papyrus, no animals, except perhaps an odd herd of hippo, or a crocodile, or still



Bird life on the White Nile.

THE MARSH PEOPLE

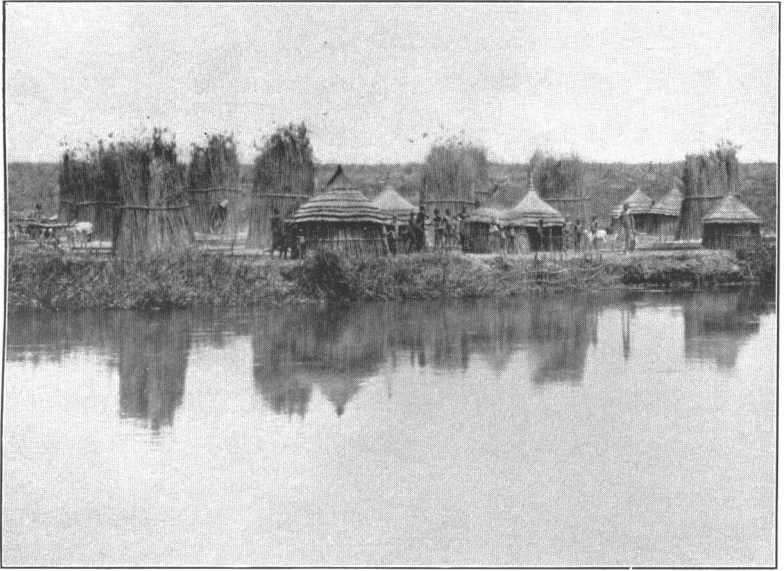
more rarely a large monitor (lizard). Birds are only plentiful where mud-flats extend into the river; there they congregate in great numbers, the commonest being the whistling teal, Egyptian geese, night herons, darters or snake birds and terns. Apart from the water-fowl, the most noticeable bird is the bee-eater, one of the most brilliantly-coloured birds in the country; both the green and the red varieties are found, and it is difficult to say which is the more beautiful. As they dart quickly across the river in quest of insects their exquisite plumage flashes in the sunlight, and it looks as though they were encased in rubies or emeralds according to which variety is seen.

Towards evening of the fifth day since leaving Tonga we had passed the south end of the Sudd region and were in open country, dry and for the greater part rather treeless. Along the banks, which were more or less bordered by tall, feathery grass, we got glimpses of the wretched Moingtang or Marsh people, a very low, naked and ugly tribe who live by fishing. They are usually extremely shy, and peep out from among the tall grass when the steamer passes as though afraid of being seen. Also there were many of the temporary villages of the Dinka and Bari, who come near the river during the dry season in order that their cattle may

THE VAST SUDAN

find food and water. To secure good pasturage they burn off the old dry grass. If the wind is blowing hard their fires spread over large areas ; the crackling and roar may be heard for miles, while the black smoke is so dense that it obliterates the sun. At night these fires are particularly impressive, the red glow of the burning dry grass reflected in the smoke clouds and the whole mass mirrored in the quiet water is really beautiful. During the day-time these fires attract great numbers of insectivorous birds, who fly about on the edge of the smoke and often right into it in their efforts to catch the unfortunate insects that are driven out by the heat. Hawks, kites, bee-eaters and even egrets will take advantage of these opportunities for easy hunting.

Life on the banks of the river must be far from pleasant owing to the insect pests which are abundant, notwithstanding the frequent fires. The people living in the grass huts cover themselves with wood ashes, which gives them a most grotesque appearance. They wear absolutely no clothing, and though black as night, you see them standing about their villages or with the cattle looking like golliwogs in their coating of wood ash ; their favourite attitude is standing on one foot while the other foot rests against the knee, and



Dinka village.

THE MARSH PEOPLE

the legs form an almost perfect equilateral triangle. Equilibrium is maintained by a spear or long stick, against which they rest. As these people have the most remarkably long legs the effect is very curious. They remind one almost of long-legged birds, such as herons, and some writers have claimed that the long legs are developed for the same reason that the wading birds have them, to enable them to walk in the marshes where the water is deep. A more likely explanation is that living in a country where high grass abounds they habitually stand erect so that they may have a clear view of the surroundings either for watching cattle or even for self-protection. There being no trees to lean against they use the spear as a rest, and the strange position of the legs is probably quite comfortable, if you can stand that way. Most negro tribes squat on their heels when resting, so do the Bari and Dinka, but not so frequently, and when they do the knee reaches almost to the shoulder, the shin being nearly vertical; the position is by no means graceful, and would be impossible for anyone with the ordinary length of leg. None of these river people indulge in any work that is not absolutely necessary. Whether it is because they consider it beneath them or because they are inherently lazy I do not know; but it is a serious

THE VAST SUDAN

problem, and one which is difficult to cope with, for people who will not work are not of much use to the country. Their chief interest in life seems to be centred in their cattle, and even these are tended usually by the boys or old men. Cattle mean wives, so every young man tries to acquire enough of them to enable him to buy a good supply of wives. Great pride is taken in cattle with extra long horns, and these are trained to grow in fantastic forms according to the taste of the owner.

On reaching Mongalla, the headquarters of the Provincial Government, the Governor made inquiries as to the best place for me to go in order to photograph game. He had even telegraphed ahead to ask that information should be obtained. The report given by the officers of the place was most disappointing. Apparently it was the worst season ever known. Places where game of many kinds usually abounded had been visited, but nothing seen; certain water-holes, not very far away from the station, had proved to be entirely devoid of animals, so it was suggested that I should go to the Lado Enclave, where I would have a chance of finding white rhinoceros and elephant and possibly the giant eland. This suited me well, and it was arranged that I should start early the following

REJAF HILL

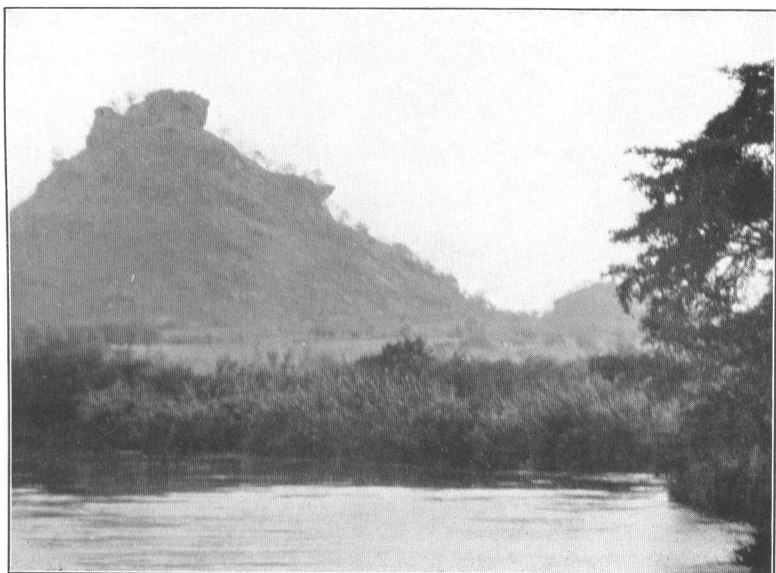
morning, the Governor very kindly lending his steamer to take me as far as Rejaf, and the Deputy Governor offered to accompany me and see that I got started under the right conditions. Accordingly we were under way soon after daylight. As we got farther south the river was increasingly narrow, the banks higher, and in some places trees of fair size over-hung the water. In the high banks the bee-eaters nested in thousands, the entire face of the little cliffs being literally honey-combed with their holes ; the air was a blaze of brilliant red as the birds darted about incessantly. It was really quite a wonderful sight. We passed Gondokoro in the distance.

This place, so well known in the history of the military activities, is on the eastern channel of the river, and though formerly a place of considerable importance, has been abandoned as a post for white people owing to its unhealthiness. Shortly before sunset Rejaf hill came in sight, a conspicuous mound, between three and four hundred feet high, of dark rock, said by the natives to have been dropped there during a volcanic eruption. Its name, Gebel Rejaf, means, I believe, "the hill of the earthquake." As soon as we arrived arrangements were made for me to leave in the morning by motor and go as far as Loka, thirty miles

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to the south-west, where I would be able to find out about the game.

Rejaf, eleven hundred miles from Khartoum, is the southern end of navigation for steamers on the Nile and is also the end of the road from Aba, in the Belgian Congo. This road is practically a link in the so-called Cape to Cairo "railway." When the Belgians were in occupation of this part of the Sudan, which was leased to Leopold for life only (it reverted to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan upon his death), this road was made, or perhaps it would be more truthful to say that the trails of wild beasts or cattle or natives were widened and the result called a road; certainly it could never have been surveyed, for it wound its way about the country with little regard to directness of route. Now this has all been changed, the crooked way has been made as straight as a proper regard for gradients will allow, bridges and culverts of steel and concrete have been built, and the road metalled and made wide. This has been a big undertaking, when the distance from Khartoum is considered. All the steel and cement has had to be brought up the Nile by steamer, and even a large steam roller was transported, in parts of course, and assembled at Rejaf. The results are eminently satisfactory, and there is now a splendid motor road,



Rejaf Hill.

The southernmost point of navigation of the White Nile.

CHOICE OF ROUTE

good even during the heavy rains, which make an earth road useless for motor traffic.

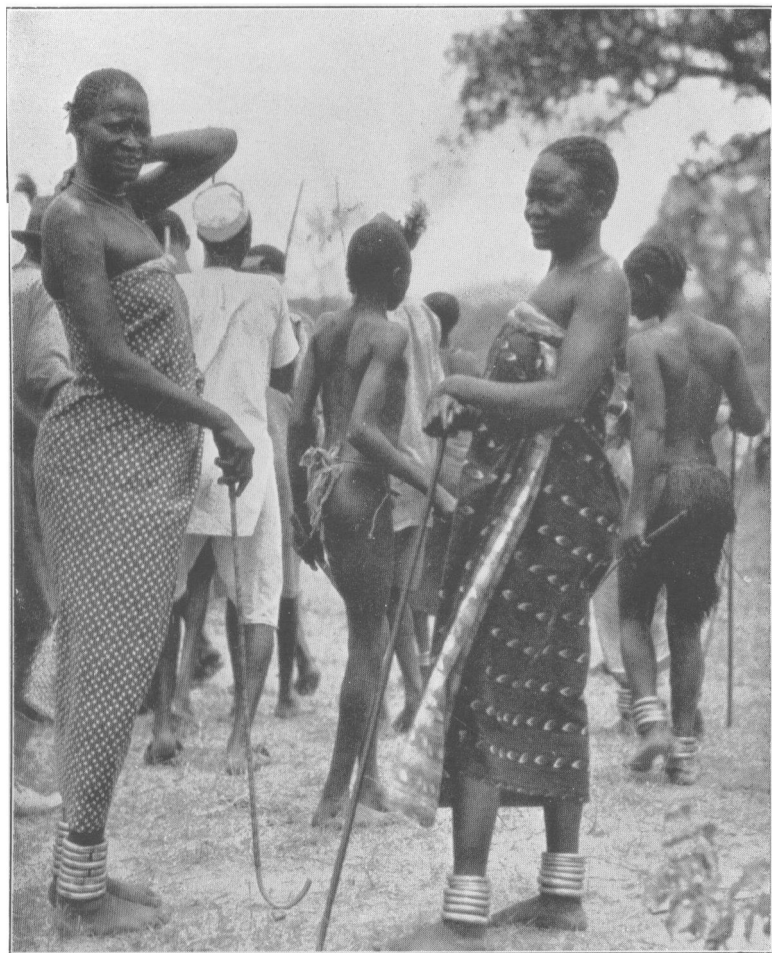
It might not be out of place to mention here that a road has been opened between Kenya Colony and Mongalla over which a car can come from Nairobi in less than forty hours of actual running time. This will enable a person to come from Mombasa to Khartoum by means of train, motor and steamer in about twelve days, counting the regular stops of the train and steamer.

On arrival at Loka, which by the way is a remarkably pretty place, I had a long talk with the resident Commissioner, who advised my going on to Yei where he said the Mamour in charge of the station would make all the necessary arrangements, and probably go with me to the best place for elephant. So immediately after early breakfast I was motored to Yei, twenty-nine miles farther on the Aba road. The Mamour, who was a Syrian and one of the best of men, advised the region about the Kobwa River near its junction with the Yei as the best place for elephant, a herd of several hundred having been seen by him only a few days before. This sounded hopeful, though I knew full well that elephants do travel and might now be a very long way off. The first thing to do was to

THE VAST SUDAN

send out to neighbouring chiefs and collect porters, so runners were sent off immediately with the necessary instructions. Then loads of camera equipment, food and camp outfit were made up, for we proposed starting early next morning. To my delight a large basket of fresh fruit was to be included in the outfit. This was indeed a luxury, for I had seen none, except a few bananas, since leaving Khartoum; but here were oranges, limes and, best of all, pineapples. The good-hearted Mamour apologised for the smallness of these pineapples, explaining that the jackals always stole the finest fruit. This struck me as peculiar, and seeing that I doubted the statement, I was taken into the well-kept garden and there saw the undeniable proof of the jackal's thieving habits.

Yei, which is fairly high and consequently not too hot, struck me as one of the best laid out and tidiest places I had seen in the country. Along the road mango trees with their rich dark foliage gave welcome shade. The houses were well built of bricks made in the place, the gardens well cared for, and the native quarters remarkably tidy. The station is garrisoned by police, and a fine, smart-looking lot of men they were, chiefly Fajolis. Shortly after daybreak on the morning after my arrival the porters, fifty in number, arrived in



Fajoli natives near official settlements.

NATIVE ENTERTAINMENT

charge of a policeman. They were quite a decent-looking lot, practically devoid of clothing, and it was my first introduction to the Fajoli Tribe. They were very different from the people on the Nile, brown rather than black, well built and very good natured, by far the most prepossessing of any of the natives that I had seen in the country, and very good porters too. The first part of the journey was along good roads and paths, so the Mamour and I rode bicycles, an easy way of travelling and one which I had never before tried in Africa.

Our first stop was at the native village of Ballaka, where we found two grass huts ready for our use, runners having gone ahead the previous day to announce our coming. The village was clean and very tidy, and the people most interesting and good natured. Being in the sleeping sickness area, no people are allowed to live near rivers or ponds. This particular village was about two miles from the nearest water, and we were supplied by the women, who brought it in large earthen jars and gourds carried, of course, on their heads. They are a remarkably fine-looking lot, the younger girls being really good-looking. Their only costume is a small bunch of freshly-gathered leaves in front and behind ; few ornaments are worn,

THE VAST SUDAN

a necklace or two of beads or wire, the same round their arms and great numbers of brass or steel rings round their ankles, and two pieces of glass, ground to a fine flat point, projecting from and through their upper and lower lips, a strange form of decoration ! It was rather difficult to induce the girls to let me photograph them owing to their shyness ; but they were finally convinced by the tactful Mamour that I meant no harm to them, and in the end they rather enjoyed the, to them, entirely novel experience.

Presents of chickens, eggs and milk were brought to us according to the custom of the country, and we bought dhurra for the porters. The question of food for porters is always a difficult one, for these people are very improvident, they are not over-fond of work, and grow barely enough for their own needs. Should the season be a bad one, grain runs short and the people suffer from hunger. All grain is stored very carefully in miniature huts that look like large beehives on stilts, or in immense closely-woven baskets placed on platforms and roofed over. Chickens of a small variety are to be found in most villages, and can be bought for two or three pence each. Fruit could be grown with little or no trouble, but is seldom seen. The authorities are doing all in their power to encourage

BICYCLING DIFFICULTIES

the growing of more and better grain by giving seed of improved varieties and offering to buy all surplus crop at a good price. I believe grain may be used as payment of taxes in lieu of money. The hut tax, which perhaps might seem to be an unfair burden on these people, is really a good thing, for it encourages work, the habit of which is not indigenous to them. They have always been taxed by their chiefs or rulers, and have seldom received any return for what they give. Now, however, they are well looked after, their safety assured and medical aid given where necessary.

When we left Ballaka next morning our way led us along a winding and very narrow rough path through a forest of small trees, stumps of which projected at all sorts of unexpected places, and as they were cut about eight or ten inches in length and usually hidden by leaves I experienced great difficulty in avoiding them with the pedals; several times I was ignominiously thrown. Altogether I was not at all sure that cycling was a desirable means of transport. We had started soon after sunrise, and reached our camping ground near the Kobwa River before noon. The heat was intense; we were only about four degrees north of the Equator, and I found that walking as we did in the afternoon in search of game was most trying.

THE VAST SUDAN

Game was extremely scarce, and we only saw one buffalo, and he was a long way off. The wind being behind us, he got our scent almost as soon as we had seen him, and he was soon lost to view. We saw no fresh signs of elephant, though it was here that the Mamour had found the large herd only a week or so ago.

Some natives whom we met gave the bad news that only three days ago an elephant had been killed by natives, and that there had been a big drive of animals, which had resulted in nearly one hundred antelope of various kinds being killed. This accounted for our not having seen any game in the vicinity. These drives are the most destructive things for game. Every village has its share of long, heavy nets. These, so I was told, are all gathered together by the people for many miles about and spread across a suitable valley or stretch of country; then big grass fires are built some miles up wind of the nets, while the natives form a long line on either side. The wretched animals, driven by the fire, rush towards the nets, become entangled in the large meshes and are killed by clubs or spears. Such a method is bound to destroy completely the game of the country within a short time. I have heard people argue that this has been going

ELEPHANT

on for countless years without serious results, but they forget that in former times large gatherings of natives for hunting purposes would scarcely have been possible, owing to the unsettled state of the country. The fires would attract enemies, who would have taken advantage of the situation and destroyed the villages and carried away the women and anything else they could find. I therefore contend that the netting on a large scale has not been going on for very long. If vigorous methods are not taken soon to stop this the country will be absolutely without game, except elephant, buffalo and rhinoceros, in a very few years.

Not knowing in which direction to move, or rather in which direction the elephants had gone, we sent out several trackers early next morning and spent the day in camp awaiting results; but the men returned late in the evening without having seen anything in the way of fresh tracks. We decided then to move camp to a small village two miles from the River Yei, and sent out the trackers before we started, with instructions to report at the next camp. The results were entirely unsuccessful.

The following day I determined to make a blind at a suitable place on the river bank and spend my time waiting there in the hope that something would come

THE VAST SUDAN

and news could be brought to me if elephant were found. Having breakfasted before daylight, we started at six and made our way to a point on the river about four miles from the camp. Except for some hartebeest and three or four colobus monkeys no game was seen. While I was selecting the best position for the blind a tracker came from the farther side of the river with the exciting news that the large herd of elephant were quite near. Needless to say, the blind was forgotten, and we lost not a moment in getting started after the tracker, believing, of course, that we should see the herd within a comparatively few minutes. On we walked over the dry rolling hills, now in open country, now in forests of large or small trees, but always onward. At first the heat was not noticed, but as mile after mile was covered we realised that it was insufferably hot and there was scarcely any wind. We had gone for perhaps two hours when we came on the fresh tracks of a white rhinoceros, so we followed these for an hour, but finally gave it up as a bad job; the animal had evidently got wind of us, for his tracks showed that he was moving rapidly.

So far there had been no recent sign of elephant, but we kept on following our hopeful guide, who wanted us to run. He was not carrying heavy cameras as my

ELEPHANT

porters were, but a speed of fully three and a half miles an hour was quite enough for us. As noon approached the heat got worse and worse, and I could not help thinking of the doleful fact that every step was taking us farther and farther away from camp and that each step would have to be retraced. Hope was rapidly vanishing; it was not the first time I had followed local information and guides, their conception of distance and time is a minus quantity. But at last, to my surprise I must confess, there were the perfectly fresh tracks not of one or two, but apparently uncountable elephant. It looked as though a tornado had swept through the forest, bushes laid flat, great branches and even trees torn down and the grass trampled in every direction. The sight gave me a strange thrill, not altogether a thrill of joy, I fear; there was something appalling in the very thought of the monsters in such numbers. A shiver ran down my spine when I realised that I was actually and deliberately trying to get near them. Surely it was nothing short of madness, and besides that, how could I possibly expect to do any photographing in such densely-wooded country. To put it bluntly, I believe I was afraid. However, after coming all this distance I had to carry on with the task. For over an hour we followed the trail, an hour

THE VAST SUDAN

of nervous excitement, as we could not tell at what moment we might come on a straggler, who, if alarmed, would lose no time in warning the rest of the herd.

The ground was about the very worst that could be imagined for my work, low, very large-leaved trees, thick scrub, four to six feet high, and here and there a large thorn tree whose top was visible above the dense lower growth. For shooting it would not have been bad, as it was, of course, splendid cover, the only difficulty would be picking out the larger tuskers. Once found, it would only be a question of avoiding the other members of the herd while stalking. But for good camera work a clear foreground is essential, and this would be impossible in such country. I hoped for the best, but saw little prospect of any success. Suddenly the tracker, who was some yards ahead, stopped, and we could see that he had at last discovered the elephant. At the same moment several discordant screams rent the air; they seemed to come from every direction and were absolutely blood-curdling. We crept up to the man as quietly as possible, and saw among the thickest bush the grey backs of several of the great animals.

They were about forty yards away and standing

ELEPHANT

quite still, the only movement being the occasional lazy flapping of their huge ears. It is impossible to make people believe that an animal as large as an elephant can be so difficult to see. Their bodies when in shadow blend perfectly with the shade of the trees, and when in the flickering light and shade seem to lose their form and become almost invisible. The movement of the ears alone reveals their presence. If they are at all suspicious they will stand absolutely motionless, and I have at times come within fifteen yards of them without discovering their existence. Their hearing is very acute when they are alert, but at other times it seems dull. It is chiefly on their sense of smell that they rely, and that sense is very highly developed. Of all wild beasts I think they have the worst eyesight, worse even than a rhino. I have had them come within nine feet, and yet they did not see me. At that time I was lying flat on the ground, expecting every moment to be trampled on. It may be asked why they did not smell me. It happened that their trunks were held high and the breeze carried the scent close to the ground and away from them; that alone saved me. As an experience it was most interesting, much too much so, in fact, but it was one that I hope I shall never again have to undergo.

THE VAST SUDAN

As I watched the grey masses and noted the conditions I could see no possible chance for doing any film work. To make good photographs the subject must be more or less clearly visible, but these animals were simply a large blur of light and shade. No form was evident, nor could I say how many there were, perhaps three or four, perhaps seven or eight. I crept up closer, keeping carefully down wind, of course, but the result was still the same. The camera would have shown nothing. On climbing up a small tree I discovered several other groups of elephant all standing under the shade of thick clusters of trees, and in absolutely impossible places for photographic work. This was just about what I had expected, but still it was disappointing to be within such a short distance of great numbers of elephant and yet unable to get any film of them. As the wind showed a tendency to shift we were forced to move away from our position and work round the herd in order to keep down wind of them.

Whichever way we went we found groups of the animals, they were everywhere but behind us, so in the end we made a large half-circle and came up in a safer position. Under a cluster of large trees we found a group of eight or nine of the monsters, but

ELEPHANT

unfortunately only the tops of their backs were visible owing to the underbrush. In vain did I try to find a clear view ; other elephant blocked my way each time ; finally, I decided to crawl to a large ant-hill, which from its height promised a better chance, but when I got there I found a dense bush between me and my subjects. I was almost in despair, when I caught sight of five cows and a fairly large bull with good tusks ; later a calf appeared, which meant that care must be taken or there would be trouble. I took the camera to a place where there was promise of a fairly clear view. It was not really satisfactory, but the best I could do. However, Fate decreed that I was not to photograph this group, for just as I was about to start turning the handle a very large cow with a young bull and a very small calf came into clear view not forty yards away. Without any unnecessary loss of time I swung the camera round and adjusted the focus, when the cow seemed to suspect my presence and stopped short, behind a large bush, of course ; all I could see was the top of her head and the two large ears spread out like sails, then the trunk was raised and swung about.

I watched the smoke from my cigarette to see whether there was any likelihood of the wind

THE VAST SUDAN

carrying my scent in their direction.* The result was not reassuring, for the wind was veering round continually. After a few moments the great beast moved forward a few steps and came clear of the bushes, her calf scarcely visible beside her. Things looked rather bad, and I turned round to see if my gun-bearer was within reach. Of course he was not, nor was he visible. I was therefore without any means of defence, and the sensation was not a comfortable one. However, there was not much time for worrying. The elephant after a few seconds' hesitation caught sight of me, gave a terrible shriek, and with trunk raised and ears spread in true picture-book style came straight towards me. It seemed as though the whole world was coming, and I was almost paralysed with fear. All that I can remember was that I turned the handle of the camera and

* When photographing elephant I always smoke in order to keep track of the way the wind is blowing. My friends think me foolish for doing this, and argue that the animals will smell the smoke and take fright. Of course they will if they get a chance, but what about the human smell? They will detect that over half a mile away, as I have proved, and that is more feared than the odour of tobacco. I also believe that it carries farther. In thick country the wind is apt to be variable, and it is of the utmost importance that any change of direction should be noted immediately. A pepper box filled with very fine dust is well enough, but for efficiency it cannot be compared with smoke.

A CHARGING ELEPHANT

trusted that it was pointed straight ; there was no time to adjust the focus or, in fact, do anything but expose a few feet of film. What was to happen after that was in the hands of the gods. When the excited creature was very close—I don't dare to say how close—I grabbed the camera and turned, hoping to run a few yards and then hide, or try to hide, behind some bushes and trust to luck. As I was about to drop in the cover I looked back and discovered to my very great surprise and relief that the elephant had turned and was crashing through the trees with a noise like a small cyclone. My feelings cannot be described, but I was extremely grateful for the way things had turned out. The outlook had not been particularly bright at one time. Yet here I was and none the worse for the encounter. No shooting had been necessary, and there was every reason to hope that I had secured an interesting piece of film (as, indeed, it proved to be).

