

