The noise made by the retreating elephant started the whole herd moving, so I decided to follow, in the hope of an opportunity for further pictures. There was no time to be lost, for the animals, once frightened, move rapidly. Taking the heavy camera, and it weighs over fifty pounds, I started, the rest of the outfit following. Before long I caught sight of several of the

THE VAST SUDAN

big brutes moving along through the trees. Several times I managed to get within reach of them and make pictures ; not the sort I wanted, for there was always too much intervening brush, but still better than nothing. Once I came within forty or fifty yards of the finest pair of old bulls I have ever seen ; they each carried magnificent tusks, fairly long and remarkably thick, a prize for the hunter of ivory ; and at one time there was a good chance for shooting, as they came through an opening in the bushes and stood still quite long enough for a shot and only about thirty-five yards away, but I wanted photographs more than ivory, and anyhow I don't think I could ever bring myself to shoot these great creatures except in self-defence, they are so much more interesting alive than dead. Unfortunately, by the time I had adjusted the heavy camera, and just as I was about to turn the handle, the grand old pair moved forward, and all I got was a film which shows the heads and backs among the dense foliage. For over an hour I followed the herd, always hoping they would come to open country ; but no such luck. They seemed to choose the densest places they could find. In my enthusiasm I nearly got too close to them several times. Seeing a fairly open spot, I would rush forward to intercept the herd, but in-

ELEPHANT

variably a small group would suddenly emerge from behind some bushes or trees and intercept me. Even by walking at my fastest speed and running for short spurts I was unable to keep up with the herd, and so finally I had to acknowledge myself beaten, and by that time I was nearly prostrated by the heat and terrific exertion of moving so fast with the unwieldy camera to carry.

Though most disappointing in the photographic results it had been intensely interesting, and exciting to the last degree. From my short experience with this large herd, which must have numbered several hundred (four hundred I was told), I was most struck by the fact that they kept up an almost incessant screaming. One usually associates this with a herd that is alarmed suddenly, and never before have I heard feeding or sleeping elephant make any sound, save the breaking of branches and the rumbling of the stomachs, which can be heard for some distance. Yet this lot, according to the Mamour, were always noisy, and I must say that any sound more unpleasant or more calculated to inspire fear cannot be imagined. There is something horrible about it.

After we had taken a short but much-needed rest we headed back towards camp ; how far away it was I

THE VAST SUDAN

dreaded to think. We had not gone far before we came across a party of natives armed with spears, bows and arrows, poisoned of course, and one antique rifle. They too had been hunting the elephant, and we learned from them that during the past week or more about seven had been killed by various parties. It was no wonder, therefore, that the wretched beasts were so nervous. Usually when a herd is resting there is no trouble in approaching to within a few yards, so long as the wind is right. One thing was quite certain, and that was that under the conditions it was waste of time to attempt any further work with the camera. They were on the move, and might travel a great distance before settling down again. I decided, therefore, to get back to Yei without wasting any more time, and go to Loka in the hope of finding white rhinoceros in a place I had heard of a couple of days' march from there.

In the meantime the first thing to do was to make our way back to camp. During the excitement of the chase I had not noticed that my feet were badly blistered or that I was suffering from both thirst and hunger. Breakfast ten hours ago seemed but a dim memory. I had started out without food, intending to spend the day in a blind, where food could have been brought to

RETURNING TO CAMP

me. Hungry, thirsty, and with feet blistered all over the soles, tired and suffering from the intense heat, the prospects of the long walk of probably sixteen or eighteen miles was not cheerful. Longer miles I have never known ; each hour seemed a week, for every step gave me sickening pain and my belt became slacker and slacker. The men, too, found the walking hard, but they have the power of going a very long time without food, and wearing no boots, their hardened feet were free from blisters. The lack of water was their chief complaint. The Mamour, as sturdy a man as I have known, showed the least evidence of hardship, and I quite envied him his youth and vigour. The sun set as we reached the river, where I had intended building the blind, and we had yet another four miles to walk. My feet by this time were so bad that I could not keep up with the others ; so keeping one man with me, I let the remainder go on ahead, while I made my way as best I could. The last part of the distance was made in the dark, and the comparative coolness of the evening was welcome after the twelve hours of sunshine and heat. At last camp was in sight, and a few minutes later I was enjoying a coolish drink of lime juice and discoloured water. A bath, dinner and then, best of all, bed.

THE VAST SUDAN

The sun was high in the heavens before I awoke, and I felt ill, miserable and stiff, with feet that could scarcely be put on the ground. Had it not been for the bicycle I would not even have been able to start ; as it was it was very difficult going, and I was more than glad to reach the native village where we were to spend the night, in a well-built rest-house. The next morning we were back at Yei, and the following afternoon I was taken by motor to Loka. Trackers were sent out to see if there was any sign of white rhinoceros in the vicinity, and I waited for two days without receiving any satisfactory news. During this time a dance of the Fajoli was arranged so that I might photograph it. This was the first African dance I had seen with music. The instruments were tom-toms of various sizes and tones and wooden clappers to add to the noise. Several "orchestras" were squatted about, each trying to make more row than the other ; around each group of these musicians men and women circled with slow, shuffling steps, always keeping perfect time. The women's costumes were decidedly varied. Some were completely covered with a one-piece print cloth of striking design clinging tightly to the body. They were well-built women, but rather on the generous side so far as development is concerned. Some wore only a sort



A dance of the primitive Fajoli women.

COSTUMES

of petticoat made by wrapping a length of print cloth round the waist ; others, more simple in their taste, wore a girdle of leaves, or of numerous finely-braided plaits of hair or leather, hanging from the waist. Those who had not been influenced by the effects of civilisation wore only a bunch of leaves in front and behind, while one indulged in this simple garb but wore also a large straw hat. The effect was very amusing. Many of them carried their babies slung on their backs, the little black heads alone showing as the mothers indulged in the joys of dancing. All the women wore beads or wire necklaces, armbands and innumerable anklets, and many of them had the pieces of glass, already mentioned, protruding through their lips. There was no age limit, everything from about three years old to quite ancient ones danced. The men had costumes or not as the fancy took them. Many, being in the police service, wore shorts or shorts and shirts.

One of the dances which seemed to meet with great approval was a very simple one which was more a test of endurance than of grace. The dancers did nothing but jump up and down as hard as they could, as high as they could, and for as long a time as their muscles allowed. Amusing, but after a time it becomes monotonous to the onlooker, if not to the performer.

THE VAST SUDAN

I promised to give them a supply of marissa, the native beer, if they gave a good dance, so after several hours, about seven, I think, the refreshments were served, great gourds and jars full of the fearsome-looking stuff. There were gallons and gallons of it, but within a few minutes not a drop remained. I noticed that the women had their drink before the men. After this, nothing daunted by the long hours of strenuous exertion throughout the heat of the day, the performance continued with even greater vim. It was late that night when the sounds of revelry finally ceased. The sound of the tom-toms by this time had driven me nearly mad.

I was much interested while at Loka in seeing that football was the favourite game of the men and boys ; it was played in bare feet, but with all the rules and regulations more or less observed, though I felt that enthusiasm occasionally made the rules rather dim and hazy. I have yet to see a place where the British are represented, even in small numbers, that football does not become popular. Temperature, climate, or conditions may seem to be against it, but it continues to flourish. Here on the Equator were these negroes enjoying it thoroughly. Knowing not a word of English, yet using all the English terms in the game. It makes one think !

RHINO

News came on the third day that there were white rhinoceros to the north, a good day's march away, so the following morning I started. The country was more or less hilly and well-timbered, beautiful and very African, but remarkably gameless. Not an animal of any sort was seen during the day's march, nor were there any birds. Our destination was a small native village, in which we found a couple of grass huts ready for us. The rhino we were told would be found about two hours' walk to the north. We discovered the tracks and followed them for a long way, through riverbeds, swamps, and over dry, thorn-covered hills. Conditions were, I felt, as bad as they could be, for the wind blew from every direction, never remaining the same for more than about a quarter of an hour. So I was not surprised when suddenly with a crashing sound a huge white rhino rushed past us. A brief glimpse was all I had of him and he was gone. For two long weary days we continued the search, but with the constant shifting of the wind there was no hope of success. During these days we came upon a few buffalo, but they were always in thick cover where any photographic work was out of the question. Beyond these and a few hartebeest, which were wilder than any animals I have ever seen, there was no game. And yet

THE VAST SUDAN

the country seemed to be ideal ; plenty of cover, good feed, water-holes frequent, besides the river, so there was everything that animals want, and yet they were not there. I could only attribute this to the netting drives of the natives.

Every afternoon we experienced thunderstorms of terrific violence with heavy rain ; these used to last an hour or two, and were evidently the forerunners of the rainy season, so between that and the lack of game I decided to return to Loka. The only feature of interest during these days was the little village in which we stayed, and it was a very small one, consisting of perhaps a dozen grass huts and the grain huts on platforms. The place was reasonably tidy and clean. The ground was swept every day by the children. With the exception of the chief no clothes were worn by the people, unless we regard as clothes the very small bunch of leaves, picked fresh every morning, worn by the women. They were a nice-looking lot ; the young girls had remarkably fine figures and were always cheerful. In fact, I have never seen a jollier lot, in spite of their extreme poverty. They owned only a very few goats and perhaps a dozen head of cattle of low grade. These and a few chickens and an odd dog were the only live stock. The cultivated ground was of so limited an

FOOD

extent that I could not help wondering how the people were able to subsist. Their only food besides the scanty supply of goat's and cow's milk was a poor variety of dhurro or sorghum, a small grain of which a supply was ground for each day's requirements by the girls. The method of grinding was primitive in the extreme. A handful of well-winnowed grain was put on a flat stone and then ground to a fine powder by being vigorously rubbed with another and smaller flat stone. The flour was boiled into a solid porridge-like mess and was eaten without salt or flavouring of any sort. This and the milk, usually soured, was the only food these people knew from one year's end to another, except after a game drive, when they gorged themselves with roasted meat. The greatest luxury known to them was salt, a handful of which was considered a handsome present. In spite of the simple and monotonous diet the people looked well nourished. But I noticed one peculiarity in all the villages I had seen, and that was the perpetual crying of the babies, especially during the night. Among the East African tribes one rarely hears a baby cry, so I could not help wondering what the cause could be.

The most amusing person in this village was the chief, a good old chap, who considered himself a very

THE VAST SUDAN

superior being, for he was dressed in what he fondly believed was the latest European fashion—a jacket of uncertain shape and still more uncertain colour, trousers, and a pair of bright yellow leather boots innocent of laces, and a felt hat. No shirt or socks were considered necessary. As he “called” on me and offered his services I feel sure he was a proud and happy man, and believed he was making a great impression. He was, but not quite in the way he imagined. I wonder if he knew how thoroughly uncomfortable he looked, and how out of place were his clothes and his gaudy walking-stick. I completed his happiness by giving him a cigarette, which he smoked with the greatest satisfaction. After he had saluted me with all the airs of a sergeant-major, I could not help wondering how and where he had become possessed of his finery; probably some Greek trader had given it to him in exchange for ivory and had made a more than handsome profit in the transaction.

On reaching Loka after a hot march, and arriving just in time to miss a terrific thunderstorm, I learned that if I left next morning I should catch the post-boat. This sounded quite satisfactory, but at Rejaf I found the boat was a couple of days late. The engineer in charge of road construction very kindly put me up, so

THE UBIQUITOUS "FORD"

I was as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, for the heat was really terrible, not even at night was there any relief, and I was glad when the steamer finally arrived and still more glad when we got under way.

At Mongalla, our first stopping-place, the Governo came on board, and hearing of my bad luck with white rhino advised my going to Tombe, and from there into Amadi and perhaps farther, to a region where white rhino were to be found. There was a Ford car at Tombe owned by a trader, and this would take me the greater part of the journey. A wire was sent asking the man to be ready, and off I went full of hope, but it was another example of the lack of relationship between the making and carrying out of a plan. The steamer took me to Tombe, and there sure enough was the ubiquitous Ford, which the owner said was in perfect working order. With me was the military inspector who wanted to go to a place not far from Amadi. There was not room for both of us with my kit; we arranged, therefore, that he should go ahead and send the car back, so that I should be able to get off the following day after the return of the car. In the meanwhile I settled down in an abandoned rest-house and fought a battle with heat and mosquitoes. Before

THE VAST SUDAN

my friend had started with the car I had taken a casual look at it and I wondered. Everything seemed possible except that the car would be capable of fulfilling its obligations ; but then one must not judge a Ford in Africa by any standards accepted by people of the north. The more decrepit the car may look the more reliable it may prove ; wire and raw-hide and boot-laces may be used to tie it together, but if it has the true Ford spirit it will still run and rattle along over the roughest of country in its own peculiar way. I have the greatest respect for these much-abused and still more used and ill-used vehicles. They say that every rule has its exceptions ; so I found, for scarcely an hour and a half had passed before the chug chug of a car broke the stillness of the hot, sultry afternoon. Had something been forgotten, or, worse still, had something gone wrong ? My friend arrived, came to me in a fine temper, and small wonder. Every tyre had not only blown out, but had collapsed completely and beyond repair. Of course, there was not a spare one, nor, indeed, was there a single spare part in case of accidents. He had brought the broken-down and for once defeated Ford back on the rims ; altogether a delightful experience in motoring. Fortunately, my friend had bicycles for himself and his orderly, so

STRANDED

they went on towards their destination after he had delivered himself of some highly expressive Arabic to the careless owner of the car.

I was now in a fine situation. Between me and Amadi, which was about one hundred miles away, there was a waterless desert about forty miles wide. To cross this on foot meant two hard days' march, it also meant carrying water. With my heavy photographic outfit this would involve the use of many porters, and Tombe was not a place where porters could be obtained without proper notice. To make matters worse, there was not a single person in the vicinity who knew any language that I knew, and there was therefore a complete ignorance on my part of any language that they knew. This was too much for me. Besides, my time was limited, and even if I could have procured the necessary porters the total march of altogether three hundred miles to my ultimate destination and back could not possibly be done in the ten days which was the utmost I could spare. The plan had miscarried in every way, so there was nothing left but to try to get in touch with the Governor at Mongalla, state the case, and see if a boat could be sent to get me out of the place, where otherwise I should have to wait for the next post-boat,

THE VAST SUDAN

two weeks hence. The prospect of stopping in such a place as Tombe was one devoid of all elements of pleasure or interest. After some time I made the Mamour understand that I wanted to send a message to the Governor. There was no telegraph station, but a message could (perhaps) be telephoned to Bor, some way down the river, and from there it could be telegraphed to Mongalla. An orderly was instructed to call up Bor. Two hours later a reply was received and I was ushered into the telephone "booth," a grass hut, dark, windowless and airless and as hot as an oven. "Hello," said I. Crack, bang, buzz, was the answer. Again I said "Hello," and again my ear drum was nearly burst by the crackling buzz. For half an hour I continued, for I did not want to stay two weeks in Tombe. In the end my patience was rewarded. "Hello," sounded dimly. "Hello," said I. "Is that Bor?" The reply might by some stretch of imagination have been "yes." "I want to send a telegram to the Governor at Mongalla." "Who are you?" or something like that came back, to the accompaniment of much buzzing. "Dugmore," I replied. But that was too much, and for half an hour I waited and mopped the perspiration from my face. Pop, bang, buzz, mixed with "Hello," suddenly made

THE TELEPHONE

me realise that I was once more connected. "I want to send a telegram to the Governor at Mongalla," I repeated hopefully. "You want to speak to Mr. Macdougall," was the reply. "No," I said in desperation, and repeated my requirements. "Wait a minute," said the person at the other end, and I waited for fifteen of the longest and hottest of minutes, then: "Hello, you want some dhurro." "No, I don't," and I am afraid I used more unconventional language as once more I repeated my request. "Oh, you want to send telegram." "Yes, to the Governor at Mongalla." I won't weary the reader by describing my efforts to transmit my carefully-worded message to the man at the Bor end of that wire. Each word had to be spelled twenty times, pronounced twenty times more and explained by every means I could think of. My stock of synonyms was completely exhausted, my temper worn threadbare, and my patience a thing of the past. In the end the ten words comprising the much abbreviated message* were volleyed back and

* My original message was: "S.O.S. am stranded at Tombe. Motor car after going two miles broken down hopelessly. No possible chance of getting away or of doing any work here. Situation dismal, assistance badly needed. Wire what you advise." What I finally managed to put through was: "Motor car disabled. Cannot get away. Please advise."

THE VAST SUDAN

forth a few dozen times, and with a resigned expression, which was really exhaustion, I said, "All right, good-bye." I went back to my quarters to rest and meditate on the ways of telephones and to hope for the best. What sort of message the Governor would receive I dreaded to think. The next day I was called to the telephone. In fear and trembling I made my way to the chamber of horrors, but was reassured by a fairly clear voice asking if I was the person who had sent the message on the previous day; if so, who was going to pay for the telegram? This was too much. I called for the Mamour, and let him tackle the problem, which he proceeded to do, though I had not the slightest idea what arrangement was made. Late that afternoon I was again summoned to the telephone, and again I braced myself for the attack. After many false starts and the customary amount of cracking and banging the line got clear, and the welcome message came to me that the Tamai (the Governor's steamer) would arrive "to-morrow morning." What a relief! and I blessed the kind Governor. Next morning I was up early and had everything ready, but it was after dark before the steamer's lights appeared round the bend of the river. By daylight the following day we were off, to my infinite relief. Wishing to

ELEPHANT AGAIN

send a telegram of thanks to the Governor, I stopped at Bor and wondered whether I would meet my friend of the telephone ; but it was Friday, the Mohammedan Sunday, and everything was shut ; so I left the message and the money with the police, with instructions to hand it in as soon as the office was open.

The captain of the steamer had instructions to take me to Malakal, about five hundred miles down river, and there pick up supplies and have certain repairs done before returning to Mongalla. If on the way I saw any game that I wished to photograph he was to give me what assistance he could. The day we left Bor the weather was very gloomy. Great grass fires sent up such clouds of smoke that the sky was obscured, and it was almost like being in a London fog. According to the perversity of things in general and of game photography in particular, this was the day on which I was to see elephant in a place where photographing should have been easy. We came to one herd about half-past four in the afternoon, but they were in very high grass and far away. Even by climbing up to the top of the pilot house I could not get above the grass which bordered the river. For an hour we waited in the hope that the herd would move to a better place, and then in disgust we left them

THE VAST SUDAN

and continued our way. Scarcely had we gone a mile when another herd was seen, feeding in an open place not a hundred yards from the river bank. There must have been about thirty of the big beasts, and they made a wonderful picture; but unfortunately it was quite impossible to use the camera—the sun had set, and the heavy bank of reddish-brown smoke made it almost like night. I could not even see to focus the camera. It was bitterly disappointing, for except for the lack of light I could never expect to have a better chance. For a quarter of an hour I watched the magnificent creatures, and then a blast of the whistle was given. This startled them, and they ran perhaps a hundred yards, then swung round in a line, spread their great ears, threw up their trunks, and stood still for a few minutes, after which they resumed feeding and paid no further attention to us, so we backed away from the bank and once more went on our way. On the rest of the trip down the Nile no animals were seen except a few hippo, and birds were very scarce. From Shambe to Lake No, a two days' run, there was nothing but papyrus, the only relief being the glorious sunrises and sunsets. These, with the papyrus in the foreground and its feathery tops against the brilliant colours of the sky, were wonderful

SHILLUK WARRIORS

to see. On the fourth day we reached Malakal, where I transhipped to another steamer which was going to Kosti with the Inspector of Education, whose kindness to me I shall never forget.

I had wired ahead to the Governor at Malakal to ask him if it would be possible to have [a Shilluk dance arranged at Kodok. He had very kindly done so, and everything was to be in readiness in time for my arrival two days later. On our way down the river I was much interested in seeing a number of groups of Shilluk warriors with spears and shields collected on the banks and in canoes. At first I thought they were on their way to Kodok for the dance, but somehow they did not look quite right for a dance, so I took some film of them in passing. Fights are still by no means uncommon among these people, who are naturally a war-like tribe, though under existing conditions they are becoming much more peaceful. In this particular instance the cause was a dispute over the fishing rights of two villages. One lot claimed a certain stretch of the river where they discovered the other lot poaching; the result was a heated argument which ended in a fight. On arriving at the Austrian Catholic Mission we were told by the priests that a fight had taken place during the

THE VAST SUDAN

afternoon, and that one or two men had been killed and several wounded, one so badly that we were asked to go back and rescue him. Eventually, about midnight, he was found near the river bank in a serious condition, a barbed spear having gone through both of his thighs, inflicting a terrible wound. Owing to the shallowness of the water we were unable to go closer than about seventy-five yards of the shore, so the unfortunate man had to be carried out to the steamer. One of the priests who had accompanied us took charge of him, and when we landed at the nearest point to the Mission he was taken ashore to be nursed by the Sisters, who devote their whole life to doing good deeds among the people. One could not help feeling sorry for these good, unselfish women, they were so pale from the long years of life in a country that is deadly to the white people of the North unless they have at least two months' holiday each year in a more suitable climate.

After landing the wounded man we kept on to Kodok, and arrived shortly before dawn. On calling on the Mamour immediately after breakfast we found that everything was in order for the dance. He had had a rehearsal on the previous day, and assured me that the performance would be well done. It was



A Shilluk warrior.

Showing the form of the well-trained hair and the cock's feather ornament.

THE WAR DANCE

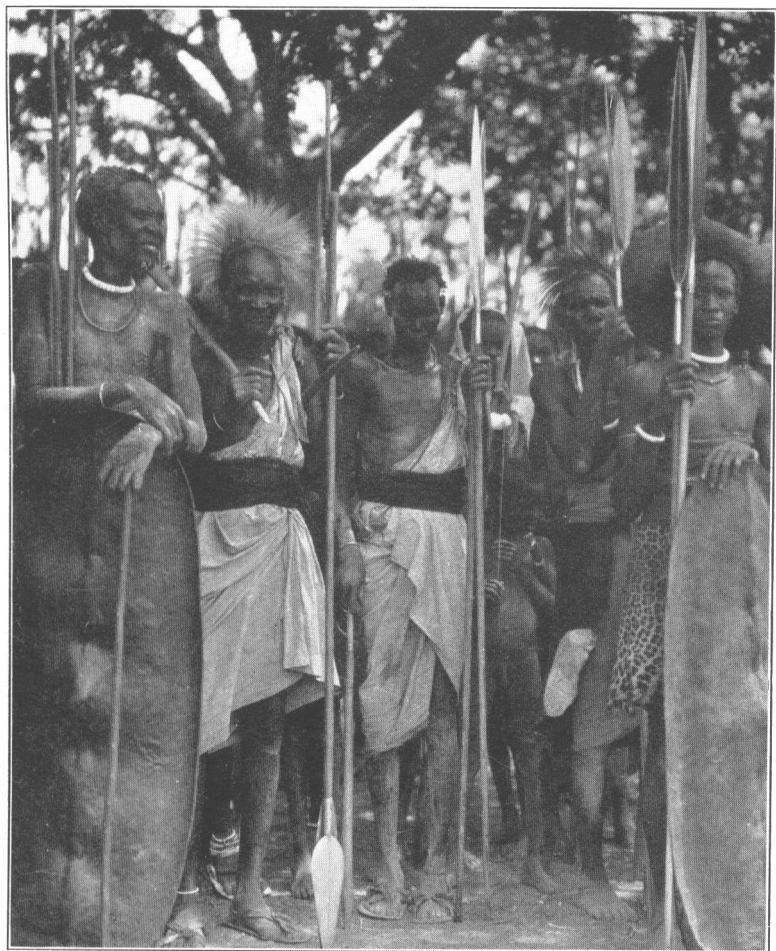
delightful to see a man so keen and with such clear understanding of what was needed for the photographic work.

At nine o'clock everything was ready, my cameras were in position and the Shilluks were gathered together in groups under the shade trees. I have seldom seen a finer-looking lot of men—tall, well-built and remarkably strong. For the sake of convention, so that the film could be shown to our public, the men all wore some sort of loin-cloth, usually leopard skin, or serval cat, or whatever they could get hold of. Had it not been for the film they would have been absolutely naked, but under the conditions this would have made the photographic work impossible. Most of the warriors had the remarkable characteristic hair dressing which gives the appearance of felt hats. A few had their hair cut in fantastic patterns or long and shaggy according to the owner's particular taste, with feathers of various kinds fastened in. Necklaces and armlets were worn by most of them, several having large, massive armlets of ivory. Every man carried one or two long and beautifully made spears and a long narrow shield of hide and of very fine design. It was interesting to know that some of the warriors present had been engaged in both sides of the fight of yesterday.

THE VAST SUDAN

Among the spectators of the coming dance was the King of the Shilluks, a fine and remarkably intelligent looking man of middle age. Being a king of the Shilluks is not altogether a desirable position, for I was told that no king is allowed to reach old age. As soon as he becomes old, or shows signs of losing his vigour, his favourite wife has the pleasant duty of poisoning him. The unfortunate man, knowing what the fates have in store, becomes nervously alert with his advancing years.

Everything being in readiness for the dance, the signal was given for the "march" past, whereupon the various groups got together, numbering several hundred in all, and with much singing and shouting commenced a most impressive sort of war dance, waving many-coloured flags and holding their long gleaming spears and shields above their heads. There was no regular formation, but simply a closely-formed mass of men who in a sort of half dance and half trot circled round the open square. Having done this several times, they all collected at the farther end and suddenly charged directly towards where I stood with the camera, making the most fearsome noises, brandishing their spears and holding their great shields above their heads. It was certainly an awe-



Shilluk warriors prepared for a war dance.

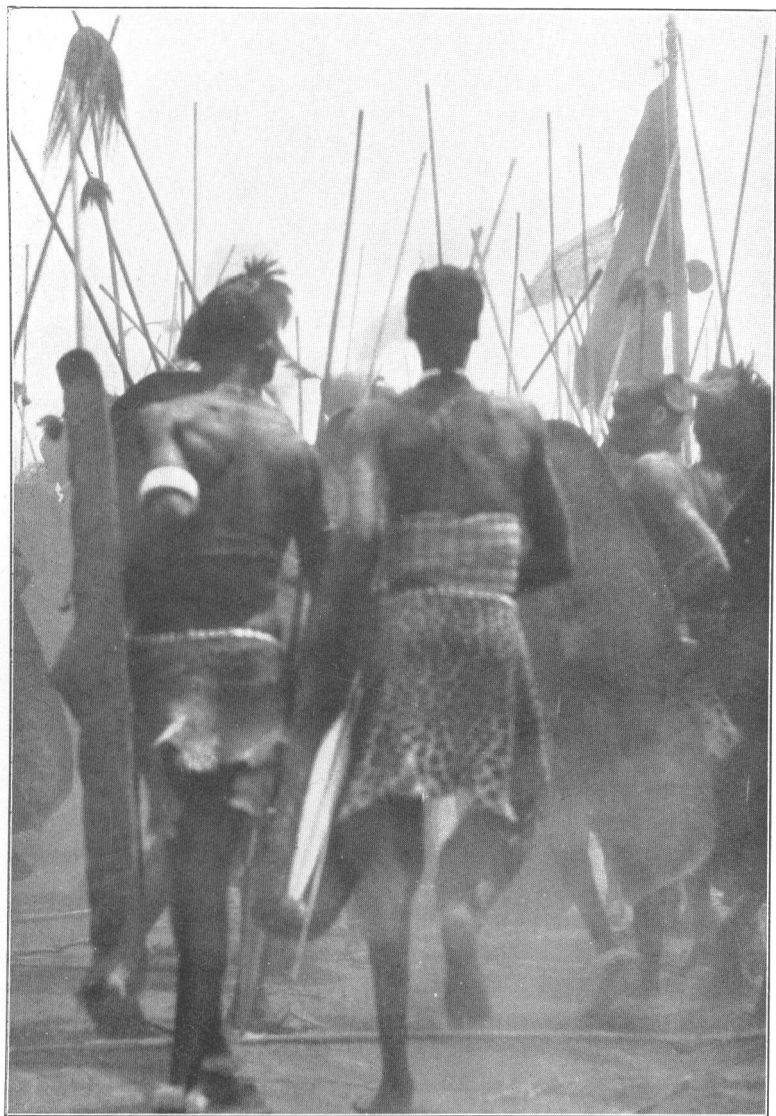
THE HYENA DANCE

inspiring sight, and I could not help wondering what it would be like to have these extremely warlike savages charging if they were really in earnest. A great deal of courage would be required to stand against it. On they came until within a few yards of me, then with a shout they all dropped to their knees and hid behind the long shields with spears held forward as though repelling an attack. This charge was repeated several times, and once the men became so excited that their enthusiasm carried the whole shouting mass past me at such range that I and my camera were in great danger of being knocked down and the spears were waved perilously near my head. I cannot say that I enjoyed the experience.

The next item on the programme was the Hyena Dance. For this one man impersonates the hyena, getting down on his hands and knees and rushing about from place to place making weird noises' while about two hundred warriors pretend to search for the animal; they were led by a most amusing elderly man, very ugly, but a natural born actor. His gesticulations and expressions were really funny as he danced about setting the step for the others. It was a curious forward and backward rocking movement, probably the original of the hesitation idea in dancing, which

THE VAST SUDAN

when done by the crowd was remarkably effective. The rhythm was perfect, and the strange song about attacking the hyena was a most fitting accompaniment. The scene was supposed to be at night, so one had to imagine everything in darkness or at best moonlight. This accounted for the men's apparent inability to see the animal, for they would pass within a few yards peering this way and that and yet not detecting its presence. For a long time this continued with variations here and there. It was intensely interesting, but I find it impossible to describe so as to give at all an adequate picture. The dance ended with a fitting climax. Two small boys fall asleep on the ground, whereupon the hyena creeps slowly towards them—the curious hesitating, nervous manner of the actual animal was depicted with astonishing accuracy—a few yards towards the intended victims, then he stops, goes back a little, glances from side to side, starts suddenly, then forward again. All the time this was happening the men were approaching with the peculiar hesitating step in the dance and chanting very softly a suitable song. Just as the hyena reaches the boys the men rush to the rescue, “kill” the hyena and carry off the two boys. The song becomes louder and the rocking dance more bold as they make their



The war dance of the Shilluk warriors.

Facing page 170.

STAGED STORY

way back to where the village is supposed to be. It was the first time I had seen any African dance which had any story to it, and I was surprised at the clever way in which it was done. Usually the dances, if they depict anything at all, have love or battle as the more or less well-hidden theme, but here was a story dance, both amusing and interesting, besides being very unusual.

The next item was an illustration of how a fight starts between natives of the same tribe. I had asked about this, and was glad to see that arrangements had been made for it. On having the scene described it struck me that there was every element of possible trouble, for these people become greatly excited and it is then difficult to control them. For after all they are really savages, according to our ideas, who but a few years ago were engaged in constant warfare. The use of real spears seemed to me to be dangerous, so it was decided that light canes should be used instead.

The performance started with three or four men with long sticks cultivating some ground. In doing this they encroached on their neighbour's property, with the result that a small band of warriors came forward to protest. A heated argument followed.

THE VAST SUDAN

From words they soon came to blows. The noise attracted large numbers of armed men from both villages, and immediately the fight began. The two sides forming up in line threw the cane spears at one another. The air was filled with these weapons thrown with remarkable accuracy and caught on the upturned shields. Backwards and forwards the two sides moved, the one lot occasionally rushing at the other in an exciting charge. As the warriors warmed to their work the excitement increased rapidly, and I was glad that canes and not spears were being used, for many of the weapons struck me and my camera. Frequently I had to grab the machine and make my escape as the masses of shrieking men, scarcely knowing what they were doing, threatened to close about me. The end came when one lot was vanquished and chased back to their village. Then the victors did a great war dance, singing their song of conquest and taunting their foes. Altogether a thoroughly good show, and one which was, I think, enjoyed just as much by the actors as by the spectators.

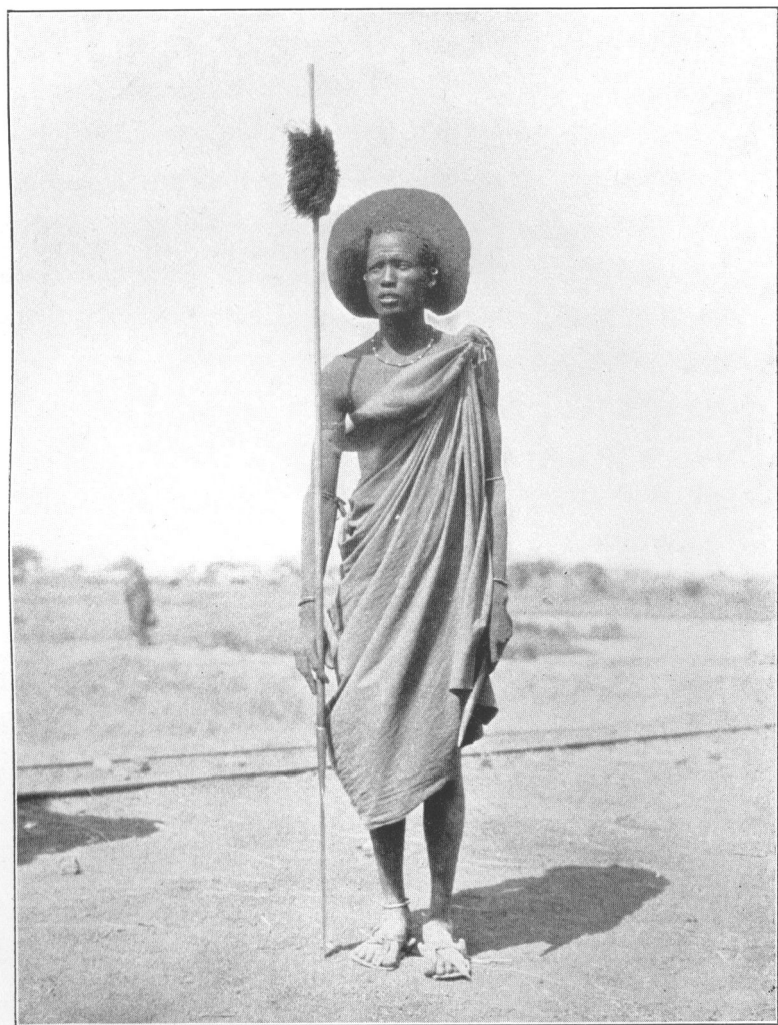
After a few minutes for rest and refreshment and to enable me to re-load my camera, the last part of the performance was begun. This was to be the crowning effort—the Lion Dance. The large square was cleared.

THE LION DANCE

At one end a hut represented a small village, where some natives sat about engaged in their usual occupation of doing nothing. Other groups sat round other huts farther away. One lonely figure was squatting down in the middle of the clearing sowing seed. From the farther side of the square two "lions" suddenly appeared. They were men wearing masks made of real lions' heads, very cleverly skinned and dried, and put on so that the men could see through the eye openings. Each man carried a lion's tail in his hand, and waved it about behind him as he crawled along the ground. After coming a short distance they both stopped, held up their heads as though sniffing the wind, and apparently got the scent of man. This excited them, and they proceeded to kick up the dust in a most natural way, waved their tails, swung their heads from side to side, and stealthily crawled towards the solitary man. Closer and closer they came, crouching flat to the ground, until they were only a few yards away, then with a rush they pounced on him. Their victim was "killed" instantly, but just as they were about to commence their meal a couple of natives came walking along. The "lions" took fright and bolted. The two natives, seeing what had happened, gave a signalling call, and immediately the

THE VAST SUDAN

people from the nearest village rushed out armed with spears and shields. The "dead" man was found. Messengers were sent back to the other villages for further help, and then the first arrivals, followed soon by the others, took up the trail of the two "lions" in a most realistic way, all moving to slow dance time and chanting a song, presumably about lion hunting. The "lions" in the meantime were watching the proceedings in an interested way, scratching up the dust and waving their tails about. The men advanced slowly, dancing all the time, until they suddenly caught sight of the two "lions." The song increased in volume as they moved forward to the attack; but the animals, thinking discretion the better part of valour, made their escape to the farther end of the square, then stopped and gave vent to their anger in loud growls. Again and again the men tried to get within reach of them, till at last they were cornered. A terrific fight took place, and the men were driven back, though not before one of the "lions" was wounded. Round and round the square the men went singing and dancing all the time, as though trying to get up their courage to attack again, while the "lions," one writhing in apparent pain, held their ground. Then came the final battle, which ended in the two animals



A typical Shilluk with well-trained hair.

Unlike some other tribes, the Shilluks always hold the spear point downward.

A GREAT DISPLAY

being killed ; and the natives, having avenged the death of their friend, did a triumphal dance, waving their spears and shields about and singing their song of victory. All this time the victim of the "lions'" attack lay absolutely motionless. He paid no attention to those who told him the show was finished. Of course not. How could he when he had been "killed" ? So he was carried away by his friends and placed under the shade of a tree, and did not come to life again till he heard the magic word "marissa" (native beer). This revived him instantly, and he joined the rest of the performers in their joyous march to the place where the great earthen jars full of the delectable(?) beverage had been arranged for them. They had earned the much-needed refreshment.

Never have I seen natives give a better show ; from start to finish there was never a dull moment. Everything had been done with unbounded enthusiasm and an extraordinary display of intelligence, which proved them to be really excellent actors. And yet, above all, their cheerfulness and good nature and their evident enjoyment of what they had been doing was perhaps the most striking part of their performance.

Not only to them did I owe my thanks, but to the

THE VAST SUDAN

Mamour who had arranged everything so well, and to the Governor of the Upper Nile Provinces, Mr. Strouve, for his kindness in making it possible for me to witness and photograph the best display of native dancing I have ever seen in Africa.

We returned to the steamer very hot and tired after such a strenuous morning and left Kodok before noon. On the way down river a great many birds were seen and a fair number of crocodiles, more than I had seen altogether on my way up. The speed of the steamer, going with the current, made it rather difficult to do much photography, but by slowing down when there was an opportunity I managed to secure some rather interesting film showing the crocodiles shuffling into the water on the approach of the steamer.

At Melut, which was our next stop, and where we stayed for the night, I had the good luck to find a number of storks building their nests, and as the trees were in a most accessible place I succeeded in making all the film I needed of them. They were most amusing to watch. It always seems wrong that they should select trees, and especially thorn trees, for their nesting sites, because they appear to have so much difficulty in getting a foothold on the frail

STORKS

branches. The nests are clumsy affairs, built of sticks, many being placed in a single tree. There were two birds that interested me particularly. One brought a long piece of stick, and after a careful examination of the various possible positions for the proposed nest arranged the stick to his liking. Having done this, he looked at it in an admiring way for a few minutes and then flew off for more material. No sooner was he out of sight than another, who had a nest about half completed, hopped on to the other one's branch, took the stick in his beak, and carried it to his own nest and arranged it to his satisfaction. A few minutes later Number 1 returned with some more building material, perched on his own branch, looked down and found that the precious piece of stick had vanished. This was most disconcerting. Still holding on to what he had brought, he looked about, as though wondering what could have happened to the piece that had been placed so carefully but a short time ago. Number 2 sat on his half-finished nest nearby and looked quite innocent.

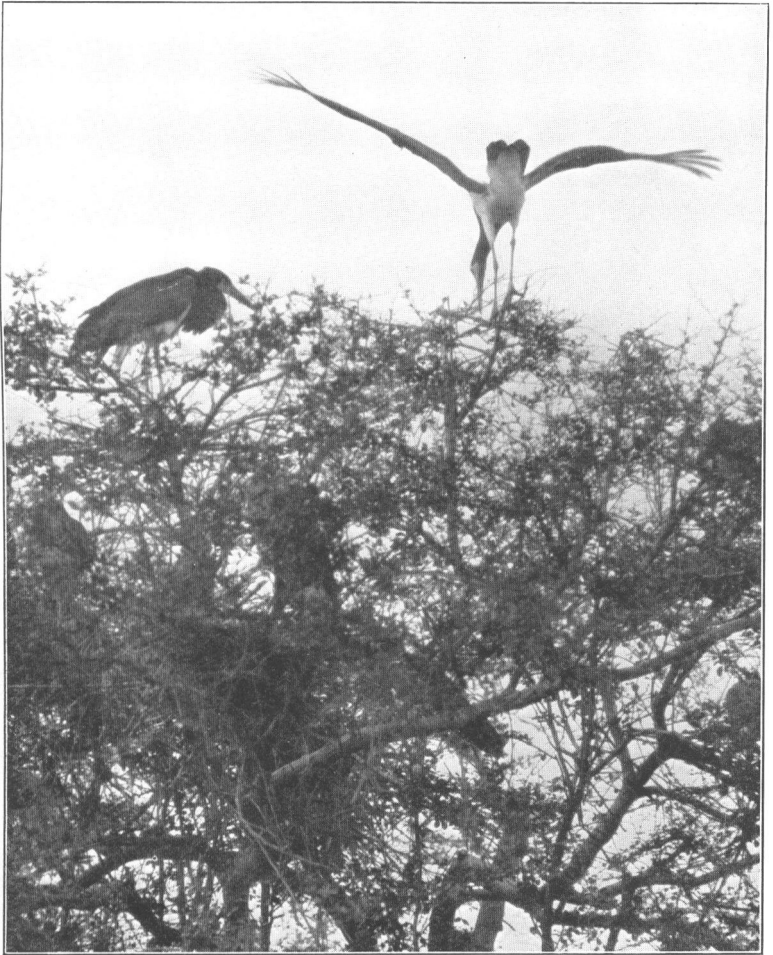
After a time Number 1 decided that as there was no explanation for what had occurred the only thing to do was to make another start. This he did, and then flew off for some more material.

THE VAST SUDAN

Number 2 lost no time in stealing the stick, so that when Number 1 returned he again found the place empty, and again he looked about with a puzzled expression, but could find no explanation to the disappearance trick. No less than seven times was this performance repeated, and might have gone on indefinitely had not Number 1's mate arrived on the scene. She talked over the situation, probably finding fault with her partner for his laziness in not getting more work done during her absence. Whether he was able to make her believe his story is doubtful, wives are not always easy to convince; but anyhow she decided to stand guard over the prospective home, while she sent her mate out for more material. This solved the problem, and when I left the foundation for the nest was well under way. But I learned that dishonesty is not confined entirely to the human race.

I have seen dogs steal from one another on several occasions, but attribute their fall from grace to their long association with man.

On our way down river to Kosti several places struck me as offering good opportunities for photographing birds, especially the graceful crested cranes, which were very numerous. Unfortunately, as time



Storks building their nests.

CRANES

was pressing it was not possible to avail myself of the situation. The steamer must be at Kosti in two days in order that I should connect with the train for Sennar.

CHAPTER IV

THE five-hour journey from Kosti to Sennar was made at night, and consequently I had no chance of seeing the country ; but it appeared to be flat, dry and uninteresting, so I do not think I missed much. My reason for going to Sennar was for the purpose of seeing the great dam in course of construction at Makwa, said to be one of the greatest engineering feats for irrigation ever accomplished. After spending the night at a rest-house we motored over to Makwa early the following morning, while my kit was sent there by train. Sennar itself is a very old native town on the bank of the Blue Nile about a hundred and sixty-five miles south of Khartoum. Owing to the excavation work being done for the system of canals, the place looked as though there had been an earthquake. Powerful steam dredges were eating their way into the soil and throwing up great banks on either side.

'From Sennar to Makwa is only five or six miles, and there I found that what had been formerly an

THE DAM AT MAKWA

insignificant native village was now quite a town well laid out with broad streets and comfortable houses for those employed in connection with the dam. Beyond this is the native quarter, with vast numbers of huts for the workmen. Most of these huts are of grass, which is, of course, highly inflammable, and the bare, darkened patches about the village showed by their covering of ashes that fires are of fairly common occurrence. Adequate sanitary arrangements had been provided, so the place was healthy.

On arriving at the dam I could not help being struck by the immensity of the work, and the almost feverish activity of the swarms of men. From the top of the practically completed western end of the granite structure one looks down on the whole scene : the rushing waters of the Blue Nile directly below, tearing like a mill-race between the supports of the temporary railway bridge ; over this bridge long trains loaded with granite blocks, rubble or cement move along slowly to the east, carrying the necessary supplies for the work of construction ; empty trains returning westward for more material. Across the branch of the river an island is seen, or rather what was an island, but which is now connected with the east bank by means of two temporary dams, which

THE VAST SUDAN

close the east branch of the river and divert all the water to the channel we see below us. Between the two temporary dams is a gigantic excavation going down nearly a hundred feet below the bottom of the Nile, down to the solid gabbro rock which is to be the foundation of the granite mass of masonry. Beyond this the almost completed eastern end of the dam is seen a mile or so away, for the total length from end to end is 3,300 yards, nearly two miles.

To the north and south we see the Blue Nile—so well named from the wonderful pale blue of the water—between the high yellow banks, making its way from its source, Lake Tsana, in the mountains of Abyssinia, nearly a thousand miles away, on to its junction with the White Nile below Khartoum, and so to the Mediterranean Sea, nearly two thousand miles away as the river flows. Going down from the top of the dam, we cross the railway bridge and the island and stand on the edge of the great pit, the scene of the tireless labour of thousands of men—some nineteen thousand are employed altogether. Day and night without cessation the work is going on, blasting, drilling, filling in, building, every man working at the highest tension. It is like a gigantic ants' colony. Men seem like mere specks, moving here and there under the



*The great Sennar Dam on the Blue Nile in course of construction
in April, 1924.*

HASTY WORK

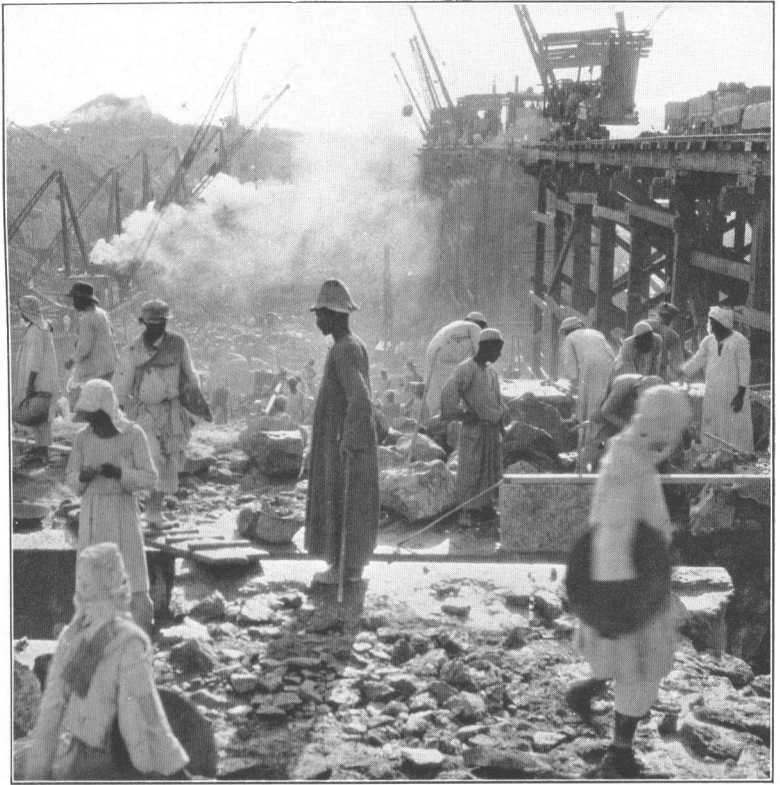
supervision of Arab foremen, of Greeks, Italians; and over them all is the Britisher, in his shorts and white shirt, responsible for the successful carrying on of the big work.

Besides the ordinary engineering difficulties of such an undertaking this particular work involves a race against time, and the time is regulated by the expected high water of the river. It was early April when I was there. In about three months the river would be in flood, rushing down a veritable avalanche of water irresistible in its power, and then if the entire masonry up to water level was not completed practically all the work would have been in vain, the temporary dams would be washed away and nearly everything would have to be done over again. Is it to be wondered that the work was being pushed forward with the utmost speed possible? I made films of the scene, and then, anxious to get a closer view, I took the camera down into the pit, down into the hive of activity where the battle was being fought against time and the power of water. At ninety feet below the bottom of the river I stood watching the great work, watching and wondering how men could endure the appalling heat. No wind gave relief from the sun's direct rays, and yet the

THE VAST SUDAN

men worked, down at bed-rock, on the banks, on the sloping sides of masonry, everywhere ; and towering above all were the immense cranes, which swung from slender wire ropes large iron dump buckets full of broken stone. At a given signal these buckets were lowered, to be stopped just short of the ground at the desired spot and there dump their load. Then there were great granite blocks held by iron hooks and hung from what seemed to be absurdly small wire hawsers. The cranes ran along the tracks so far above till they were over the resting-place for the granite block, then lowered their burden to where the men awaited it. A powerful stream of water was turned on from a hose to cleanse the block of all grit, after which, very gently it was dropped with absolute precision on to its exact position. Such work required skill of the highest order, no fumbling, for that meant loss of precious time. Every bit of work seemed to dovetail perfectly. Every piece of material was ready where needed, and all work was done without confusion. It was all a wonderful example of complete co-ordination, speed and efficiency.

The engineer showed me some of the remarkable instruments employed in the great work. One that struck me as being most remarkable was an instrument



*Building the great Sennar or Makwa Dam on the Blue Nile.
19,000 men were employed in the work.*

DAM CONSTRUCTION

for testing the internal pressure and temperature of the huge masses of masonry. It seemed almost uncanny that the delicate dials should show such subtle things. One of the great difficulties that had been encountered was the finding of the absolutely sound rock bottom for the foundation work. Here and there unexpected pockets of unsound rock were found, and these had to be excavated so that they would pass the most minute examination, for the slightest weakness in the foundation would prove disastrous. Curiously enough, while I was exposing a film showing the work, the engineers for the Government and the contractors, Messrs. Pearson, were actually making the final test which satisfied them that the final depth had been reached, and that the construction of the main part of the dam might now be undertaken with safety.

In the parts at either end that had been completed I was interested to see the great spill ways, with their massive gates for regulating the flow of water. The constant falling of even small volumes of water will eventually wear away almost any foundations if allowed to fall unbroken. With a dam of this colossal size, which on its upper side holds back water that has a depth of about one hundred feet, extending up

THE VAST SUDAN

river some fifty miles, with a width of two miles, containing water weighing roughly four hundred million tons, it is easy to see with what a terrific pressure the water comes through the gates. To prevent this damaging the foundations immense blocks of rough-hewn granite project from the solid masonry beneath the spillways and break the fall of the water and distribute the weight with its great destructive power. As I looked at this wonderful achievement of man's genius I could not help thinking of the efforts that I had seen of the building of dams as accomplished by the humble beaver. They in their simple way, with no tools save those provided by Nature, overcome difficulties with cleverness unsurpassed by any creature except man. They, too, have to consider, among other problems, the question of the destructive power of falling water, and when they build a dam of fair height, from perhaps six to fifteen feet, they also build a subsidiary dam a short distance farther down stream, so that a pool of from one to several feet in depth is formed. The water falling over the crest of the main structure strikes the water below, so that the force of the fall is minimised. As the beavers sometimes build dams many hundred (up to quite 1,000) feet in length, which hold back thousands of

NIGHT WORK

tons of water, they have to use no little engineering skill to protect their work from injury.*

The Sennar, or as it is sometimes called the Makwa, Dam is one of the most impressive sights I have ever seen. In the glaring light of the hot tropical sun every detail is revealed with startling clearness, but seen at night it is even more wonderful. Endless electric lights illuminate the scene, and give to the almost naked workmen a weird appearance as they move about rapidly in the sharp high lights and deep shadows. Beyond the foreground of activity and life the soft moonlight gives an air of mystery that is very beautiful, and the whole effect is that of a masterpiece of drawing such as one might expect from Doré or Frank Brangwyn.

It is of vital importance that all the various phases of the work should be carried on simultaneously, and that delays should be avoided at all cost, so let us leave the dam and go back to the west bank of the river and see what provision is made to guard against possible delays. A high factory-like building looms up a short distance away and towers above everything in the flat land. This is the factory where all the

* See for further details of these engineering feats *The Romance of the Beaver*, by the same author.

THE VAST SUDAN

cement used in the construction is made, an immense saving in time and cost, to say nothing of the risk of delays caused by the sadly frequent strikes that have done so much to paralyse the industries of the world in recent times. A strike of dock hands, sailors, transport workers of any sort, apart altogether from the trouble that might, with little or no notice, take place in the cement factories, and the result would be complete disaster so far as the building of the dam is concerned. Two or three weeks' delay might have jeopardized the whole undertaking, and the four million pounds which represents the cost of the structure would have been thrown away. It will be seen, therefore, with what wisdom this risk was avoided by making the cement on the spot. All supplies that had to come from abroad were brought to Makwa well ahead of time, and every article that could possibly be needed was there, neatly arranged and ready for immediate use. Repairs of all kinds could be carried out in the various well-equipped workshops. For the masonry there was a veritable village of granite covering many acres, great piles of blocks of all the required sizes and shapes, arranged on either side of the railway, which carried them to the dam as they were wanted.

I had seen no signs of granite in the immediate

GRANITE

vicinity, so I inquired as to the source of the supply. It all came from Gebel Sagadi, a mountain of almost solid granite of fine quality some thirty-five miles from Sennar. I gladly accepted the invitation to visit the quarries, and was taken there by car the following morning. The country was flat desert as far as the eye could see, with here and there a rounded, boulder-covered hill rising abruptly from the plains. Sagadi is a pair of such hills, about five hundred feet high, of solid granite, strewn about with immense boulders. The quarry work is carried out by a firm of Italian contractors who have many of their own countrymen engaged on the actual stone cutting, while about a thousand natives of various tribes do the quarrying. The place is waterless except for a small pool at the top of one of the hills. I learned this when I inquired where the baboons, and a large troop of them lived in the hill, obtained water. These animals are absolutely dependent on water, and cannot go more than a day or two without it. All the water for the men was brought by train from the Blue Nile, thirty miles to the east. At first I scarcely realised the dimensions of the quarry and the work that was being done, but when told that between two and three thousand tons of granite, in the form of rubble and

THE VAST SUDAN

cut blocks, was carried each day to the dam I was able to appreciate what was being done.

Being anxious to see the effect of blasting the granite, I was glad to learn that there would be a blast very soon. Of course, I wished to make a film of it, but when I looked on the ground where it seemed best to put the camera and saw that it was strewn everywhere with fragments of granite varying in size from small splinters to pieces weighing fifty or sixty pounds, I lost my interest in that particular blast, which was to be a big one. Big ones threw stones to such a distance that neither I nor my camera would be safe from the hurtling rock and still be within good photographic range. I had seen too many explosions in France. There one could not as a rule get away from them, but here I could and did, with a speed scarcely believable in a man of my age. I wanted a small blast for my photographic efforts, and was taken to where there would be one. Near a ledge, at the head of a long expanse of smooth, shining granite, far up the hill-side, two small figures could be distinguished; they were loading up the boring and putting the fuses in position. I arranged my camera and waited. After a time the two men moved slowly away and proceeded to take cover. The fuse had

BLASTING

been lit. Not wanting to waste film, I scarcely knew when to begin turning the handle, because I might, if the fuse delayed its action too long, come to the end of the film before the explosion. My Italian friend grew impatient, and urged me to start exposing. I waited. Seconds passed, minutes passed, and still nothing happened. Now if there is one thing that makes me nervous it is a "deferred" fuse, and when I saw one of the men up on the hill leave his place of shelter and move towards the borings I expected to see him take a sudden departure from this world of ours and start on his journey Heavenward. But nothing happened to justify my fears. He did something to the fuse and retired once more to his place of safety; and once more I stood by, and by good luck I had just started exposing when the explosion took place. So I secured the film I wanted, whereas had I started exposing when the fuse was first lighted I would have run out of film at the critical time.

Having had a glimpse of the gigantic work that is being undertaken, it might be well to explain that the purpose of this great dam, which was commenced in December, 1922, and will be completed by July, 1925, is to irrigate a tract of country three hundred thousand

THE VAST SUDAN

acres in extent, so that cotton may be grown. To convey the water to where it is needed nearly a thousand miles of important canals will be dug, varying in width up to a thousand feet. Besides these, which will constitute the main arteries of the system, there will be endless smaller canals for distributing the precious fluid, that will make of the desert a land of verdure. No country grows finer cotton than the Sudan, but its cultivation up to recently has been done only in a small way. The ultimate value of the crops that will be produced can scarcely be estimated. Not alone will the Sudan benefit by this, but we at home, for the Lancashire mills will use it, and convert the raw material into fabrics that will go to every part of the world. In a hundred ways will we reap the results of the mighty work that the building of the Sennar Dam represents. Mill hands and mill owners, railway and steamship companies, wholesalers and retailers, down to the smallest of shops, will all get their share of what the desert will produce when its pent-up energies, so long neglected, have been developed by the magic power of water.

While at Makwa Mr. Hussey of the Educational Department very kindly took me out to see the Sultan of the Fallata, a tribe whose history has a curious

THE FALLATA

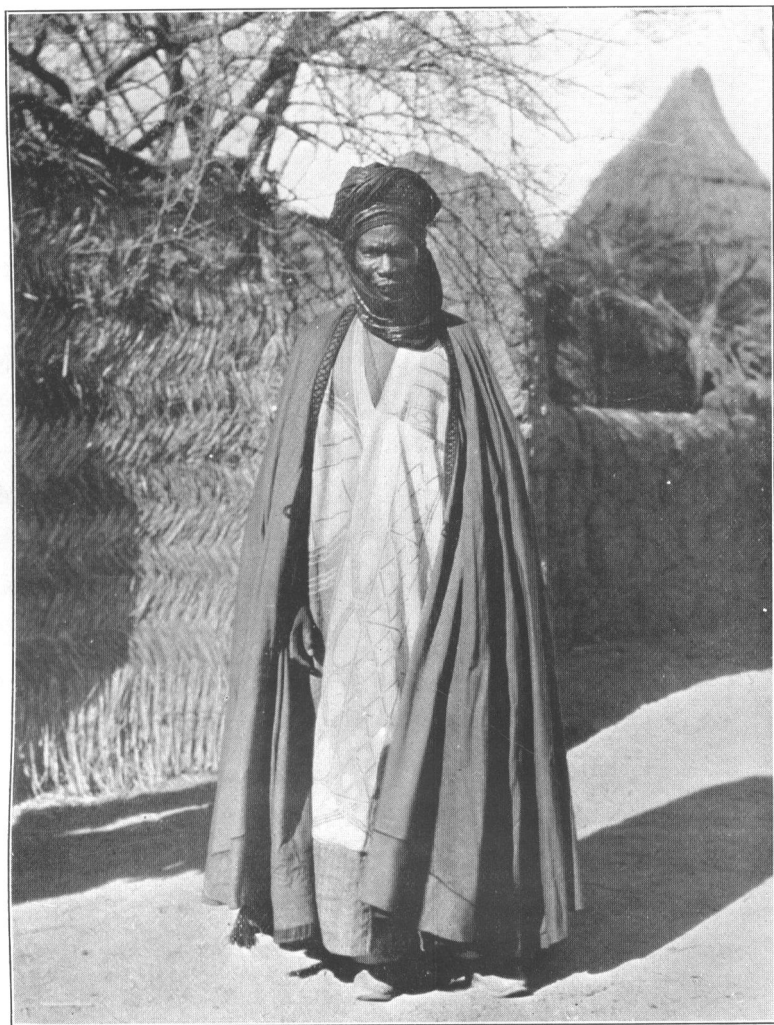
romantic interest. They came originally from the west coast, somewhere in Nigeria, I believe. Their purpose was a pilgrimage to Mecca, for they are devout Mohammedans. The long journey, which occupied about four years, was done on foot, and in some parts wide detours were necessary to avoid passing through country inhabited by hostile people. They had to make long stops in some places in order to grow food, for they could not afford to buy it, even had it been procurable, and considering their numbers this would scarcely have been probable. The growing and harvesting of the crops, of course, occupied a lot of time; but in spite of this and the fact that at times they were forced to pass through country where the people were unfriendly and where fighting was inevitable, they eventually reached the shores of the Blue Nile, and from there most of them completed their original plan and went on to Mecca. Those who could not for various reasons make the pilgrimage settled at a place a few miles south of Makwa, built a village, and awaited the return of the pilgrims.

This all happened only a few years ago, and now the Fallata have a town of fair size and built according to their own particular ideas. It is entirely different from any native village or town that I had seen.

THE VAST SUDAN

Usually seclusion is quite the last thing considered, but here one could go through the narrow streets from one end of the place to the other and all that is seen are high mud walls or fences of grass or matting, fairly neat, with small openings leading to the huts, which are in the enclosures and some distance from the street. The houses or huts are low and usually of mud, with thatched roof, tidy and well kept. The streets were not overcrowded: a few children, the boys naked, the girls more or less clothed, an occasional woman in blue dress draped gracefully about the figure. Men were scarce, for it was the Feast of Ramadan, when for a month no food or drink may be taken between sunrise and sunset, consequently unnecessary work is carefully avoided. This I believe accounted for the few men in the street. Those we saw were usually dressed in long flowing white robes, and turbans, which accentuated the extraordinary blackness of their faces. Some goats and a drove of camels gave the correct atmosphere to the strange place and completed the population of the streets through which we drove on our way to the Sultan's home, or perhaps I should say palace.

Word had come to him of our intended visit, and the Sultan stood at the entrance to his assorted houses



The Sultan of the Fallata.

THE SULTAN OF THE FALLATA

with all his suite and greeted us with the greatest cordiality, for Mr. Hussey was an old friend and spoke the language, if I remember, correctly. We were introduced to all the important ones present and then conducted into the palace, a mud building of one large room in which were comfortable chairs. Numerous outbuildings adjoined the main one. The Sultan, Mohammed Bela Maiurno, was a fine-looking man of middle age and blessed with a keen sense of humour, a most infectious laugh, and most delightful manners. He squatted on a rug, while we took the chairs. Close to him stood his son, a tall, handsome fellow, ebony black, and dressed, like the others, in spotless white robes. The cool of the darkened room was welcome after the intense heat of the sun. Welcome also was the bowl of dark brown fluid made from roasted and crushed grain, a really delicious drink, wholesome and harmless, and one that quenches the thirst better than anything I have ever tried ; and it takes something quite out of the ordinary to quench a Sudan thirst, for it is a wonderfully dry country. It was rather surprising to find this roasted grain drink. I had never before seen it in Africa, but it is almost the same as the Indians of America have used from time immemorial, except

THE VAST SUDAN

that they use maize instead of dhurro. It was considered to be a most sustaining beverage, so much so that when long marches were made this was often the only form of nourishment that was carried, the roasted maize being both light and portable. Being Ramadan, our hosts would not join us either in refreshments or cigarettes.

My friend had a surprise for the Sultan in the form of some shot-gun cartridges. He was very fond of shooting, so nothing would please him more. When asked to guess what Mr. Hussey was holding concealed behind his back he made many bad shots on purpose, I think, so the cartridges were produced after a time, and I have never seen a present give greater joy. He beamed all over himself as he took the boxes, and then embraced his friend with delightful impetuosity. It was all most amusing, and illustrated the friendly relations that existed. When lunch-time came I was surprised to see that the table was covered with a clean white cloth, knives and forks laid out in proper order, and the fine china was scarcely what one would have expected. Californian tinned fruit, which was the dessert, seemed somehow to be rather out of place, but nevertheless very welcome. Delicious Abyssinian coffee was served after the meal.

THE SULTAN OF THE FALLATA

Altogether it struck me that we were being treated uncommonly well.

I was anxious to photograph the hospitable Sultan, and he was delighted at the idea, but insisted with pardonable pride in wearing his finest robes. When he appeared dressed in all his finery he was quite a striking figure. The rich plum-coloured garments with the turban of the same colour were most effective, and the bright red turned-up shoes of fine Kordofan leather gave a finishing touch to his appearance. As it was about time for the afternoon devotions, I photographed the Sultan with his retinue going to and coming from the mosque. The building was a very simple one of mud, with a domed roof, but without any minaret such as one associates with mosques. But I noticed that throughout the Sudan the minaret is seldom seen, probably because most of the buildings are of mud, which would not be a suitable material for building the tall, graceful spires. After spending a thoroughly interesting day in the Fallata town, which overlooks the Blue Nile, we returned to Makwa, stopping on our way to see the school, for the education of these people is being carried on conscientiously.

The Fallata will probably prove most useful in the Sudan, as they will help to solve the labour problem,

THE VAST SUDAN

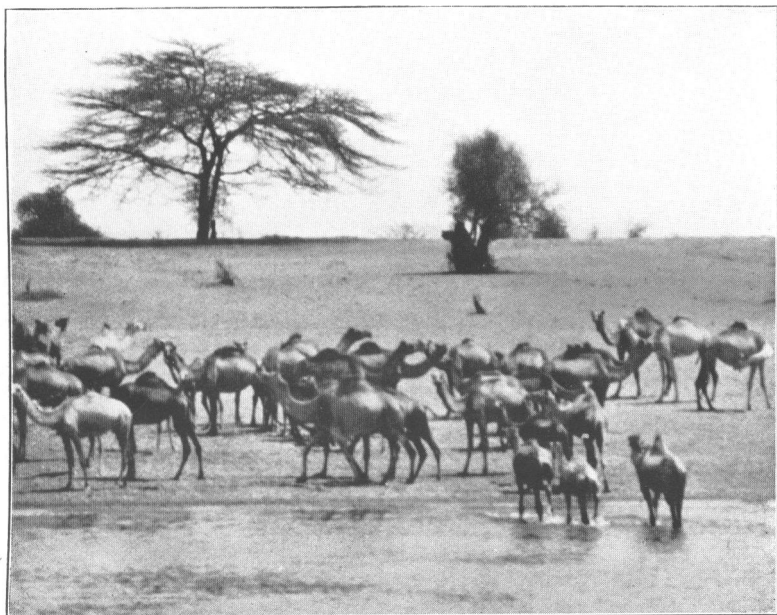
which is made so difficult by the great dislike for work of any sort that characterises many of the native tribes, while these people from the west are industrious and apparently reliable and peaceful. Eventually it is to be hoped the Dinka, Bari, Shilluk and other tribes will be made to realise that manual labour is not demeaning, and that only by working will they be able to keep going. It will be an uphill task trying to make them understand this, for their habit of standing about and doing nothing but talk is inborn in them. I do not think that they are really so very lazy, most of us work only because it is absolutely necessary, and up to now there has not been any real reason for them to do anything. Naturally they have followed the line of least resistance and have done nothing until it has become a habit, and one that is difficult to change. So long as they have not required money, why should they work? Life is easy in tropical countries, their needs are very simple; if they have enough food that is all they actually require. If they want extra beads or necklaces there is usually some way of getting money enough for them; hides can be sold without difficulty, chickens and eggs demand no attention and will usually find a ready market; looking after cattle is the natural occupation of the

COTTON

people and is not considered work, and they are easily sold. So I repeat, Why should they work? Some people say they don't and never will, but that remains to be seen. It is always easy to increase people's wants. One man buys something, let it be clothing, ornament or anything else, and immediately his neighbours want the same or something better, so it will be by increasing their wants that work will become, very gradually, a habit. In the meantime the Fallata are working. With the increase of cotton cultivation they will have more than they can do; they will accumulate money, and probably in time will become an important people. Whether the other tribes will follow their example remains to be seen.

CHAPTER V

AFTER leaving Makwa I returned to Khartoum by rail and spent a couple of days in making arrangements for the rest of my time in the Sudan. There were still several things I wanted to do and several places to visit. Distances are so great that it is by no means easy to do much in a short time. In ten days my steamer would be leaving for home, and ten days go quickly ; but, thanks to the great kindness of the officials, everything was done to facilitate my obtaining as much material as possible during the short time at my disposal. I was particularly anxious to have an opportunity of photographing the great flocks of birds that were to be found south of Kosti. In order that I might do this a steamer was placed at my disposal, and the plan was that I should go first for the birds, then to El Obeid to photograph the famous Camel Corps, from there by train to Khartoum and on eastward in a private carriage on the train to Kassala, to see the construction of the new railway, returning from there to the main line, by which I would go to



Camels brought to the Nile in the dry season.

KHARTOUM AGAIN

Port Sudan. This would mean that I must travel some eighteen hundred miles during the ten days, besides doing the photography. That I was actually able to do it speaks well not only for the transportation facilities, but for the splendid co-operation of the officials. I was not allowed to worry about anything, for every detail was arranged and the plans worked out perfectly.

During the day and a half in Khartoum my spare time was well occupied in packing up my outfit and getting it all ready for the homeward journey, and on the morning of April 11th I left on the steamer for Kosti. A great change had taken place in the appearance of the country since I had first gone up the Nile. I had thought then that it was dry, but now everything was absolutely parched. At many places along the river enormous herds of cattle and camels could be seen ; they had been brought from the still drier country to the east and west to the river for water. In some parts the bank was a solid mass of camels, thousands and thousands of them. I did not realise that there were so many of these animals in the whole Sudan. At all times the camel is a picturesque creature, but as they grouped themselves about in and out of the water they made a most fascinating

THE VAST SUDAN

picture, which I was able to photograph from the steamer. We arrived at Kosti on the second day, too late to pass through the bridge. So the following morning we made an early start, and finally, after waiting an hour, the great bridge was opened for us. This bridge, which is five hundred yards long, is for the railway which runs from Khartoum to El Obeid, a distance of about four hundred and thirty miles. A couple of hours' steaming took us to where I had seen the large flocks of birds on our way down river, and on our way we passed a flock of flamingoes, the first I had seen on the upper river, and from what people told me it is unusual to find them in this part. I was struck by the lack of colour in these birds, the pink being scarcely visible. Unfortunately, they proved to be very wild, and would not let the steamer come closer than a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards.

On a mud flat on the east side of the river crested cranes and other birds congregated in large numbers, but the absence of any cover promised to make the chance for doing satisfactory photographic work almost hopeless. At least, so it seemed from what I could see from the steamer when we brought her to anchor in mid-stream. Taking the necessary cameras, I went

CRESTED CRANES

ashore in a small boat, and landed a few hundred yards below where the birds were collected. They did not appear to like our arrival, and began a chorus of cries as though of alarm. Before making any attempt to stalk them it was advisable to let them become somewhat accustomed to our presence, so I stayed fairly near the boat while I assembled the camera and made everything ready. The mud-flat extended for a distance of about three hundred yards from the grass and tree-covered bank. Shallow pools of water covered it in places, but there was no vegetation, and I was confronted with the problem of stalking in the open with absolutely no protection. The question was how close would they allow me to approach. Even with the longest focus lens I should be within seventy or eighty yards before I could get a reasonably good photograph, and it seemed very doubtful whether they would be tame enough for that.

As soon as the birds had settled down quietly I started forward towards where the main flock was, perhaps six hundred yards away. Walking very slowly, holding the camera in front, I moved a few yards at a time, and so gradually decreased the distance. On the way I got within a hundred yards or less of a flock of spurwing geese and photographed them, and

THE VAST SUDAN

then moved forward again. As I approached the cranes they showed signs of nervousness, standing erect and giving voice constantly to their curious, rather musical cry. For a long time it was necessary to stand quite still in order to allay their suspicions, and at last to my relief they commenced feeding. With the crested cranes were thousands of ruffs, some ducks, sacred ibis, spoonbills, egrets and various other birds, such as plover, stilts and terns. Also a few pelican and storks, which were more shy than their neighbours, for they flew away before I was within two hundred yards. The cranes were lined up on the edge of the water where it was only a few inches deep, and it was interesting to watch them as they bowed in a jerky manner to one another, as though curtsying with extreme politeness. After watching them for some time it seemed advisable to expose some film, even though they were too far away to give satisfactory photographs; but they might fly away at any moment, and then my opportunity would be gone. I had only this one day to devote to them, as I had to be back at Kosti before dark. Having exposed a short piece of film, I again moved forward by slow degrees, until at last I was within seventy yards, to the evident consternation of the birds, who kept up a



Crested cranes on the White Nile.

CRESTED CRANES

continual cry of alarm and jumped about in an uneasy way, which showed that they were ready to take flight at any moment. Their beauty could now be seen clearly, and they are certainly about the handsomest and most graceful of the birds of the country. Their curious erect, light-coloured crests give them the appearance of wearing cockades. While I was exposing some film on the scene a large number of the cranes took to their wings, but after flying about for a few minutes to my surprise they returned, so that I was able to photograph them in flight, which was what I wanted in order to show the well-marked pattern of their beautiful grey, white and chestnut coloured plumage. When I tried to reduce still further the distance between the camera and the birds, so that the birds would appear larger on the film, they decided that I was becoming too familiar, and they all took flight. Once in the air they felt safer, and circled round me in wonderfully graceful flight which I was able to photograph. It was not long after the departure of the cranes before the large flock of ruffs went off in a closely-packed flock that moved with great speed, twisting and turning about and making a sound like a wind squall. The ibis, duck and others also decided that the place was becoming unsafe and

THE VAST SUDAN

moved away. The last to go were the strange-looking black and white stilts. They allowed me to approach to within a few yards and use the camera on them as they waded about the shallow pools in search of food. Finally, I was left alone with my camera. All the birds had gone, and there was nothing more for me to do; and perhaps it was just as well, as I had been standing about in the intense heat of the sun for four or five hours, my feet most of the time in the hot shallow water, and there was not a breath of wind to make the conditions a little more bearable. Altogether I was quite ready to get back to the steamer and the shaded deck, to say nothing of a cool, refreshing drink. The power of the sun in the Sudan at this time of year is terrific, and it is not wise to be out in it without shade for many hours at a time.

While waiting near the shore for the bridge to open I was interested to see a pair of ibis that seemed remarkably tame. It appeared that one of the pair was crippled and was unable to fly, even standing was apparently painful. But its mate would not leave it, though I went within a few yards of them.

Our trip back to Kosti was entirely uneventful, and we arrived there in the afternoon in time to make what arrangements were necessary for getting my

THE GUM TRADE

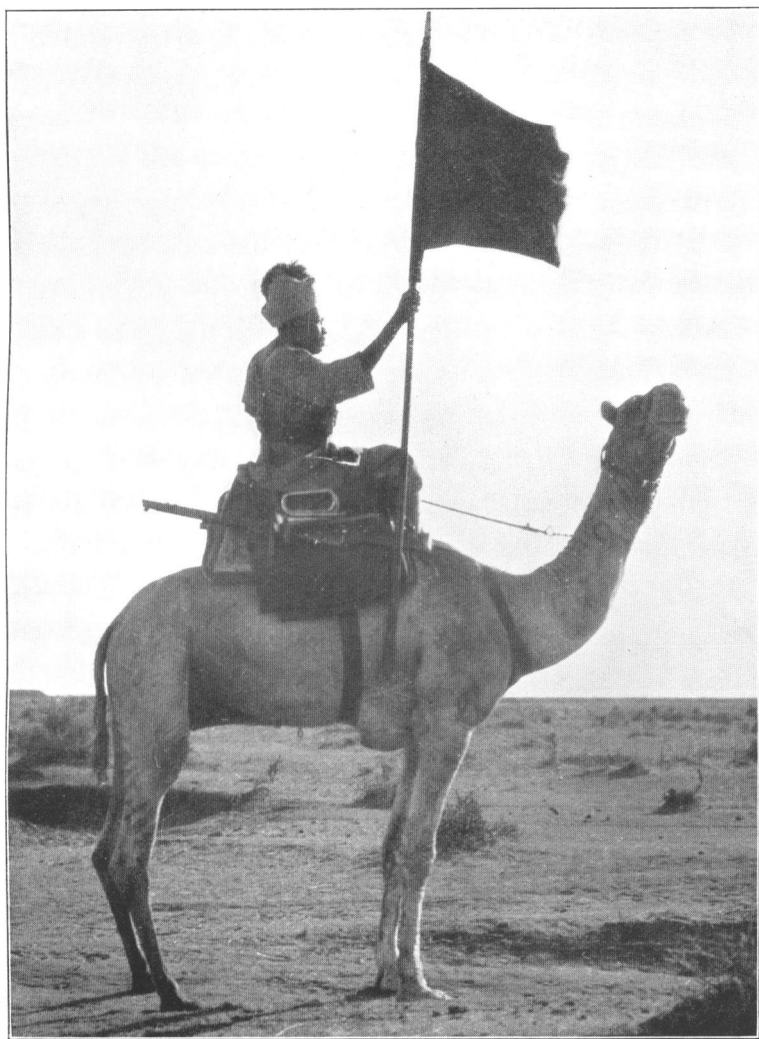
outfit to the train, ready for an early start the following morning. Assistance was given to me by the officials, who sent down a cart and some of the police, and when the train arrived at seven o'clock everything was put on board, and off I went to my next destination, El Obeid, the terminus of the railway and chief town of the Province of Kordofan. This part of the country produces great quantities of gum, and I was told that during the past season about two million pounds had been paid to the natives for this gum. What was the actual value I do not know, but the crop is the most important one in the province and is the chief freight carried by the railway. Formerly it was transported almost entirely by camels as far as the river. The railway, apart from the question of its speed, is far better and safer, as it ensures the gum being kept dry, and this is absolutely necessary. Besides gum the province produces camels, cattle and a certain amount of grain.

The train brought me to El Obeid late in the evening, and there I met the officer commanding the Camel Corps. He had received word from Khartoum, and everything had been arranged so that I should be able to make the photographs the following morning in time to catch the train back according to plan.

THE VAST SUDAN

That evening during dinner with the several officials the details of plans were discussed. The Camel Corps were to assemble before six o'clock, and then as soon as the light was good enough for photographic work the programme would be carried out. By four o'clock I was up, and after getting the camera in order had a light breakfast, and before six a car took me out to the place where the work was to be done.

What a dreary-looking country it appeared, little better than desert—endless sand and low thorn scrub scattered about here and there, and nothing else as far as one could see. And yet this was the country where fighting had been carried on so relentlessly in the days gone by. Here at El Obeid in 1882 the famous Mahdi in his three attacks on the town lost ten thousand in killed alone ; but five months later he captured it, together with a large number of prisoners and munitions, as well as one hundred thousand pounds, and made it his headquarters. It was on his way to the attack on El Obeid that Hicks Pasha in the autumn of 1883 was killed and nearly all of his men with him. Slatin Pasha, after his surrender, was kept at this town before being taken to Omdurman. In many ways does El Obeid figure in the history of the Sudan, especially during those



The bugler of the Camel Corps.

THE CAMEL CORPS

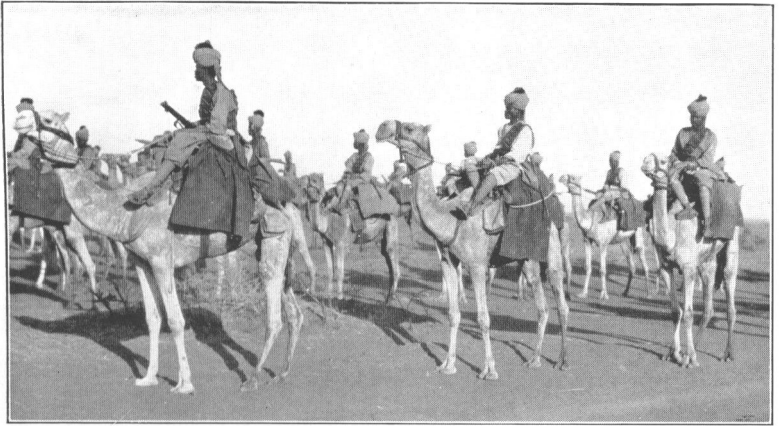
critical days of the Mahdi's rise and fall, and until it was occupied by Colonel Mahon in 1899. One of the last notes of interest, outside of the railway being brought there, was the capture of the Sheik Said Ibrahim in 1903, and his trial at El Obeid, which resulted in his being sentenced to five years' imprisonment for trading in slaves. But all the troubles and horrors of the times gone by are now only history, for to-day El Obeid is a quiet, prosperous town, the chief market for the great gum trade and the administrative centre of the province. Water seems to be its one great difficulty. Being in a desert land, the supply is obtained from wells, and these are, I am told, barely sufficient for the needs of the growing population.

As I arrived at the scene of operations the Camel Corps appeared. A strange picture they presented in the cloud of dust, gold tinted by the rising sun. To my mind there are few things more picturesque than camels, especially when in large numbers and mounted by men in the striking uniform of the Corps. A finer-looking lot of men than these Arab soldiers it has seldom been my good luck to see. No sooner had they reached their position than they halted and the men dismounted and unsaddled. The camels were then

THE VAST SUDAN

given a small allowance of grain, which was fed to them by hand. After this I photographed them being saddled and starting. The first part of the performance was to be an attack by Arab horsemen. Two scouts went ahead until they discovered the "enemy." One man immediately made his camel sit down behind a small thorn bush, while the other went back with the information. In a few minutes the main body came up at the trot and formed a square, with the animals in the centre. Scarcely was this done than a number of white-robed Arabs came galloping down on them, their horses leaving a cloud of dust in their wake. Both sides opened fire, and of course the "enemy" was defeated. It was really very well done, and the film shows clearly the whole operation, and illustrates the smartness of these men and their excellent training.

After the sham fight there was a machine-gun action, and I could not help being surprised at the extraordinary proficiency of the men. Nothing could have been smarter. That and the other operations were carried out most thoroughly well, and showed not only that the men were well officered, but that they themselves were far above the average in intelligence. All the men and N.C.O.'s are Arabs, and it is looked upon as a mark of great distinction



The Sudanese Camel Corps at El Obeid.

AT EL OBEID

to belong to the Sudan Camel Corps, for the men are picked with the greatest care. I had heard so much about the regiment that I was very glad to have had the opportunity of seeing them. My only regret was that, as my time was so very limited, I was unable to learn more about them and their work. But my train was due to leave at 7.40 and I had to rush back by car, and stepped into the compartment as the whistle blew, orderlies having seen to all my belongings being put on the train. It was with the deepest regret that I said good-bye from the moving train to the fellows who had been kindness itself in arranging every detail for my work, as well as for my comfort, during my very brief stay at El Obeid. After a much needed wash, for I was dust from head to foot, and a little food I settled down to make the best I could of the journey. The heat was almost unbearable, in spite of the electric fans which were running at full speed; but my companions, officials from El Obeid, were such a jolly lot that the hours passed quickly. There being no dining-car on the train, our servants cooked the meals in the small kitchens with which the trains are fitted, and we fared as well as anyone could wish.

I had long ago dispensed with the services of my

THE VAST SUDAN

“boy.” He had nearly driven me to murder and a few other things, and I felt that if I wished to retain my limited reason and comparative freedom from crime that he and I must part for ever and ever. This happy incident had occurred at Khartoum during my last visit. The cook took on the job of boy and cook—sort of general; and he managed fairly well, with the result that I was rapidly regaining my normal frame of mind. I have refrained throughout this narrative from touching on my experience with my servant, partly for the reason that had I told the truth no one would have believed me, and I hate being doubted, and partly because I hate to have anyone think that I could be so complete a fool as to engage such a creature, and having engaged him to keep him so long. There were reasons for the latter; however, I will not bore the reader with such “household” affairs.

The journey by rail from El Obeid to Khartoum is four hundred and thirty miles, and it is not what anyone in his sound senses could call an interesting trip. The country is flat, dry (during the dry season, of course), and for the greater part treeless, except during part of the way between El Obeid and Kosti, where gum and thorn trees may be seen. Few villages

SEEN FROM THE RAILWAY

are passed, and many of the stations are merely watering-places for the engine ; a tin hut or perhaps a brick one with thatched roof, a couple of forlorn native railway employees, an odd representative of the nearest tribe, probably a few goats, or sheep (the sheep have long hair like the goats, and I cannot always tell them apart), three or four hungry-looking chickens, and the eternal blazing sun. If the station happens to be at or near a village there is always the crowd of natives, who imagine that the train can neither come in or leave the station unless they are there to watch it. They are welcome, for they give a touch of life to the otherwise dreary scene. Occasionally some particularly enterprising native possessed of the lust of money—and it is usually an Arab—brings to the train fruit or food of various sorts. I bought some delicious-looking melons, but their looks belied them, Unfortunately the train had left the station before I made the discovery, otherwise I might have got my money's worth by throwing them at the dealer in tropical fruits. He had, I imagine, picked up the melons cheap because of their uneatable condition, and knowing that whoever bought them at the station would be far away before finding out the uselessness of his purchase, he felt perfectly safe. The sun had

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set when we crossed the iron bridge at Kosti. That was the last sight I had of the White Nile, and it looked very beautiful in the red glow of evening. There is no doubt that it appears at its best during sunset or sunrise, or even by the soft light of the tropical moon.

Morning brought us to Khartoum, where I was met by Mr. Lyall, the Civil Secretary, who very kindly took me to breakfast and made me at home in his comfortable house, which overlooks the Blue Nile. Arrangements had been made for me to continue my journey that night in a private carriage. Into this my entire outfit was packed, as it was to be my home for the next few days until I reached Port Sudan. These private carriages or saloons are a fine institution. Everything is planned for one's comfort. They comprise a roomy compartment, with tables and chairs and a bed, a bathroom, kitchen and a much-appreciated ice-box—a sort of self-contained flat on wheels. Nothing could be more complete. Good food, drinkables and a cook are included, so what more could one wish? Travelling in the Sudan is almost luxurious.

I spent the last day in Khartoum in settling up and saying good-bye to my recently-made friends and



*Building a railway across the desert to Kassala at the rate of
a mile and a quarter each day.*

The man in this picture is carrying two steel sleepers weighing 80 lbs. each.

SUDAN DESERTS

thanking them for their many kindnesses and whole-hearted hospitality, and in the evening I took possession of my comfortable carriage, which had been attached to the east-bound train.

For two days the train took me across the dry desert country, where strange mirages deceive one into believing that there were lakes everywhere; people or cattle a little distance away appear immensely tall and seem to be walking in the sky, small scrubby bushes look like giant trees and low hills become lofty islands in the mirage lakes far above the earth. Nowhere have I seen more extraordinary effects than those in the Sudan deserts. They are particularly noticeable in the morning, when the powerful sun heats suddenly the sandy wastes and makes the world look so beautifully unreal, and makes one realise that "things are not always what they seem." Atbara was passed the morning after leaving Khartoum, thence by the Port Sudan railway to Haiya Junction. There my carriage was picked up by the construction train of the Kassala line, and taken south to rail-head, where I arrived on the evening of the second day.

The camp was in the flat, arid country, which during the dry season is burnt up by the sun, but with the first rains becomes covered with rapid-growing

THE VAST SUDAN

vegetation, so that in a few hours the appearance of the land changes completely. When I saw it towards the end of the dry season everything was at its worst ; the scanty vegetation was greyish-yellow and parched and coated with dust, and the heat was terrific. The temporary camp, which moved with the advance of the railway construction, consisted of a few large tents for the engineers and other officials and numerous grass huts for the men. Anything more dreary could scarcely be imagined, and yet, in spite of the surroundings, there was the usual cheeriness of the Britisher, who seems to adapt himself to any and all conditions. He takes his few little comforts with him, and gets the very best he can out of everything. He works hard, seldom grumbles and is always cheerful, so long as he is not denied his daily bath. Should that be impossible, and water has to be a long way off to make it so, he makes the best of it and does not growl more than is absolutely necessary. The small staff seemed to enjoy their work and take pride in the fact that they were building a railway at almost unheard-of speed. I had come here with the idea of making a film of this new railway and the methods of construction, and those in charge of the work received me with the utmost



A further stage in the building of the desert railway.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

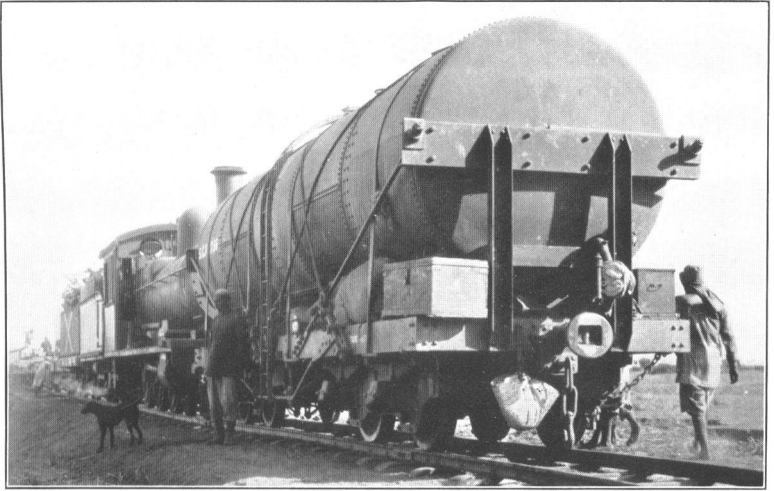
kindness and were only too keen to help in every way to make my task as easy and interesting as possible.

All work is done during the mornings, starting as soon as the light allows and finishing about one o'clock, making a working day of about eight hours. Working in the afternoon is out of the question owing to the great heat. On the morning following my arrival I had breakfast at five, and then moved forward with the train to rail-head a few miles from the camp. On arriving there I found a scene of remarkable activity, hundreds of workmen hustling about, each one with a definite job to do, for the construction of a mile and a quarter of railway line must be completed before one o'clock. It seemed to me that this was a super-human task, and I was anxious to see how it could be done.

Perhaps I was a trifle incredulous, but who will blame me? It did not really seem possible. Leaving the train, I moved forward with my camera until I came to a place, some five hundred yards or so ahead of the huge locomotive, where the raised earthwork for the road bed had been completed. It was about two feet above the ground level. Here I placed one of my cinema cameras in position, facing the train. It was then exactly seven o'clock, Between me

THE VAST SUDAN

and the train swarms of men were working with feverish speed. Slowly they came closer and closer. First of all men came, each one carrying on his shoulders two steel sleepers weighing altogether one hundred and sixty pounds. They *ran* with these loads, an endless stream of them, each one dropping his load on the road bed at the approximate place where it would be needed. With incredible speed this line of sleepers came forward to where I stood, and then it passed me. Following immediately on this operation men came who adjusted the sleepers to their exact position as to alignment and spacing. Scarcely was this done when groups of seven or eight men came at the run bearing the rails, and these they dropped on the earthwork alongside of the sleepers. Other men followed and lifted the rails on to them, locking them on the one side into the lugs of the sleepers. As soon as a rail was thus secured, the corresponding one on the opposite side was carefully placed into position and loosely attached to the plates and to the preceding rail. One man came then with the spacing rod—gauge, I suppose is the correct word—placed it across the rails to get the exact width, while other men bolted it securely; and all this time the train had been coming towards me, a few yards every



7.18 o'clock.

At 7.0 o'clock there was nothing but the earthwork where now the train passes on the completed railway.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

four minutes, following on the heels of the men, who had scarcely time to complete their tasks before the engine reached them. Seldom was the front of the train more than twenty yards behind the actual work of construction. At eighteen minutes past seven the powerful engine pulling the immense train had actually passed me. In other words, where eighteen minutes before there was bare ground there was now a railway line ready to carry the heaviest trains. Simultaneously with the railroad the telegraph line was being erected, so that the iron poles complete with their wires were at all times alongside of the engine. More perfect co-ordination I have never seen, and all the work was done without confusion. The men knew their work, and what is more they did it, and did it with startling speed ; and this, please remember, was in a hot climate, where in the shade (and there was none) the temperature was from 100 (in the early morning) to 115 degrees Fahrenheit. What the sun temperature was I dare not even guess. It is interesting to know that a day's work in the earlier days of the building of the line was from daylight, say five-thirty, to four o'clock, and that during the last few months the same amount of work was being accomplished in a working day three hours shorter. In other words, by knowing their

THE VAST SUDAN

duties thoroughly and by more systematic methods the men were able to cut down their working day by three hours and yet produce the same results.

In October of 1923 the construction of this line was commenced, and in April of this year (1924) it had reached its terminus, Kassala, a total distance of two hundred and thirty miles, an average speed of about a mile and a quarter per day. It is a great achievement, and one that reflects the utmost credit on all concerned. The work was done under difficult conditions, particularly those of climate and water supply. There is practically no water in the country traversed by this line, so almost every drop had to be carried from Haiya Junction, its starting-point on the main line. In fact, I am not sure that it did not come all the way from Atbara.

It is interesting to know that all the material used in the construction of the Kassala railway is of British manufacture—steel sleepers, rails, engines, trucks, and all—and that everything was brought to Port Sudan in British ships. The large orders were placed in order to help the serious situation resulting from unemployment, and to keep the steel works going during the time following the depression after the termination of the Great War.



Two means of transport.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

The reader may ask what purpose is served by the building of this railway across a desert land. It is chiefly for the purpose of carrying cotton and other products from the Kassala region. Formerly this was carried by camels, a slow and expensive and very limited method of transport, and one which was bound to retard the development of the agricultural resources of this section of the country, which will now be able to carry its imports and exports to and from Port Sudan, and so be accessible to all parts of the world. The great advantage of this will be felt particularly in Great Britain, which imports more cotton than any country, I believe. I understand that eventually the line from El Obeid to the Sennar Dam will be linked up with the new line at Kassala. This will save going by Khartoum, and will also open up great tracts of country for the growing of cotton, which would be otherwise too remote from transportation facilities.

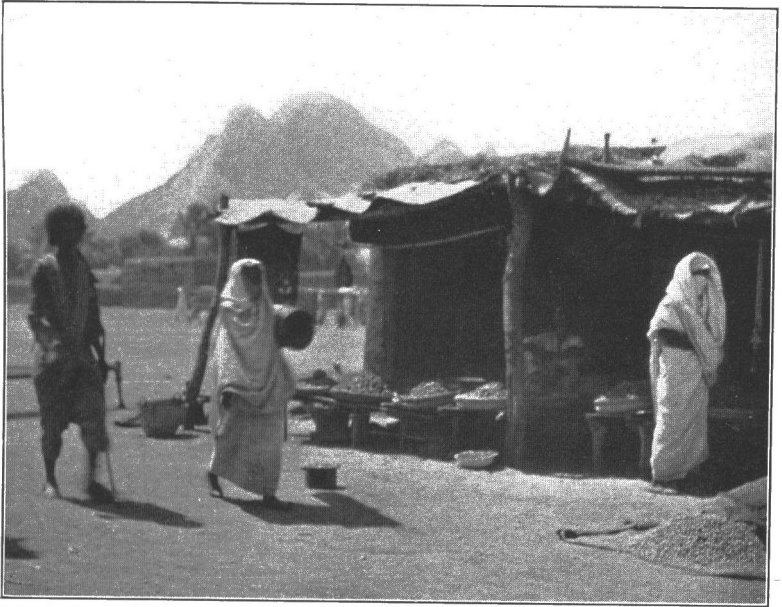
From where I stood while making the film of the construction work I could see the mountains above Kassala, and stranger mountains would be difficult to find. Their curious rounded outline reminds one of a child's early attempt at drawing hills; with their queer knobs of solid rock they do not look real.

Kassala itself is about 1,700 feet above sea

THE VAST SUDAN

level, and Gebel Kassala rises another 2,600 feet above the town. As I was anxious to see the place the engineer in charge of the railway offered to take me there in his car. It was only a distance of about eight miles, but it was across country, part of it over cultivated land, now dry and hard without vegetation and very bumpy. However, the much-abused Ford bounced along at a speed far too great for comfort; but speed was necessary, as I had but a couple of hours all told before I must be back at the train.

A more picturesque town it has never been my good fortune to see, and I only regretted that I could not stay there several days or even weeks in order to photograph and paint it. Everything in it made a picture, but nothing appealed to me more than the suk or market. The yellow sandy ground, dazzling in the brilliant sunshine, green sheds of sticks and matting and thatch were the shops, here and there a more pretentious one of native-made bricks and others of sun-baked mud. In the open-fronted, low buildings were endless baskets of eatables (more or less), dried dates, onions, coffee, and grain, hard-looking bread of sorts, and some fresh fruits and many things quite unfamiliar to me. People of many kinds were there.



The market of Kassala.

With Gebel Kassala in the distance.

KASSALA

Arab women, dark in colour, but with fine faces, their black hair dressed in endless numbers of fine plaits, parted in the centre, wearing many ornaments, such as necklaces, ear-rings and bracelets, and clothed in simple but graceful dresses of various colours, blue of a beautiful shade predominating. Some of these women, of splendidly erect carriage, passed by carrying earthen jars on their heads, true pictures of the East. Some concealed their faces with the yashmak, or with folds of their dresses; some wore bright-coloured low shoes, others were barefoot. The men, no less interesting and picturesque, were of many races or tribes; some, clothed in bright-coloured garments gracefully draped about them, wore turbans tightly wound round the head, or hanging in folds which stayed on their heads for some reason that I could never discover. Others were naked, or nearly so, while here and there a Fuzzy Wuzzy appeared, in marked contrast to all the other people. A fine-looking lot they are, handsome as statues, clean of limb, though otherwise dirty, clothed in a scanty garment of white, or that had been originally white, thrown carelessly over the shoulder. But it is the strange method of arranging the hair that attracts attention to them. It is combed out into an immense

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ball, into which ornaments and long pins are inserted. Kipling has immortalised them as the Fuzzy Wuzzies of war-like habits. They may be fine fighters and brave as lions, and they are certainly an attraction in pictures, but from all I have heard of them they are not good for much else, being lazy to a fault. Still, they are really fine looking and I was glad to see them. To tell the truth, and so expose my ignorance, I had always imagined that the Sudan was entirely or almost entirely peopled by these strange-looking people, and it was a great disappointment to me to find that I had been so completely mistaken. For as a matter of fact the Fuzzy Wuzzy is not found much farther west than Kassala. Their home is in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea coast.

I was very anxious to have some of these strangely handsome men in the picture of the suk, but it was not easy to do. They seemed to have a marked objection to being photographed, and either hurried past me or stayed hidden behind the buildings, or, what was still more aggravating, they went back of me. Any request that they would stop within range of the fearsome cinema camera met with little or no response. Once a small party came along on camels, a wonderfully picturesque group, but they rushed

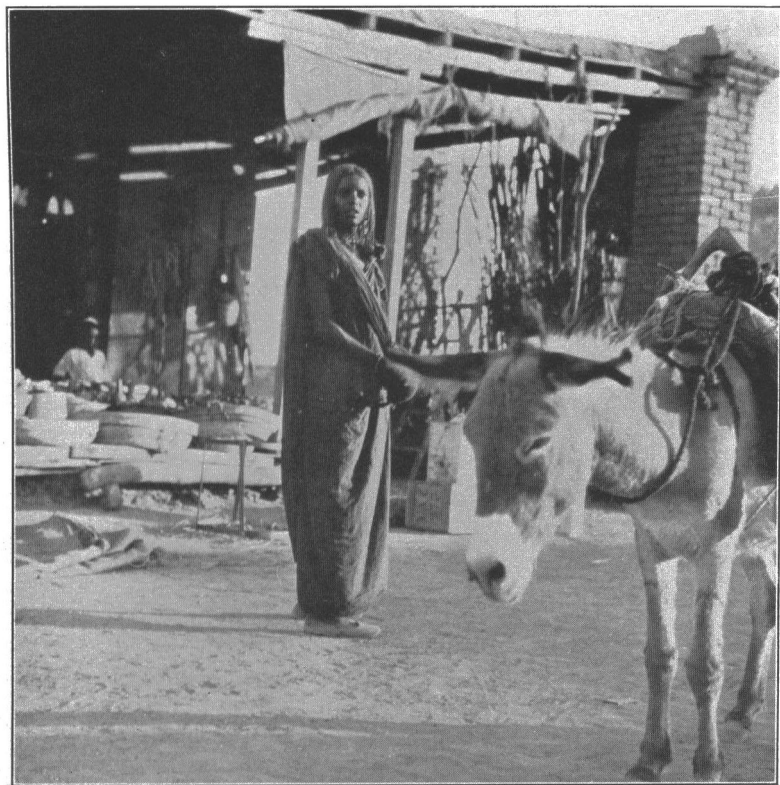
CAMELS AT KASSALA

past me with such speed that I could do nothing, nothing, at least, but admire them, and I regretted more than ever that I could not stay in the place and make the sort of pictures that could be made if I had time to wait patiently for suitable opportunities. At one side of the market square there was a very large tree, a wild fig or banyan, I think, and under the shade of its rich green foliage a number of people, both men and women, were seated, offering their wares for sale. It was a wonderful picture ; the mass of beautiful colours made me long for a colour film, which alone could give an adequate idea of the scene. In the background stood Gebel Kassala with its strangely beautiful form outlined against the intense blue of the sky. Now and then camels passed by and added greatly to the composition of the picture. Not far from this scene was the grain market, with its piles of delicately-coloured grain, watched over by Arabs in flowing robes. Here and there were groups of women in their dresses of curious blue, which was such a perfect contrast to the prevailing tints of yellow. To complete the picture there were camels, single or in groups, standing up or lying down and lazily chewing their cud in delightful contentment, while in the immediate background were masses of

THE VAST SUDAN

graceful date palms, their feathery green leaves making a screen through which the mountain could be seen. A typical picture of Africa at its very best, typical in colour, form and lazy, dreamy peacefulness. This was the Kassala of to-day, under the protective rule of far-away England. It is strange indeed that we of the land of grey skies and sombre colours should be able to adjust ourselves to the ruling successfully of countries which are so completely opposite in every respect. What a change we have wrought in places like Kassala. To-day peace and security and increasing prosperity; yesterday turmoil and strife, bloodshed and misery.

Kassala, situate within a few miles of the Abyssinian border, is on the River Kash, which comes from the mountains of Abyssinia; its upper part, where it is called the Mareb, being the dividing-line between that country and Eritrea. Near Kassala it disappears into the sand, according to the peculiar way of so many African rivers. During the dry season the town depends on wells, for there is no other water, and the river bed is nothing but a broad sandy waste, bordered here and there by palm trees and scrub. The town has a population of over fifty thousand, and is the headquarters of the Governor of the province,



A shop in the picturesque town of Kassala.

KASSALA

and the chief market for grain and cotton of the country for many miles round. Now that it is the terminus of the new railway it assumes a new and greater importance, but it is to be hoped that its primitive beauty will not disappear under the changed conditions. The district was the scene of many battles during the latter part of last century and probably many years before. In 1894 the Italians took Kassala and held it for two and a half years, during the latter part of which time they were virtually prisoners, as already related in the first chapter of this book. Not until the end of 1897 was the place taken over by the Egyptian troops under the command of Colonel Parsons, and from then to the present day there has been peace, such as was hitherto unknown to the town and the surrounding country.

It was with the greatest regret that I packed up my cameras and took my departure from the most interesting town I had seen since my arrival in the Sudan; but the train must not be kept waiting, for if it was late I should miss my connection at Haiya Junction, where my carriage was to be attached to the Port Sudan train. On my bumping way back to rail-head a long line of camels passed; they were all loaded with great bales of cotton. What a slow method

THE VAST SUDAN

of transportation this appeared. For countless ages it had been the country's only method, but to-day, when speed is the vital factor in development, it seemed depressingly slow. The railway, which was to be opened within the next few days, would change this, and would enable produce to be taken from Kassala to England in about seventeen days, whereas before it would have required about a month to take it as far as the coast.

On arriving at the train, which had advanced a mile and a quarter since early morning, my outfit was put on board and by noon I was heading north. It had been a busy day, but every moment had been interesting. All things considered, perhaps the most interesting morning I had spent since my arrival in the country, for I had seen the new and the old being linked up, and had been able to photograph scenes which actually depicted the real re-conquest of the Sudan.

Of the journey back to the main line there is little to tell. The dreary desert country offered little in the way of interest, but fortunately I had plenty to do, so the time passed quickly. My packing had to be finished, for I had practically completed my work, and everything must be in readiness to put on the

THE RETURN JOURNEY

steamer. Films that had been exposed, and which were to show the people at home what is being done in the vast Sudan, must be sealed up to protect them from the humid heat of the coast ; cameras carefully packed for shipment, and all the details must be attended to that mark the end of a trip. Fortunately, my carriage was roomy, so that had it not been for the terrible heat the work would have been easy enough, but even though I was stripped to the waist I found my task a hard one. As I worked, my mind was filled with the questions : How would the film turn out ? Had I given the correct exposures ? And under the great variety of conditions this was a gamble. Then I wondered whether the heat of the past month had affected the film. It had been too hot to do even any test development, therefore everything was uncertain, and yet on the successful results so much depended. Having been granted every possible facility by the Government officials, it was only natural that I should be anxious to prove that I had availed myself of the conditions and produced a film which would give people a correct idea, not only of the country itself, but of the work that was being done for its development and improvement. This was all very worrying ; still, I hoped for the best, and as

THE VAST SUDAN

it turned out there was no reason for me to have worried.

About twenty hours after leaving rail-head my carriage was connected to the Port Sudan express, and I was headed homeward at good speed. The first part of the journey was over country that did not differ essentially from what I had seen since leaving Atbara, the same dry sandy land which was only waiting for the rains to clothe it with green vegetation. The scrubby thorn trees were almost leafless, but gradually, as we made our way eastward, hills appeared to break the monotony of the landscape. In time the speed of the train diminished somewhat, for we were climbing steadily, winding our way through great boulder-covered mountains. The scenery became more and more impressive, and the distant views of rugged mountain ranges were really beautiful. I regretted the fact that it was the dry season, for otherwise the soft green foliage of the African trees would have added a great deal to the beauty of the country. In spite of the increasing elevation the heat was intense, and I was glad to be alone in my carriage, so that I need not consider my appearance and could dress in the least possible amount of clothing. After reaching Summit Station, which, as its name implies, is the

THE RAILWAY

highest point of the railway, 3,000 feet above sea level, the speed of the train increased noticeably as we made the gradual descent.

It struck me that the work of constructing this railway must have offered many serious difficulties, for in such a mountainous country there is not only the question of gradients and curves, but the torrential rains, so characteristic of tropical Africa, have to be taken into consideration. A place that may be dry to-day might be a raging torrent to-morrow. Coming from the high rocky hills, the devastating force of the water would be terrific, and it is not to be wondered at that during the work of construction there were many serious wash-outs along the line. Looking at the now dry water-courses, it was easy to imagine what happened when the floods swept down the gulleys after heavy rains. Immense boulders, torn from the hill-side, were strewn along the course of the rushing streams; trees, uprooted by the breaking away of banks, lay half buried in the rocks and gravel, their branches torn, their trunks naked and bleached by the sun, like huge distorted skeletons. Great gashes in the surface of the earth were made by the water in its eagerness to find an outlet; and looking at it all one marvelled that the railway had withstood the yearly

THE VAST SUDAN

onslaught since the time of the opening of the line in 1906.

Considering the innumerable difficulties, the construction of this railway was accomplished with remarkable speed. From Atbara to Port Sudan the line is about three hundred miles in length, and this was completed in fourteen months. Originally the Red Sea terminus was Suakin, but owing to its superior harbour facilities Port Sudan was eventually chosen. When I first saw the mountains back of Port Sudan from the town they filled me with curiosity. In a way they appealed to me as beautiful. No verdure shows, nothing but great ranges of rock and sand, which in the hot, moisture-laden atmosphere of the Red Sea take on an infinite range of wonderful colours, from gold to purple, changing continually with the hour of the day, but perhaps most beautiful when outlined in masses of deep rich tones against the setting sun. At last I was in those mountains, winding about through the deep defiles with the peaks of solid rock towering above ; and in the distance far below was Port Sudan, a mere suggestion of a town, almost lost in the blue haze of the plains and sea. The strongly-defined foreground of bold rocks, sun-scorched and bare, made a wonderful contrast to the tender colours

PORT SUDAN

of the distance, and I was glad I had come this way.

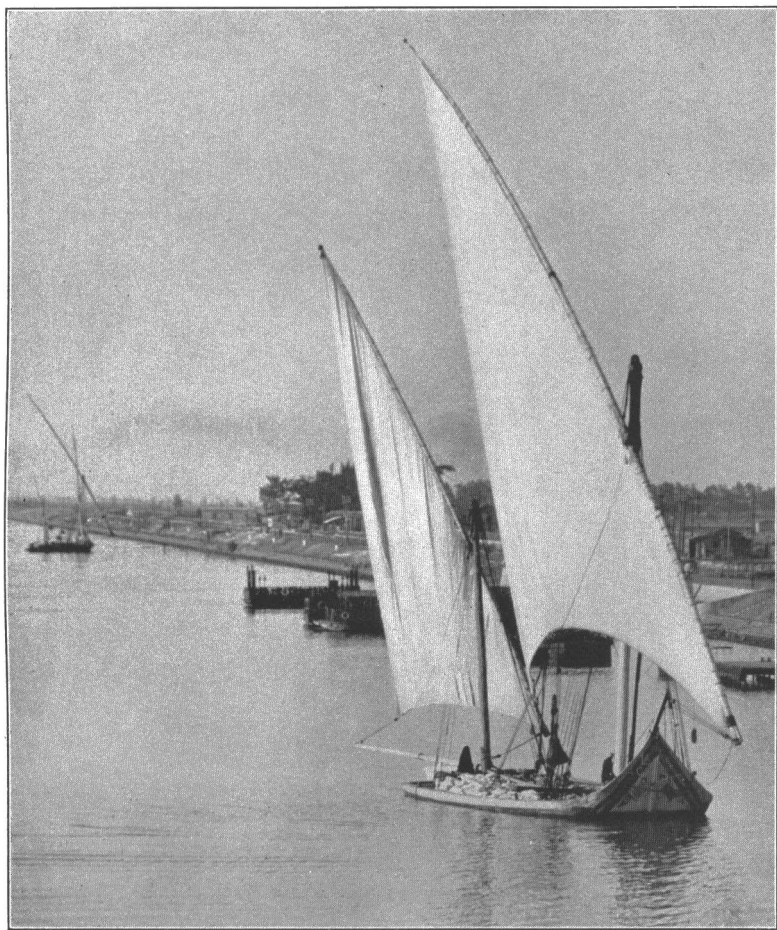
Shortly before the sun set the train came into the station, and there I learned that the steamer was late and was not expected till to-morrow, so I made my way to the hotel, which is under the management of the railway, and was fortunate enough to find that a room had been reserved for me by the thoughtful officials. The next day was spent in making photographs of the harbour and in attending to the shipping of my belongings. The same remarkable courtesy and kindness which I had experienced throughout the Sudan was shown to me here. My carriage was brought alongside the steamer as soon as she arrived, and my outfit was taken on board.

Port Sudan is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable of the many noteworthy achievements in connection with the development of the Sudan due to the efforts of such men as Lord Cromer, Lord Kitchener, and Sir Reginald Wingate. Some doubted the wisdom of the undertaking, which involved such a large outlay of money. Where there was nothing but a small native village only a few years ago there is now a splendid quay, built of solid stone blocks, fitted with the most up-to-date system of steam cranes on travelling rails,

THE VAST SUDAN

so that the loading and unloading of steamers can be accomplished with the least possible delay, for the trains come alongside the steamers. Sheds, warehouses and Customs buildings are on a liberal scale and of solid stone, and there is probably no more complete and convenient port to be found in Africa, and it is growing with almost incredible speed. It is not very long ago that some people who thought themselves wise declared the port was unnecessarily large. I see now that elaborate plans are being made for doubling the size and capacity of the port. To-day it is not an uncommon thing to see four or five large steamers waiting for their turn to dock, and they speak eloquently of the necessity of increased facilities, and prove conclusively that those whose inspired vision foresaw the value of this Red Sea port were correct in their ideas, notwithstanding what was said by those who opposed the scheme when it was first discussed.

Up to within a few years ago the Sudan had no seaport, unless we count Suakin (a few miles south of Port Sudan). All the imports and exports of the country had to go through Egypt. This involved great expense and loss of time, owing to the fact that everything had to be transhipped from train to



A picturesque dhow.

Laden with stone for the construction work in connection with widening the Suez Canal.

THE FUTURE

steamer, both at Shellal and Halfa. Then there is another serious point in connection with the necessity of an outlet for the country other than through Egypt. In the event of trouble between ourselves or the Sudanese and Egypt, and judging from what has occurred within the past weeks the possibility of trouble is not quite as remote as might be imagined—what would be the position of the Sudan? It would be practically cut off from the rest of the world. Another point, remote perhaps, but still within the range of possibility, is that Egypt might conceivably be in the hands of some other country; stranger things have happened! In such an event the necessity for a Red Sea port would be absolutely vital. Then, again, there is the question of the Suez Canal. Supposing another Great War; and Heaven forbid that such a calamity would ever occur again; yet it is a possibility, and as such must be considered. Any fool can prepare for a certainty. It is the uncertainty that offers the most insurmountable difficulties. In such an event the Canal might be seized by our enemy. That same enemy might also control Egypt. Where then would the Sudan find access to the world? If Egypt were friendly and an enemy held the Canal we would have the advantage of being able to transport men, munitions

THE VAST SUDAN

or whatever was necessary from the Mediterranean through Egypt and the Sudan to the Far East. Whichever way one looks, the importance of the Red Sea port is equally great and vital, both to ourselves and to the Sudan, and the nation's gratitude is due to those to whose wise council and determination we owe the building of Port Sudan.

CHAPTER VI

IN the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to give an idea of the Sudan as it appeared to me during my brief visit. What I saw is about what anyone else might see. I had no opportunity for the careful study of the country or its people. I went there chiefly with the idea of making a film of the bird and animal life on and near the Nile. In other words, to do on the Nile what I had done in British East Africa during my several visits to that wonderful game country. But my plans changed within a very short time after my arrival. To begin with, I was unlucky enough to be there when for some reason, which has not been explained by anyone, the game did not come close to the river according to its usual habit. During other winters great herds of many kinds of game frequented the banks of the White Nile and its tributaries, so that from a boat they could be photographed. Giraffe, buffalo, water-buck, white-eared cob, hartebeest, Mrs. Gray's lechwe, roan antelope, situtunga and elephant, were commonly seen, and occasionally lion or even leopard.

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The idea of photographing these creatures from a boat appealed to me very strongly. It would be something different from anything I had undertaken previously, and I believed that a film of the Nile with its many animals would prove interesting to the public ; but as I have said, it was not a good year. Animal life was abnormally scarce near the river, and doing much with the camera was a matter of luck. It also happened that I found the Sudan to be so full of other and even more interesting things that were a surprise to me, and I decided to devote my energies and my camera to showing the Sudan and its people, and to trying to demonstrate what is being done out there for the development of the country. This offered opportunities for making a film that would be full not only of human interest, but would be of value as showing what England has done in a region which, until now, has never had a chance for development, and which is almost unknown to the majority of people. For my own part I had very little idea of what the country was like. Its enormous size astonished me. One million and twenty-five thousand square miles is its approximate area. England could be dropped into it and almost lost. Its greatest length from north to south is about thirteen hundred

AN IMMENSE COUNTRY

miles and the width eleven hundred. Describing its position in the words of a book on geography, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan may be said to be bound on the north by Egypt, on the west by French Equatorial Africa, on the south by Belgian Congo, Uganda, and Kenya and on the east by Abyssinia, Eritrea and the Red Sea. Its extreme southernmost point is three and a half degrees north of the Equator. The White Nile is, of course, by far the largest river in the country, and the one that is the greatest factor in its development. Who actually discovered the source of this great river is a somewhat open question. The fact that it came from the Great Lakes appears to have been known to the Romans, who sent expeditions to report on it. Ptolemy in A.D. 150 made a map of the course of the Nile, starting from its original source, the Mountains of the Moon, presumably Ruwenzori, thence through three lakes. But modern exploration of the Nile may be said to date from 1848, when the two missionaries Rebmann and Krapf published the results of their travels, during which they saw Ruwenzori and the four Great Lakes. Others may lay claim to be the discoverers in still more recent times, but credit is really due to them more for the detailed and accurate information they gave than for

THE VAST SUDAN

actual discoveries. The most important tributaries of the White Nile are the Bahr el Ghazal, which widens out and forms Lake No, near its junction with the main river, the Sobat, the Blue Nile, which rises in the mountains of Abyssinia, flowing from Lake Tsana and joining the White Nile at Khartoum (the first definite information regarding its source was supplied by the Jesuit Fathers, who visited Abyssinia between 1525 and 1622), and the Atbara, which rises on the borders of Abyssinia near Gallabat. Then there is the Bahr el Zeraf, which is really more of an off-shoot of the main river, starting in the Sudd area near Shambe and entering the Nile below Tonga.

Generally speaking, the Sudan may be described as a more or less flat country, the greater part of which suffers from lack of water, except in the neighbourhood of the actual rivers. In parts of the Western Provinces water is so scarce that both the people and their stock have to depend largely on water melons. The chief products of the country at present are cotton, grain, principally dhurro, gum, ivory, and cattle. Of these the cotton and gum are by far the most valuable, but cotton promises to be of steadily increasing importance, and it is with this fact in view that the great irrigation schemes are being carried out. Of these

POPULATION

the Sennar Dam on the Blue Nile is the most ambitious effort. With the increased area of cultivation, made possible by a constant supply of water, railway facilities will, of course, have to be extended in order that the crops may be carried to the coast. One of the problems which follow naturally on this phase of the country's development is that of labour. Whatever the population of the Sudan may have been in the past, we know that it was ruthlessly depleted from time to time as far back as history goes, and on until the end of the Mahdi's reign of terror. When Sir Ernest Budge visited the Province of Dongola in 1897 he says that he found "four-fifths of the population had been destroyed—the young men had been slain in the wars of the Mahdi and Khalifa, and the young women had been carried off to fill the harems of the Bakkara." What was true of Dongola was true of many, if not most parts. How many years it will take to repopulate the country is difficult to say, for the people are not usually prolific; large families seem to be quite the exception and infant mortality is fairly common. The total population is to-day about three and a half million. In the southern parts, particularly near the Nile, the tribes are chiefly negro; as we go farther north they are still mostly black-skinned, but

THE VAST SUDAN

are of more or less Hamitic origin, with a mixture of blood from many countries. The Arabs are of comparatively recent arrival, having come in important numbers probably five or six hundred years ago. With the exception of the pure negro tribes, most of the other people owe a great deal of their uncertainty of origin to the fact that slaves were taken from so many parts and represented probably almost every tribe in Africa, and perhaps even farther east. The women slaves bore children, which were half-breeds, and these in turn bore others, so that the original characteristics gradually vanished, and to-day you will find in one person the traces of many different tribes and even different races. Generally speaking, the river negroes, such as the Shilluk, Dinka, Nuwer and others have, as I have already stated, an inherent dislike for work of any kind, except attending to their cattle, fishing, hunting, or fighting. But if this peculiarity can be changed, there is no reason that they should not become useful labourers. However, the "but" is a big one, and has proved discouraging to many cheerful optimists, who fondly believed they could solve the problem merely by telling these people what a good thing it is to work. They can only be converted by the need of money, and money, as most

COTTON

of us poor creatures know, does not come without work. The people of the more northern territory, though not over fond of manual labour, have begun to realise the value and use of money, consequently they are overcoming their natural dislike of work, because of their desire for things that money alone will purchase. The Arabs of the lower classes seem to be industrious and are usually fairly intelligent, so that they do work above the ordinary manual labour if opportunity offers. From what I could learn the Fallata appear to promise well as labourers, but unfortunately they are in small numbers.

It will be interesting to see what happens with the very large areas that will be soon under cotton cultivation, whether sufficient labour will be forthcoming. But in all probability the natural increase of the population, now that fighting has practically ceased to be a national pastime, will gradually repopulate the country, so that the question will, we may hope, solve itself. Up to the present a great many Egyptians have, I am told, been brought in. They are good workers, but it seems to be a great mistake having too many of them in the country; especially is this true now that we have seen so recently that they have been the chief trouble makers.

THE VAST SUDAN

The Sudan should be worked by its own people under proper and effective guidance. Foreign labour brought into a country nearly always ends in disaster, or at least in trouble, and a country which has suffered so cruelly as the Sudan has from the hands of the Egyptians should be particularly careful how it allows those who are too often the descendants of their oppressors to get a foothold.

The most important question in relation to the Sudan is what our policy is to be. Egypt is doing all in her power to try to get possession of the country. And why? Because she has seen during the few years of our administration the enormous potentialities of the apparently desert land. She has seen the work that we have done and the money that has been expended begin to bear fruit, but so far everything has been only the laying of the foundation for the future. The building of colossal dams; the nearly two thousand miles of completed railways; the great port on the Red Sea; the making of roads; the valuable work of the health authorities, which has made it possible even for European people to live in places where formerly there was little else than pestilence; the establishment of commerce on a sound basis; the careful development of education;

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

and, above all, the creating of law and order, of justice and fair play for every man, woman and child, be they rich or poor. What is to be the result of all this splendid work? It is difficult to say with accuracy, but if the promises of the present may be taken as an indication, it is safe to predict a wonderful future of prosperity for the hitherto barren land. The almost limitless supply of cotton that with proper development may be grown will alone prove a source of enormous income, and Egypt sees this and realises with disgust the opportunities she has missed. She had her chance, and what little use did she make of it. Did she ever do a single thing which would benefit the country? I think not. If she did, it is not recorded in history. For thousands of years she was more or less connected with the Sudan; in recent years she had practically possession of it; and during her entire period of control, or part control, she simply bled the country by every vile means in her power. Nothing was too frightful, nothing too low and cowardly for the Egyptians to perpetrate, provided they could secure booty, in the form of slaves, gold, ivory and whatever they could make use of. In more recent times promises were made repeatedly that the most urgently-needed reforms should be

THE VAST SUDAN

carried out ; but their promises were as worthless as might have been expected from a people who knew so little, or should I say practised so little, of honour and justice. She made what use she could of the Sudan and its unfortunate people, and in return gave them nothing but ill-treatment. For the future of the country she cared nothing. It was the land of the "Blacks," so why should anything be done for them ? The men made good slaves, the women they could find uses for, their country was for the most part a sandy desert, to develop it would mean work and expense, and anyhow it wasn't worth it ; so they considered. So also did others who came there during the Egyptian rule. Even Baker characterised it as "having neither natural capabilities nor political importance," and yet we see what has happened in a quarter of a century, during which the British have undertaken its administration. It has become an important and valuable part of Africa, of direct interest to ourselves and others. Now, too late, let us hope, Egypt sees her fatal mistake. She abused her trust when she could have accomplished great things, and to-day she clamours loudly for what she allowed to slip from her hands through gross incompetence and dishonesty. The claims she makes are so absurd



A sailing dhow on the White Nile near Omdurman.

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

that they scarcely deserve notice. She has nothing to support the statement made quite recently that the Sudan and Egypt were from ancient times one country. They were, instead, always two or more separate and distinct countries, occupied by absolutely different peoples with different languages and religions. That Egypt, when she wanted plunder, made repeated expeditions into the Sudan and conquered parts and held them for various periods is true enough ; but her hold was at best precarious, and one maintained only by force of arms. She was probably more nearly in actual possession of the Sudan during the latter part of the last century when with Turkey she made a pretence of governing the country. The result of the appalling corruption and oppression was, as already shown, the Mahdi's uprising, with its attendant horrors, all of which would never have occurred had the people been treated properly. And now she not only asks, but demands, the Sudan, and has even the audacity to claim that the Sudanese prefer Egyptian to British rule. One does not have to be in the country very long to find out the incorrectness of this absurd claim. Those of the natives who know the Egyptians of to-day or remember them in the past have nothing but bitterness in their souls for them, and the one thing

THE VAST SUDAN

they dread more than another is a resumption of the old regime, when nothing they possessed was really their own, from their cattle to their wives and even to themselves. Then it must be understood that a large proportion of the population is composed of negroes, who are little more than savages. These know nothing of the people from the north. They may have stories passed down to them from their ancestors, which relate the deeds of horror perpetrated by the invaders of their country, but beyond that they know little or nothing on the subject. The few Egyptian clerks and mamours and others in more or less subordinate positions with whom they may come in contact are not associated in the minds of the people with the old invaders. They usually do their work well enough, lead rather colourless lives, and are scarcely a feature of the country or its administration. From what has transpired lately it would seem that many of them have been doing all in their power to stir up trouble.

It is to the Britisher that the natives look for everything. He may try and punish the criminal and his justice is not questioned. His simple word is worth as much as any oath. He speaks the truth even though it be unpleasant. He may at times be severe,

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yet it is seldom that he is anything but just. He is mad, of course, that goes without saying, he does all sorts of strange things that no one can understand. He measures the current of the rivers and tabulates the rise and fall of the water. He catches rain in funny little tins, which he examines carefully after a shower, and he plays strange games; but he speaks their language, and for all his peculiarities he is undoubtedly popular, and his administration is better than anyone has ever remembered. He settles all sorts of cases; no squabble is too small for him to give to it his most careful attention, and in doing this he has strange experiences, especially in cases of domestic troubles. He must know all about the divorce and marriage laws of the tribes that inhabit his district, and that in itself is no easy task, for they are peculiar to a point that is unbelievable. One that struck me as most difficult to grasp was connected with the taking of a wife. It appears that a man when he wants a wife pays to the father of the girl so many head of cattle, goats, sheep or cows. After a time, be it a few months or years, he decides she is not quite up to his expectations, or perhaps he sees one that he likes better, but cannot collect the cattle necessary for her purchase. He then "returns with thanks" his earlier

THE VAST SUDAN

wife and demands the return of the cattle that he had paid for her, in order that he may secure the new wife. Now it is quite conceivable that the cattle may have died or been sold. What, then, is the girl's father to do? Such questions have to be solved to the satisfaction of all concerned by those who are taking charge of the country. Troubles come from very small beginnings, so even these trivial cases must be treated carefully in order to ensure harmony in the community. Family feuds are easily kindled, and they soon lead to serious intertribal conflict. It is in the small affairs, I believe, just as much as in important ones that our people make their power for good felt and appreciated by the natives. They show this by their extraordinary faith in the Britisher. They believe in him and trust him even if he may not be understood by them.

In no country that I have ever visited have I seen a more perfect relationship between the white man and the black than that which exists in the Sudan. This I attribute largely to the very great care that is taken in the selection of officials, a higher grade of white man would indeed be difficult to find. So long as the present methods obtain the country will be well managed. A few ill-chosen officials might easily

ENGLAND AND THE SUDAN

cause untold trouble and undo the splendid work done by those who have during the past quarter of a century held the various offices throughout this territory.

This brings us to the final point. Are we going to give up our protection and administration of the Sudan? In reply to the questions put by Lord Raglan and Viscount Grey in the House of Lords on June 25th of this year Lord Parmoor replied, "The Government was not going to abandon the Sudan in any sense whatever. They recognised the obligations which had been undertaken towards the Sudanese, and regarded these obligations as of such a character that they would not be abandoned by us without very serious loss of prestige." This practically reiterated what Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, stated in 1922: "His Majesty's Government would never allow the progress which has already been made in the Sudan and the greater progress of future years to be jeopardised." These statements seem to admit of no misunderstanding, and they answer in clear language the Egyptian *demand* for "complete and unfettered sovereignty over the Sudan." These demands do not come from the fairer-minded and more intelligent Egyptians, but from those whose heads are swelled

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by the recent changes that have been made in the country. But the independence that she asked for and received has not been such an unqualified success as to prove her capable of increased power. The statement made recently in *The Times* (June 27th, 1924) is only too true, and I cannot do better than quote it: "The first effects of the independence accorded to Egypt are now visible, and the spectacle is by no means encouraging. It is still possible that in time and by painful practice the Egyptians will some day learn to govern themselves, but no one who knows anything of the present state of the country will deny that the withdrawal of British control has been followed by a conspicuous decline in the efficiency of all departments of the Administration and in the whole art of Government. Most Englishmen, however, regard the present condition of Egypt, as Lord Grey does, with considerable anxiety, and there is certainly no disposition to make any further concessions until self-government in Egypt gives much more reassuring results." I do not know what the "further concessions" means, but I do know that nothing that Egypt could or would do should ever influence us to give up the Sudan to that country; for not only would it be a step backwards, but it would be unfair to the Sudanese.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

At present they are, of course, not in any condition to govern themselves. Half the people are absolutely ignorant of everything to do with self-government, and would be mere puppets in the hands of those of the more northern parts. We have a responsibility which we have no right to shirk. Gradually, perhaps, the people will develop and become capable of taking care of themselves; but this will take a long time, how long no man can say, but when it comes it will be time enough to consider whether we should give up entirely our position of trustees. In the meanwhile we are doing all that is possible to fit the people for the great task of self-government. When one hears of those well-intentioned persons who cry loudly for "Africa for the Africans," we feel that their knowledge of the country and its people is extremely limited. If we wish well for the people we must realise that the greatest kindness we can show them is to guide them carefully along the paths of development, so that eventually they will be able to take their place in a modern world.

One of the situations which makes the position of the Sudan particularly difficult to handle is the complete difference of its people. Unquestionably those of the northern part, the Mohammedans, would be

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the rulers, in the event of the country being left to take care of itself. The result would be that the negroes of the southern part would have no voice in anything ; they would most likely become almost slaves, unless they resorted to fighting, and that is what would inevitably happen. They have tasted of the joys of freedom and security under our rule, they know what it is to feel that not only they themselves but their cattle and other possessions are safe, and they would not take kindly to a return to the dark days of oppression. Fighting is second nature to people like the Shilluks, and it would require very little incentive to make them return to their former methods. Until these southern tribes have reached a point where they can take care of themselves and have a say in their country's government it would not be fair to leave them to the mercies of the shrewder northern people, and it will mean many years of work along educational lines before there can be any hope of their reaching such a plane.

Fresh news of a disturbing nature is coming from Egypt almost daily, and strangely enough, and we may hope incorrectly, the names of a few of the most prominent Sudanese are being associated with the demands for the combining of the two countries. This

THE POLITICAL QUESTION

shows the seriousness of the Egyptian propaganda that has been working lately towards the overthrowing of our power there. In the unfortunate event of a so-called combining of the two countries Egypt's position would become insecure, and it would be but a short time before the conditions which existed during the latter part of last century would again produce disturbances, with results that would threaten the safety of Egypt, and we would again be called upon to restore order. The Sudanese have learned a great deal during the past twenty-five years, and they would constitute a very real menace to their northern neighbours. Both countries have everything to gain by allowing the present conditions to continue without alteration. For as *The Times* says, "If the Egyptians decline their former share in it (the Condominium, by which we rule the Sudan together) the practical consequences are not very formidable. They have more to gain by it than anyone else. The British record in Northern Africa certainly gives no ground whatever for the foolish suspicions entertained among Cairo politicians as to our intentions in the Sudan. It is hardly necessary to remind these politicians of what they themselves are fully aware, that the evacuation of the Sudan by Great Britain must lead in a

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very short time to anarchy, to a revival of those fierce, destructive impulses which went near to submerging Egypt hardly thirty years ago, to a recrudescence of the slave trade, and to the release of forces of disorder against which Egypt could only defend herself with the greatest difficulty." Whatever can be done to prevent this happening must be done by us, and we can do it only by adhering with absolute firmness to our resolutions and obligations. We have taken on the White Man's burden, and we must not drop it. In the Sudan we have done some of the finest work in the history of our country, but that work will be only of temporary value if we forsake the country now, or indeed at any time until the people, both negro and Arab, are in the position of being able to carry on successfully. The cynical may smile and say that we are not philanthropists, and that all that has been accomplished is for our own advantage. No country and no government is disinterestedly philanthropic, their own interests must be consulted, but if by doing good to others we can at the same time be of real service to ourselves, what more could be wished? This is, or should be, a practical world, and no one who knows anything of the history of the Sudan and its people will deny the enormous advantages that

SACRED OBLIGATIONS

have been gained by our interference on their behalf, while it is equally undeniable that we too have a great deal to gain by what we have done. Egypt is a small country of only about twelve thousand square miles, but its geographical position is an important one. It has been given every opportunity for development. Let it take advantage of its good fortune, let it take its place in the world, and go ahead as it should do, but under no consideration must it have the Sudan. If the Egyptians wish to continue under the conditions of joint control with us well and good, otherwise let us carry on alone the work of preparing the Sudanese for self-government. Our obligations are sacred. The people, so long down-trodden, have at last found happiness and security. They have been given every reason to be hopeful of the future, and it is our duty to see that their hopes are fulfilled.

List of the more important Animals found in the Sudan

- Elephant (*Elephas africanus*).
- Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*).
- Black rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*).
- White rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*).
- Buffalo (*Bos caffer æquinoctialis*).
- Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis typica and antiquorum*).
- Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus addax*).
- Mrs. Gray's cob, lechwe or water-buck (*Cobus maria*).
- Sing-sing or defassa water-buck (*Cobus defassa*).
- White-eared cob (*Cobus leucotis*).
- Uganda cob (*Cobus thomasi*).
- Vaughan's cob (*Cobus vaughani*).
- Eland (*Taurotragus oryx*, probably *pattersonianus*).
- Giant eland (*Taurotragus derbianus gigas*).
- Heuglin's or lelwel hartebeest (known as Jackson's) (*Bubalis lelwel*).
- Neuman's hartebeest (*Bubalis neumanni*).
- Tora hartebeest (*Bubalis tora*).
- Tiang (*Damaliscus corrigum tiang*).

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- Desert tiang (*Damaliscus corrigum jonesi*).
- Greater kudu (*Strepsiceros capensis*).
- Lesser kudu (*Strepsiceros imberbis*).
- Harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*).
- Abyssinian bushbuck (*Tragelaphus decula*).
- Situtungu (*Tragelaphus (Limnotragus) spekei*).
- Reedbuck (*Cervicapra arundinum*).
- Bohor reedbuck (*Cervicapra redunca*, probably *cottoni*).
- Soemmerring's gazelle, ariel or aoul (*Gazella soemmerringi*).
- Addra, or ril gazelle (*Gazella dama ruficollis*).
- Red-fronted gazelle (*Gazella rufifrons*, probably *salmi*).
- Rothschild's or Mongola red-fronted gazelle (*Gazella rufifrons albonota*).
- Heuglin's gazelle (*Gazella tilonura*).
- Isabelle or genai gazelle (*Gazella Isabella*).
- Dorcas gazelle (*Gazella dorcas*).
- Beira antelope (*Dorcotragus megalotis*).
- Oryx beisa (*Oryx beisa*).
- White oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*).
- Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*, probably *bakeri*).
- Oribi (*Oribia montana* and possibly *haggardi*).
- Abyssinian duiker (*Cephalophus abyssinicus*).

ANIMALS OF THE SUDAN

- Blue duiker (*Cephalophus equatorialis*).
Salts' dik-dik (*Madoqua saltiana*).
Nubian ibex or beden (*Capra nubiana*).
Barbary sheep or auodad (*Ovis tragelaphus*).
Wart-hog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*).
Red bush pig (*Potamochoerus porcus*).
Sennar pig?
Grant's zebra (*Equus burchelli granti*).
Nubian wild ass (*Equus asinus*).
Lion (*Felis leo*).
Leopard (*Felis pardus*).
Cheetah (*Cynælurus jubatus*).

In addition to the above, there are the following animals not included as game :—

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Aardvark. | Spotted hyena. | Porcupine. |
| Hyrax. | Striped hyena. | Crocodile. |
| Wild dog. | Jackal. | Fox. |
| Colobus monkeys and others. | | |

Some of the more important Birds found in the Sudan

Ostrich.	Hawks and eagles and vultures of many species.
Bustards of several species.	Snake birds.
Guinea fowl.	Flamingo.
Francolin.	Crowned or crested crane.
Sand grouse.	Demoiselle crane.
Spur fowl.	Marabou stork.
Quail.	Saddle-bill stork.
Ground hornbill.	Shoebill stork and others.
Secretary bird.	Pelicans.
Geese (including Egyptian and spur-winged).	Ibis (several species).
Teal and ducks of several kinds.	Goliath heron.
Fish eagles.	Squacco heron and others.
	Purple jaçana.

Notes on the Distribution, Appearance, Peculiarities and Habits of the Game of the Sudan

THE distribution of the animals in the Sudan is remarkably local, and there is not sufficient data to enable anyone to give more than a rough and very approximate idea of the range of the game. For identification purposes only the most distinctive markings and colours are given, no attempt is made to go into minute details.

Elephant (*Elephas africanus*, both *oxyotis* and *rothschildi*).—Found distributed throughout the more southerly part of the Sudan in the provinces of Kassala, Fung, Upper Nile, Bahr el Ghazal, Mongalla and the southern part of Kordofan and presumably Darfur. The most marked peculiarity of the Sudan race of elephants is the enormous size of the ears, which attain a vertical length of between six and seven feet and are triangular in shape. Whether this is sufficient

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to justify their separation into a local race is rather a matter of opinion, on account of the extraordinary degree of individual variation which is likely to exist in such highly-developed animals. Unquestionably local conditions of food, climate and surroundings have a direct effect on the development of animals. For example, the elephant found in the region of the Blue Nile are seldom if ever possessed of large tusks, while those farther south and west, especially in Mongalla, the south part of the Bahr el Ghazal province and on to the borders of Uganda and the Belgian Congo, frequently carry tusks of enormous size. The animals themselves also seem larger. The height to which an elephant grows is not very clearly known owing to the difficulty of making measurements when the animal is dead. I have seen sportsmen measuring a freshly-killed specimen with the fore leg *extended*, whereas it should be forced up to the body as though the weight were on it. This can readily be done with the smaller animals, but is, of course, impossible with anything of the size of an elephant. For this reason heights given are not always to be relied upon. Lydekker says that a specimen from Abyssinia is stated to have been 11 feet 6 inches in height, and that they may reach "a dozen feet."

ELEPHANT

The weight of the tusks in proportion to the length differs so much that no rule can be given. A tusk that was owned by Sir E. G. Loder was 10 feet 4 inches long, and weighed two hundred and thirty-five pounds, while a pair that was in the possession of Mr. Rowland Ward measured 11 feet 5½ inches and 11 feet respectively, and weighed *together* only two hundred and ninety-three pounds. The tusks of the bulls are much heavier and generally, I think, straighter than those of the cows. Occasionally I have seen cows with remarkably long tusks with a very decided curve upward. In some cases the tusks are straight or almost straight, in others markedly curved upward; some are more or less convergent, others distinctly divergent; and I have seen one old cow whose tusks came so close together that her trunk could not be lifted in the ordinary manner, but had to be pulled up, and when not in use dropped outside or coiled up on the two tusks. The African elephant is easily distinguished from the Indian species by the size of the ears and by the fact that tusks are commonly carried by the cows. The shape of the head is entirely different, being far more receding. The statement that has been made that the shoulder forms the highest point (in the African species) is open

THE VAST SUDAN

to question. From my own observations and the sketches I have made from life and from numerous photographs I should say that when standing in a strictly normal position the shoulder is *slightly* below the middle of the back. In certain positions the shoulder may be either very much higher or very much lower than the back. Very old cows seem to show a falling away of the hinder part, so that the shoulders appear considerably higher. The habits of the Sudan elephant depend on many conditions. Where they are much hunted they are less likely to either feed or drink during the greater part of the day, but retire to a shaded place and remain there. Ordinarily they feed at night and more or less during the day, except during the middle of the day, when they sleep for several hours. This is not an absolute rule, for I have found them feeding and drinking at all hours of the day and night. For anyone who wishes to see wild elephant to the best advantage and with the least possible expenditure of energy and in the greatest comfort there is probably no place in Africa to be compared with the Upper White Nile. There from the passing steamer it is no uncommon thing to see large herds feeding in the high or short grass near the river bank, and now that shooting has been

HIPPOPOTAMUS

stopped from steamers the opportunities for seeing these magnificent creatures, the real king of beasts, will become better, as they will soon learn that they have nothing to fear from the noisy boats.

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) are found in the White Nile and its tributaries south of Kosti and occasionally as far north as Khartoum. A pair landed in the town not long ago and caused great consternation owing to the popular belief that they are very dangerous. Usually they are seen in herds of from five or six up to twenty or more. They are noticeably shy, seldom showing more than the top of their head and back above water. For many years shooting them from the steamers was allowed, but now that unpardonable form of so-called sport has been stopped the animals will probably become more tame. Unfortunately, great numbers are killed by natives, who regard the flesh as a delicacy. The hippo is essentially an aquatic creature, sleeping usually in the water where it is fairly shallow, with their nostrils above water and their heads frequently resting on each other's backs. When frightened they dive silently, and will remain under water as long as five minutes. They seldom feed during the day, but go ashore at

THE VAST SUDAN

dusk in search of grass and other vegetable food. Farmers have a very natural dislike for them owing to their fondness for young crops. A large field of maize or other "mealies" will be destroyed completely in a single night. Curiously enough, the natives do not take the trouble to build fences round their crops, as they do not realise how small a fence will prove an effective barrier to these great creatures. The roar of the hippo is one of the strangest sounds to be heard on the Nile; it consists of one mighty roar followed by several grunts, and the stranger to the country is likely to believe it to be a lion's roar. There is much diversity of opinion as to whether or not the crocodile is an enemy of the hippo. From my own observations I am inclined to believe that the young are attacked, sometimes with fatal results, if the mother does not happen to be present, for she is very solicitous for the welfare of her offspring and will immediately attack any enemy. I have found young hippo with wounds which had evidently been inflicted by crocodile, though I have never actually seen one killed. The footprint of the hippo is easily distinguished from that of the rhinoceros by having four toes instead of three.

BLACK RHINOCEROS

Black rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*).—In the Sudan these are found only in the province of Mongalla on the east bank of the White Nile. They are very scarce and are carefully protected. These unfortunate creatures are likely to be among the first of the larger animals to be exterminated owing to their stupidity. It requires neither skill nor courage to shoot them. Their poor eyesight makes stalking them easy, even to the inexperienced hunter, and as they keep to a small area of country for a long time they can be found without difficulty. Their hearing is only fairly keen, but they have a remarkably well-developed sense of smell. This is equally a protection and a menace to them, because they have a bad habit of rushing blindly towards where they scent the human being, thereby giving the impression that they are charging, and consequently giving colour to the excuse for shooting in self-defence. Speaking from a very considerable experience with these strangely stupid creatures, I have found that the "charge" is little more than an exhibition of nervousness, caused apparently by their lack of good eyesight. This has been true in nearly every instance except in one district in Kenya, where almost every rhino I saw that was within reasonable range did deliberately charge. When two or three

THE VAST SUDAN

came together shooting was unfortunately really necessary, but this only happened on two or three occasions. As a rule the rhino can be driven off without difficulty. I have had them come into my camp at night, and have chased them away by running after them in my pyjamas and throwing stones. At other times I have stalked them in open country to within thirty yards or so and made photographs, and on no occasion have I myself had to fire at them. If they do charge they *may* be dodged, that is if there is only one ; but the dodging requires a certain amount of coolness, as no move must be made until they come to within two or three yards, at which distance the head is lowered so that they cannot see the object of their attack. At the critical moment it is necessary to give a quick jump sideways. This part of the performance is easy enough, the difficult part is trying to stand still while the huge beast is coming. A full-grown one stands up to about 5 feet 8 inches at the shoulder and weighs in the neighbourhood of two tons. The skin, which is very tough, is in the thickest parts fully half an inch thick, and when cut into strips can be used for sticks or whips ; its clear amber colour when polished is much like that of the hippo skin when treated in a similar manner. The African black

BLACK RHINOCEROS

rhino has two horns composed of compressed fibre or bristles and is not actually attached to the skull, as a rule the front horn is longer than the second one. Unfortunately, these horns have a commercial value, most of them going to China, where they find a ready sale for medicinal purposes. If there was a law absolutely prohibiting the export of these horns it would do a great deal towards preventing the destruction of the rhino. The tracks of these animals are easily distinguished by the three toes. The black rhino has a well-developed upper lip which is more or less prehensile, and is evidently of use in feeding, for the animal browses chiefly on the leaves of small plants. I have seen no evidence of their eating grass. A great deal has been written about the rhinoceros birds (*Buphaga*) which are usually found on the animal, particularly those that live in open country, and the common belief is that they are sentries and give warning of approaching danger. To dispute this is to court trouble, but I venture to say that though they do at times makes a disturbance when man approaches, and so perhaps cause the rhino to look out for danger, their main reason for staying on the animal is to eat the parasites which the coarse skin harbours. We see starlings on sheep and cattle at home, and

THE VAST SUDAN

certainly no one would suggest that they are doing sentry duty. As a sporting trophy few animals are less interesting than the rhino, and certainly few large animals are less interesting to shoot. For the camera hunter they make splendid subjects, interesting and amusing, and there is just enough danger in stalking them to within close range to add the necessary spice of excitement. It is to be hoped that they will be given adequate protection, otherwise in a very few years their present limited habitat will know them no longer. They are practically extinct in South Africa, and are decreasing rapidly in their last stronghold, Kenya and Tanganyika.

White rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*).—The only part of the Sudan in which they are found is in the country to the west of the White Nile in the provinces of Mongalla and the Bahr el Ghazal, probably most numerous in the neighbourhood of the rivers Yei and Meridi. The total number is, however, very small, and these are protected, at least so far as the shooting of them by white men is concerned, but unfortunately the native still continues to kill them whenever opportunity offers, and unless vigorous steps are taken to prevent this continuing it will be but a very few

WHITE RHINOCEROS

years before they vanish altogether. They are easily killed, being if anything even more stupid than their black cousins. They are also far less dangerous. Their eyesight is small protection, as they cannot apparently distinguish clearly anything over about forty yards away. Both their hearing and sense of smell are remarkably good. Next to the elephant they are the largest of the quadrupeds, attaining a height of over six feet and a half; like the black rhinoceros they carry two horns, but of much greater length and more slender in proportion, the front one being, I believe, invariably the longer. The horns of the males seldom if ever exceed 40 inches in length, while those of the female have been known to reach $62\frac{1}{2}$ inches. A noticeable feature of the white rhino is the square nose and elongated slit-shaped nostrils. Of all large creatures they are perhaps the least beautiful, owing to the curiously ungainly shape of the head. In disposition they differ from the black species in being less nervous, though the idea that some writers have given of their being lethargic is only true when the animal has no suspicion of danger; but when once they get scent of man they become greatly excited, and move off without the slightest hesitation and at incredible

THE VAST SUDAN

speed, galloping for some distance before breaking into a fast trot, which continues for many miles. They feed chiefly at night, and though it has been stated that they eat nothing but grass, I have reason to believe that this is open to doubt. During the heat of the day they like to wallow in mud-holes, and in so doing they render the water almost useless to men and even to other animals. Their name is most misleading, as they are not white but rather a dull ash grey, considerably lighter in colour than the black variety.

Buffalo (*Bos caffer æquinoctialis*) are found in the provinces of Fung, Upper Nile, Mongalla, Bahr el Ghazal and Kordofan, their range being about the same as that of the elephant. The buffalo of the Sudan seldom carry as fine horns as those of Kenya and Tanganyika; especially is this true of those in the region of the Blue Nile, and for this reason they have been regarded as a sub-species and given the name of *B. c. æquinoctialis*. It is a great question whether these local races of a species should be named separately, particularly as the horns, which in most cases form the basis of identification and consequent separation, are seldom constant in form and size. In the case of the Sudan buffalo the horns are, on the

BUFFALO

average, of smaller size, but then one of the largest pair of horns on record, 53 inches (outside span) and $47\frac{1}{2}$ inches from tip to tip, was shot in Uganda, which borders on the Sudan. Few animals are more deceptive in size than the buffalo, their massive build giving them the appearance of being far taller than they are; as a matter of fact, they stand only a trifle over five feet at the shoulder. It is difficult to give accurate information as to their habits, as these have changed so much in the last thirty-five years. Before the rhinderpest swept over the country in 1890 the buffalo habitually stayed in the open and fed during the day. In those days they were perhaps the most numerous of all the animals in Africa, but the terrible disease very nearly exterminated them in certain parts of the country. For many years after this the few animals that remained forsook the open during the daytime, retiring to the forests and dense swamps while the sun was up and at dusk coming out to feed and drink. In 1910 this still continued, but during the past few years they appear to have returned to their former habits in many parts of their range, and have increased enormously in number. In the Sudan the few herds that I saw spent the greater part of the day between ten in the

THE VAST SUDAN

morning and three or four in the afternoon under the shade of the trees, where they found protection from the powerful sun. Single individuals and small groups I saw in the open on several occasions during the heat of the day, but they were remarkably wild. They drink once or twice each twenty-four hours, usually in the early morning or late afternoon, and they appear to take great delight in wallowing in mud, probably for the purpose of getting relief from insect pests. They do not seem to have any marked preference for particular kinds of country, for they are found equally in dense forests, open forests with glades, scrub-covered plains, bare plains, papyrus or grass swamps.

Few animals appear to have keener eyesight, hearing and sense of smell. This coupled with their extraordinary way of merging into their surroundings, so that they are very difficult to see, makes it necessary to take every precaution when stalking them. As a rule, however, their main idea when disturbed is to get away as fast as possible. Unless wounded they are not usually so dangerous as people imagine, but unfortunately there are occasional exceptions to this rule when, apparently for no reason that one can discover, they will charge. This is most likely to

BUFFALO

occur with old, bad-tempered, solitary bulls or with cows that have young calves ; but I have known it to happen in a herd of over thirty, when one of the number, a bull, made an unprovoked attack on two natives, killing the one and seriously injuring the other. Incidentally I may add that I watched this herd and the bad-tempered master bull for several hours ; he was perpetually on the look-out for trouble, it seemed, and I could not screw up my courage sufficiently to attempt photographing the herd. This was the only time in my life when I was actually too much afraid to use the camera, but I have a very great respect for buffalo. If they do charge, it is almost impossible to dodge them, owing to their remarkable agility and persistence ; and shooting them even with a heavy rifle is difficult, because when attacking they come with head thrown back so that the brain is protected, and the horns, which are very wide at the base, act as a perfect shield for the neck and spine. One of the most interesting things I have seen in connection with buffalo is their liking for what are called "soda" springs. I have known them to travel a considerable distance, leaving untouched on their way the ordinary water-holes, in order to drink the "soda" water. This, I believe, is done for the purpose of destroying

THE VAST SUDAN

the leeches with which they are much troubled. I have found on the ground masses of clotted blood in which dead leeches could be seen, not far from the "soda" springs and always on the tracks of buffalo. Unfortunately, I have never had an opportunity of carrying the investigation as far as I would like, therefore this explanation is by no means proved.

Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis typica and antiquorum*) range more or less throughout the Sudan south of Dongola, where the country is suited to their needs. Two varieties are to be found: the Nubian (*G. c. typica*) and the Kordofan (*G. c. antiquorum*). The former, belonging to Nubia and eastward to Abyssinia, has white fore-legs free from spots below the knees, the bulls have a well-developed frontal horn and scarcely visible posterior horns. The principal horns, between the eye and ear, are of ordinary length. The Kordofan variety is said to be easily distinguishable by the fact that "in the fore limb from just above the line of the abdomen and on the hind limb half-way up the thigh the spots suddenly break up into a series of very small spots of irregular shape, similar spots occurring on the under parts and inner side of the limb." The horns are similar to those of the Nubian race. These

GIRAFFE

distinctions are, to say the least, not overwhelmingly convincing, especially when we consider how great is the variation in individual giraffe. Even in a small herd there is frequently a noticeable variation both in colour and markings so great that it can scarcely be attributable to age or sex. Some are dark, others light in colour among animals of the same size, be they young or mature. Some have blotchy, ill-defined markings, others look almost like the reticulated giraffe. Few animals that I have seen show greater individual variation. It seems a pity that these handsome and harmless (except where telegraph wires are concerned) creatures should be allowed to be killed, even though the sportsman is required to pay about ten pounds for the privilege. There is certainly no sport in shooting them and they furnish no trophy, and no one could possibly claim that they are dangerous. Alive they are perhaps the most beautiful and interesting of all large animals, and they give a touch to an African landscape that nothing else can give. One never becomes tired of watching them. I have seen thousands, but still they fascinate me. Unfortunately, the natives kill them in great numbers, chiefly for the sake of their skins, which make good leather and whips. I was told that during last year seven or eight hundred

THE VAST SUDAN

were killed by Arabs in Kordofan. Perhaps the story was not true, we can only hope so. In Kenya, where the giraffe is well protected, not only by law but by public opinion, they have increased greatly, and now it is not uncommon to see herds numbering up to seventy or more. They are fairly shy creatures, except where motor-cars are concerned. These fill them with curiosity, and they will run alongside of a car for miles, and sometimes cross in front of a moving car only a few yards away. If they so desire they can always keep clear of man, for their senses of sight, hearing and smell are very acute. I do not think I am wrong in making the statement that the giraffe has the finest eyesight of any animal. From experience I can say that they will detect a man nearly a mile away. Their great height, and they stand up to about nineteen feet to the top of the head, gives them every opportunity for keeping a look-out. Strangely enough, in spite of their size, they are not easy to see, provided they are among trees and not moving. It has been said that this is due to their protective colouring, but this is not a satisfactory explanation. Buffalo, which are very dark grey or almost black, are equally difficult to see, particularly when in the flickering light and shade of a tree, and the same is just as true of

GIRAFFE

elephants. The whole theory of protective colouration of the larger animals may be open to argument, but from my own observations in the field I am firmly convinced that practically speaking there is no such thing. This may be heresy, but it is the result of many years of careful observation. The reader may say in reply, "But what about animals turning white in winter in countries where there is snow?" In such cases the white coats are probably for the purpose of warmth. Animals such as the otter and beaver that live in warm burrows or lodges do not turn white; however, this is not the place for a discussion on such a complex question. Returning to our subject, the giraffe is almost entirely a tree or bush browser. Occasionally, however, they may be seen feeding on grass or plants (I cannot say which) close to the ground. This is not a spasmodic effort, for I have seen a herd of a dozen or so doing it for a long time, even though there were trees nearby. What trees are most sought after I cannot say; in some places thorn trees, even the camel thorn, provide most of their food; in other places, especially in forest country, and they do go into forests notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, they eat the leaves of many kinds of trees and bushes. It has always puzzled me how they can eat

THE VAST SUDAN

the leaves of such trees as the camel thorn without being injured by the sharp, curved, tough thorns. Yet, with their long prehensile tongues they strip the leaves with no apparent ill-effect, in spite of the fact that their mouths are noticeably soft. Presumably the giraffes feed only by daylight. Where they go and what they do at night I do not know. Judging from the giraffe's build they were never intended to drink from ground level. Presumably in their earlier state they obtained their drink from water-containing leaves of the trees, but nowadays they have to sacrifice appearances and drink as best they may by straddling their long front legs far apart in order to reach the water. How often they need water is open to question, but I should say once in about three days under ordinary conditions, but in places where the dews are heavy perhaps once in a week or even less often.

Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus addax*).—In the deserts of the western part of Dongola which are almost waterless. This antelope, which is a near relation of the oryx, stands about forty-two inches at the shoulder, is of a pale sandy colour, nearly white on the flank and belly ; face darker and with a white band below the eyes. The forehead is covered with

WATER-BUCK

a mat of thick dark hair ; hoofs noticeably broad and shallow. The horns are slightly spiral and well marked with transverse ridges close together, length up to forty inches. Owing to the difficulty of crossing the waterless desert the addax is not very frequently hunted by sportsmen. The typical addax is found in Southern Tunis, Algeria and probably Morocco.

Mrs. Gray's cob, or lechwe or water-buck (*Cobus maria*).—Southward from Malakal in the provinces of the Upper Nile, Sobat-Pibor and the Bahr el Ghazal. These beautiful cob or water-buck stand thirty-eight inches in height, are of a rich deep brown running almost to black, and relieved by a patch of white in front of the withers, a "yellowish streak behind, above and in front of each eye and the yellowish muzzle, chin, and patch on the lower part of the throat." Females and immature males are more of a chestnut colour. The horns, which attain a length of about thirty-three inches, are long and very gracefully double curved, and ridged conspicuously for the greater part of their length. There has been much controversy about this antelope, whether it should be called a water-buck, cob, or lechwe, so to avoid trouble most people who go to, or live in, the Sudan, speak of it

THE VAST SUDAN

simply as "Mrs. Gray." A somewhat awkward name for an animal. They are to be found in swampy places, frequently standing and feeding in shallow water in places more or less inaccessible to men, or at least to Europeans. Occasionally they approach near enough to the river bank to be seen by people on the steamer; it is one of the sights that passengers usually hope to see.

Sing-sing or defassa water-buck (*Cobus defassa*) is one of the most common and generally distributed of the antelopes in the Sudan, especially in the more southerly parts. It is not, however, found far away from water, usually preferring the immediate vicinity of rivers or swamps. In size it is larger than "Mrs. Gray," standing about fifty-two inches at the shoulder. They are heavily built, the large bulls weighing nearly five hundred pounds. The hair is coarse and long, especially at the neck, where it hangs down and gives the animal the appearance of having a very thick neck. In colour the Sudan water-buck are much more of a greyish brown than those in Kenya, the rufous colour which one usually associates with the species being far less pronounced and in some individuals scarcely noticeable. The rump is almost white, not

WATER-BUCK

in a circle or ring as with its near relation *cobus ellipsiprymnus*, but in a fairly large patch. There is also a white patch on the throat, and whitish eye rings and muzzle. The horns, carried only by the males, are heavily ribbed, thick, with a single curve reaching, in the Sudan, a length of about thirty-four inches. In habits they are gregarious, single ones being seldom found, though occasionally solitary old bulls may be seen; but as a rule, however, they are not far from a herd. Usually they are found in parties of seven or eight and occasionally in large herds. The largest I have seen numbered about seventy and contained a fair proportion of males. Herds composed entirely of females or males are not uncommon. In appearance the water-buck reminds one to some extent of the red deer. They are extremely handsome, but not particularly graceful, being rather heavy in their movements.

White-eared cob (*Cobus leucotis*) is found chiefly in the immediate neighbourhood of the White Nile, south of Malakal, the Bahr el Zeraf, Bahr el Ghazal and the Sobat and their various tributaries, always in the vicinity of water. Height of shoulder about thirty-six inches, slightly smaller than "Mrs. Gray,"

THE VAST SUDAN

which it resembles both in appearance and habits. Old males have the same dark brownish black coats, but lack the white patch forward of the withers. The throat is white, including the muzzle, and the head from back of and including the ears to forward of the eyes is white ; the horns, which have the double curve, seldom exceed twenty-four inches in length. This striking antelope is abundant in the region which it inhabits, and it is not an uncommon thing to see from the steamer large herds containing a hundred or more individuals. When frightened they bound high from the ground in order to obtain a view above the grass, much after the manner of the impala, though with far less grace and agility.

Uganda cob (*Cobus thomasi*).—In the vicinity of the Upper White Nile and Bahr el Ghazal. Slightly smaller than the white-eared variety and more rufous or fox-coloured. The white markings rather less clearly defined and not extending so far back as the ears. The front of the fore-legs and lower part of hind-legs are marked with black. The horns practically identical.

Vaughan's cob (*Cobus vaughani*).—Captain Vaughan, who first described this cob, gives its range as follows :

ELAND

“It appears to be the common kob of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, by which I do not refer to the Bahr-el-Ghazal River, but to the district south of the Meshra-el-Rek and north of the Congo Free State bounded on the east by the Nile and on the west by the French Congo. I have not been in the eastern half of this district, but I infer that the white-eared kob is not found there.” Its colour is described as foxy-red. Whether it is a distinct species or simply a local variety is somewhat doubtful.

Eland (*Taurotragus oryx*, probably *pattersonianus*). —“Mongalla Province on the east bank (of the Nile only).” One of the largest of the antelopes, the eland is the most gentle and easily tamed. The immature and the females are of a soft fawn colour turning with maturity to pale blue-grey in the bulls, with more or less distinct white vertical stripes on the sides. On the forehead the hair forms a fairly thick dark mat, elsewhere the hair is very short and fine. The horns are almost straight and thick, with a spiral twist. In habit they are gregarious, and in Kenya and Tanganyika they may be found in large herds, sometimes numbering several hundreds. Usually they frequent fairly open country, and seem to be able to go a long

THE VAST SUDAN

time without water. In fact, I have never seen them drinking, though I have waited and watched for weeks at a time in places where they were abundant.

Giant eland (*Taurotragus derbianus gigas*).—Only found to the west of the White Nile in the provinces of Mongalla and the Bahr el Ghazal. They are rare and somewhat difficult to find. The giant eland is the largest of the antelopes, standing almost six feet at the shoulder. The general colour is pale fawn, changing to cold grey in the older bulls. The neck is much darker and beneath the loose skin forms a well-developed dewlap ending in a mane of coarse black hair. The dark mat of hair between the eyes does not appear to be constant. The spinal stripe is well defined with black hair. The horns are heavy, nearly straight, and spirally fluted, the maximum length being about forty inches, and are carried by both male and female.

Heuglin's or lelwel hartebeest, commonly known as Jackson's (*Bubalis lelwel*), occurs in the country from Kordofan Province southward in the Upper Nile, Mongalla and Bahr el Ghazal. Fairly common, usually in small or large herds. This is practically the

HARTEBEEST

same as Jackson's hartebeest, differing chiefly in its lighter and more tawny or foxy colour and the dark spinal or dorsal stripe. It has the same ridiculously elongated narrow head and strangely-shaped horns pointing backwards at their tips, and with the base on the horn-pedicle which is so very pronounced that it forms a sort of extension of the upper part of the skull. The total length of these horns is about twenty-five inches. At the shoulder the animal stands about fifty-two inches. They have the same curious gait which is so characteristic of the hartebeest, galloping in high jerky bounds, as though on springs, their legs scarcely appearing to move, except when suddenly frightened, when the body is lowered, the legs making long strides as they scuttle away. They frequent either open or bush country and are remarkably alert, always keeping a sentry on duty, perched on an anthill if there is one about. Like most antelope they feed chiefly in the early and late part of the day and rest for several hours about noon. As in all the hartebeest, both male and female carry horns.

Neuman's hartebeest (*Bubalis neumanni*).—Found on the banks of the White Nile. Scarcely distinct from the preceding species. A slightly greater divergence

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at the base of the horns is their chief claim to separation.

Tora hartebeest (*Bubalis tora*).—Found in the more eastern part of the Sudan in the provinces of Kassala and Fung, where it replaces the other hartebeest. The chief characteristic is that the head appears shorter, owing to the lower pedicles and the horns have a much greater spread. The colour is light tawny.

Tiang (*Damaliscus corrigum tiang*).—The more southerly portion of the Sudan in the neighbourhood of rivers is the home of the tiang or topi, one of the commoner of the antelope. The height of this animal is about fifty inches, the colour is deep chestnut, with a tinge of purple becoming almost black on the shoulders and face. The horns, which run to about twenty-four inches in length, are distinctly ribbed, curving back, and are without the high pedicles which are characteristic of the hartebeest. In habits they are strictly gregarious, going about in large herds, frequently in the company of water-buck or cob.

Desert tiang (*Damaliscus corrigum jonesi*) are found in western Kordofan. They are less brightly

TIANG

coloured and have slightly longer horns ; beyond this the chief difference between them and the former variety is that they are not found habitually in the vicinity of water, but live chiefly in the desert.

Greater kudu (*Strepsiceros capensis*) occurs in the provinces of Kordofan, Kassala and Fung. Height up to about fifty inches. The horns, which are of extraordinary length, up to fifty-six inches in the Sudan, are spiral with a marked ridge in front at the base and following the curves almost to the tips. The females very seldom carry horns, and when they do they are smaller than those of the males. The colour is fawn, turning to grey as the animals grow old. On the sides there are narrow, fairly clearly defined, vertical white bars, a more or less barred dark and light mane the whole length of the spine, and a dark fringe on the throat, two small white patches, sometimes merging into one from the eyes downward across the front of the face. The greater kudu is without doubt the most magnificent of the antelope, but unfortunately few travellers ever have a chance of seeing them, owing to their rareness. They seldom go in large herds, usually in parties of less than a dozen. Their choice of homes is in rough, hilly, scrub-covered country.

THE VAST SUDAN

Lesser kudu (*Strepsiceros imberbis*), rare in Mongalla Province, closely resembles the greater kudu in general appearance, but is only about forty-one inches in height, and has two white bands on the throat, and about double as many stripes on the side. The habits of the two species are more or less similar, except that the lesser kudu is not so much addicted to rough hills, but seems to prefer dry and more or less flat country with abundance of bush.

Harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*).—“Upper Nile and Bahr-el-Ghazal Provinces.” Height up to twenty-nine inches. “Horns twisted, but not into bold spiral curves, from ten to fourteen inches in length, rather triangular in section, and flattened behind. Flanks with white spots. Body mostly rich dark chestnut-red, with *several* distinct vertical white stripes.”

Abyssinian bushbuck (*Tragelaphus decula*), “takes the place of the last in Kassala and Fung Provinces.” “Body more yellow. Vertical stripes absent or almost absent. A long horizontal white stripe on the flanks, in front of and above the white spots.”

Situtunga (*Tragelaphus (limnotragus) spekei*), rare in Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal. Height to about

REEDBUCK

thirty-eight inches. Colour, greyish - brown, with scarcely perceptible stripes, more noticeable in the young males. The coat is long and soft. The feet have much elongated hoofs (to enable the animal to walk in swamps, which is the usual habitat). The horns, up to thirty-five inches in length, are spiral and resemble somewhat those of the kudu.

Reedbuck (*Cervicapra arundinum*) is found in the Bahr el Ghazal Province. Height about thirty-four inches. Colour fawn. Horns black and short seldom longer than twelve inches, tops curved forward. A distinguishing feature is the bare, or nearly bare, patch below the ear, and the softness at the base of the horns in all but the old animals. They are not usually found in lots of more than three or four, and when frightened make a strange whistling sound, and carry their white or light-coloured tails well up. They show a marked partiality for the vicinity of streams.

Bohor reedbuck (*Cervicapra redunca*, probably *cottoni*) is found from Kassala to the Bahr el Ghazal and from Kordofan to and including Mongalla. It is slightly smaller than the common reedbuck, at least three or four inches shorter. Colour bright fawn.

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Horns much the same as the common variety, but more sharply hooked forward.

Soemmerring's gazelle, ariel or aoul (*Gazella soemmerringi*), found in Kassala, Fung and Red Sea Provinces nearly as far north as Halfa. Height up to about thirty-seven inches, rather larger than Grant's gazelle, which it resembles in general appearance. The white rump patch is, however, much larger. The colour is yellowish or fawn. Horns up to about sixteen inches in length, are ribbed distinctly in front and have the points curved or hooked inwards. This gazelle is decidedly gregarious, and is found in herds numbering hundreds. Bushy-covered plains seem to be its favourite home, and it does not appear to depend on a constant supply of water

Addra (or Ril) gazelle (*Gazella dama ruficollis*) occurs west of the White Nile in the Provinces of Kordofan and Dongola. Height up to thirty-seven inches. Colour peculiar and quite distinctive, almost chocolate on the neck and upper back, while the rump, face, belly and a patch under the neck are white. The indistinct line of demarcation runs from the top of the pelvic bone on the back in a direct line, at an

GAZELLE

angle, crossing the chest in line with the lower end of the shoulder-blade ; between the neck, which is dark, and the head the colour and white merge gradually. Horns up to about fifteen inches in length, are well ribbed for about half their distance and the points curve slightly forward. These gazelles live in the desert country.

Red-fronted gazelle (*Gazella rufifrons*, probably *salmi*) is found in Kassala, Fung, White Nile and Kordofan Provinces. Height about twenty-five inches at the shoulder. Colour sandy, shading into rich rufous on the forehead, white around the eye and in a streak towards but not reaching the nose, not sharply defined ; a broad dark flank band. Horns up to about fourteen inches long, distinctly ribbed to near the points, slightly lyrate, tips curving inward and a little forward.

Rothschild's or Mongola red - fronted gazelle (*Gazella rufifrons albonota*), in the Bahr el Zaraf and Upper Nile region. A local race of the above, with very slight differences. " Differs from *G. rufifrons* in having the nose and lower half of the central face-stripe black, with a slight mixture of rufous hair,

THE VAST SUDAN

instead of bright rufous-sandy. Face-stripe from eye to nostril white instead of buff. Area between tear-duct and lips dark buff, strongly mixed and shaded with black, instead of pale buffy rufous. Head and neck pale isabelline instead of rufous buff. Upper half of face and forehead pale rufous mixed with white, almost entirely white between the horns. Horns wider spread and more recurved backwards than in *rufifrons*, the points more turned inwards, and the rings deeper cut and more conspicuous."

Heuglin's gazelle (*Gazella tilonura*).— In the provinces of Kassala and probably Fung. General colour sandy, tail black almost to the root, strongly defined flank band of black. Height twenty-seven inches. Horns about twelve inches in length with tips hooked inwards.

Isabelle or genai gazelle (*Gazella isabella*).— The deserts of the northern parts of the Sudan to the Red Sea. The colour, like that of so many of the desert animals, is pale sandy, the flank band being the same colour but darker. Height about twenty-five inches. Horns somewhat lyre-shaped, with the tips turning sharply inward, like Soemmerring's gazelle, only much

GAZELLE

smaller, probably not exceeding eleven inches in length.

Dorcas gazelle (*Gazella dorcas*).—Chiefly in the eastern part of the Sudan in the modified desert areas. Colour sandy above and white below, with a rather dark, slightly defined, fawn-coloured flank band; rump white. Knee tufts well developed. Height about twenty-three inches. Horns lyrate, *not* hooked at the tips, fairly thick, while the females carry very slender horns, not so markedly lyrate. Those of the male reach a length of thirteen or fourteen inches.

Beira antelope (*Dorcotragus megalotis*).—Reported to have been found in Fung Province. Very rare. About twenty-three inches in height and grey-fawn in colour. Horns only five inches in length. This small antelope resembles the klipspringer in habits, living in rocky hills where water is very scarce.

Klipspringer (*Oreotragus saltator*).—In the more eastern part of the Sudan, the Red Sea and Kassala Provinces. Height up to twenty-two inches. Colour rather grey and golden, hair thick and wavy, of curious texture. Feet with rounded blunt hoofs, on the tips

THE VAST SUDAN

of which the animal stands. These evidently assist them in jumping about on rocks. Horns are insignificant, usually about four or five inches long and straight.

Oryx beisa (*Oryx beisa*).—Probably only found in the Sudan on the eastern side in Kassala on the borders of Eritrea and near the Red Sea. Not common in the Sudan. Height up to about fifty inches. Colour almost dove-grey, with distinct black markings on the face, throat, tips of ears, fore-legs, tail and a narrow stripe along the side from under the chest upwards along the side of the belly. Horns straight, or with very slight curve backwards, sharply pointed, up to about forty-six inches in length. Both male and female have equally long horns and are indistinguishable in form and colour. Habits strictly gregarious in their normal habitat.

White oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*).—In the dry desert-like country of northern Kordofan and Dongola. About forty-six inches in height. Colour a soft chestnut grey on back going to stronger chestnut on neck, belly white, face more or less white, with dark markings. Horns up to forty inches in length, slender, sharply pointed and with a distant backward curve.

ANTELOPE

Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*, probably *bakeri*).—In the southern part of the Sudan, including the provinces of Kassala, White Nile, Fung, Mongalla and Bahr el Ghazal; common in the neighbourhood of the White Nile and Bahr el Zeraf. Height about fifty-seven inches. Colour warm brown or greyish, face black with white muzzle and a distinct white patch from horn downward in front of eye. Long mane, very dark, hair on neck long, ears with more or less drooping points or tufts. Horns thick in the male, much thinner in female, curving backward. Found in small herds in varied conditions of country from rocky hills to the flat and fairly swampy regions near the rivers. A fine-looking antelope, though not nearly as beautiful as its near relation the Sable.

Oribi (*Oribia montana*, possibly *haggardi*).—These are found over a large area of the Sudan south of the northern deserts. Height about twenty-three inches, colour yellow-fawn, lighter below. Horns short and straight, about four or five inches in length.

Duiker and Dik-dik.—There is so much confusion about these little antelopes, whose range is practically the whole of Africa, and so numerous in varieties that

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I do not pretend to know or understand them. The Abyssinian and blue duiker and Salt's dik-dik are said to be the ones found in the Sudan.

Nubian ibex or beden (*Capra nubiana*).—In the mountain district of the Red Sea coast. Height about thirty-three inches. Colour brownish and variable. Distinguished easily by the remarkable horns, which are heavily knobbed, well curved, and reaching a length in exceptional instances of about fifty inches.

Barbary sheep or aoudad (*Ovis tragelaphus*).—Found locally and rarely in the desert mountains of Northern Sudan from the Red Sea to Kordofan. So common in Zoos that description is scarcely necessary. The long fringe of hair on the throat, chest and fore-legs is quite distinctive. Colour dull yellowish-brown. Horns up to about thirty-three inches long.

Wart-hog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*).—More or less throughout the Sudan. Conspicuous by the three pairs of wart-like protuberances beneath the eyes, and in the well-developed curved tusks, those in the upper jaw being the longer, and reaching a length on the outer curve, of up to twenty-seven inches. Colour

WART-HOG

grey, the skin being sparsely covered with coarse hair or bristles. The neck and part way down the back is covered with a long bristly mane; the tail, which is long, has a pronounced tuft. They live in almost any sort of country, plains or bush-covered hills, or anywhere but in swamps. Their home is usually the deserted hole of an ant-bear or some such place, and they enter it backwards. As a rule they go in family groups, or the old males go about alone. They are decidedly shy, and trot away at the slightest suspicion of danger, always carrying their tails erect when frightened. I have never seen them wallowing, but have noted that they usually drink during the heat of the day.

Red bush-pig (*Potamochoerus porcus*).—In the Bahr el Ghazal Province. Colour, as its name implies, bright reddish-brown, with sharply-pointed tufted ears. Small tusks.

Sennar pig.—Of uncertain species, said to be found in the Fung Province.

Grant's zebra (*Equus burchelli granti*).—In Mongalla Province. Not common.

THE VAST SUDAN

Nubian wild ass (*Equus asinus*).—Very rarely found in the desert of Berber, Kassala and Red Sea Provinces. Height about four feet. Colour warm grey, with dorsal and shoulder stripe clearly defined, as well as dark bars on the legs. They are absolutely protected.

Lion (*Felis leo*).—More or less distributed throughout the Sudan, but not numerous. The Sudan lions are not conspicuous for fine manes, and are as a rule rather an inferior race as compared with those of Kenya.

Leopard (*Felis pardur*).—Throughout the Sudan, probably most numerous near the rivers, where they can obtain abundant food.

Cheetah (*Cynœlurus jubatus*).—Scarce throughout the country.

Notes on Method of Travelling in the Sudan

As conditions of travel and sport in the Sudan are somewhat peculiar a few hints may not be amiss. Safari as one knows it in Kenya or Tanganyika or Uganda is entirely on a different plan. In Nairobi you go to a safari outfitter, go over a carefully-prepared list of all the possible and impossible things that could by any chance be taken on a trip, check off what you want, and then find that it is twice as much as you need. The number of loads is worked out, expensive cooks, boys, headmen and gun-bearers are engaged, and off you start like a prince, even if you do come back like a pauper ; but if you do that it is your fault, as the work can be done without extravagant expenditure. But the point that strikes one is that everything is systematised ; let your wants be simple or comprehensive, you get what you want without any trouble or fuss.

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The outfitter has become an expert. In the Sudan it is all very different. First of all, the Nile is your road in most cases, and for most of your distance. It is a very good road, and you go along it in luxurious steamers. What could be more simple? The boat takes you to some suitable place, and you make side trips. If you would do the trip with the maximum of comfort and reduce the hardships to as near the zero point as possible, you take a car with you on the steamer. This enables you to reach out-of-the-way places without bothering about porters. Whether you get back depends, of course, on many things; breakdowns are not exactly unknown, even in the Sudan. If you make only one-day trips you need no equipment such as beds, baths, etc., and so the car will carry four or even five persons. If you are taking much paraphernalia your passenger list must be reduced. As the country is generally very dry, once you leave the river water for the car must be carried. But let us start at the very beginning.

From November to March is the best season. If you are on a shooting or photographic trip the first thing to decide is what game you want. We will consider that it is a general bag that is desired, and that the journey will be made by steamer, plus car.

TRAVELLING METHOD

Steamers are limited in number, so application must be made as far ahead as possible. This can be done through the London office of the Sudan Government railways and steamers, or by writing to the Traffic Manager at Atbara, or to the Game Warden, Khartoum, stating exactly what you wish. To give an idea of cost of steamers. The daily charge varies from about £21 to £38 for two or three passengers, to £47 for parties of ten. This price includes everything, such as navigation charges, engineer and crew, fuel, ship's stores, cabin and saloon outfits, servants and catering (except drinks).

The boats are stern-wheelers and are very comfortably arranged, with baths, electric light, fans, etc. A barge accompanies the steamer for carrying fuel (wood is picked up at the various wood stations), for servants' quarters and for safety in case of squalls striking the steamers, which for coolness are very high and of very light draught. Having settled on your steamer and paid the twenty per cent. deposit required on signing the agreement, the next step is to secure the permits for importation of fire-arms and ammunition, either via Port Sudan or Cairo. Unless this is carefully attended to a lot of trouble may result. If a photographic outfit is taken ascertain

THE VAST SUDAN

before leaving home what the regulations are, especially as to cinema cameras and films.

Khartoum may be reached either by way of Cairo, thence by train to Shellal, by boat to Halfa and train from there to Khartoum, or by steamer direct to Port Sudan and from there by train. This is the easier way and saves Egyptian Customs troubles. Once in Khartoum it will only be necessary to secure the game licence, which at present costs £50. (As the game regulations are subject to alterations at short notice I refrain from giving them here.) Arrange where to go and the other small details, which will take a day or so ; for this reason the time of your arrival should be a couple of days before the steamer charter commences. From the Game Warden all the necessary information can be obtained as to the whereabouts of the game, and the existing regulations as to shooting from steamers, the limits of the game reserves, and so forth.

Every possible courtesy is shown to visitors, more so indeed than in any place I know of. Should you expect to do any camping and require tents, bring them with you. Satisfactory tents apparently are difficult to find in Khartoum. They have a curious idea as to the weight of a two-man tent, and those I

TRAVELLING METHOD

saw made me wonder, as they would have required about six to ten men to carry them. It is rather the custom of the country to arrange for rest-houses, or huts, instead of making regular camps, and it has the disadvantage that you are seldom where you really wish to be, and the joy of camp life is missing. This I consider a great drawback. The hut may be cooler, but somehow or other the tent has its own peculiar fascination.

If the cost of a private steamer is not in keeping with your purse, then the alternative is to go as near as possible to your destination by the post-boat, which at present leaves Khartoum twice a month and goes as far as Rejaf. If word has been sent ahead porters will be found ready, but take your own cook and personal servants and your outfit of food, etc., in loads of about fifty pounds. Supplies can be obtained at reasonable price and of good quality in Khartoum, but unfortunately they do not go in for the regular chop boxes, which are so convenient. Ordinary packing boxes are used with nailed-on lids, and they are unsatisfactory.

At many of the more important stations there are variably good stores, kept usually by Greeks. Meat, in the form of small chickens at about fivepence

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each, and sheep can be bought in most places, and eggs almost everywhere; and in the Nile and its tributaries fish can nearly always be caught. Some are very good, some indifferently so, and others very bad.

In the way of clothes very light material is necessary, as the Sudan is a hot country; pith helmets or topis must be worn. Suitable ones can be bought in Khartoum at reasonable prices, cheaper than in England. Mosquito nets are essential, as these pests are unpleasantly abundant along certain parts of the Nile. Private steamers are supplied with them—mosquito nets, not the insects. You are expected to dress respectably at the various stations, especially in the evenings. I went off with only my khaki things and found myself in very embarrassing situations. Field-glasses, of not more than eight magnifications, are a necessary part of the outfit. If you plan to go after any of the desert animals, such as addax, sufficient notice must be given for the engaging of camels and making of the necessary arrangements. Should you consider engaging a “nuggar,” or sailing-boat, from points of economy or your love of the picturesque, make up your mind before you start that time must mean nothing. To-day or next week or some other week are all the same.

TRAVELLING METHOD

Don't make a programme of events, or if you do forget it promptly. It won't be observed, unless you are a particular friend of the clerk of the weather. These boats are very nice to make photographs of, or paintings, but they have a deep-rooted objection to sailing with anything but a fair wind, and the wind is not always fair, which means you and your destination remain apart. Otherwise these tall-sailed, broad boats are not bad ; but they must be fitted with a thatched "deck house" or shelter with a floor. Cost by the week is about six to eight pounds, with crew. It varies with your appearance (if you are negotiating directly with the principal) and the owner's hopes. All things considered, it is better to request one of the good-natured officials to make the arrangements.

As a country for photographic "shooting" the Sudan offers splendid opportunities, especially along the rivers, provided you have your own steamer and are not in a hurry. With plenty of time and reasonable luck remarkable photographs of birds and animals can be made. Owing to the great heat of the sun, only cameras made for tropical use are advisable. For cinema cameras those made of metal are best ; films must be carefully packed in sealed tins, and should be developed within a reasonable time after

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exposure. Lenses of from twelve to seventeen inches focal length will be found necessary for cinema work, especially if the work is being done from a steamer.

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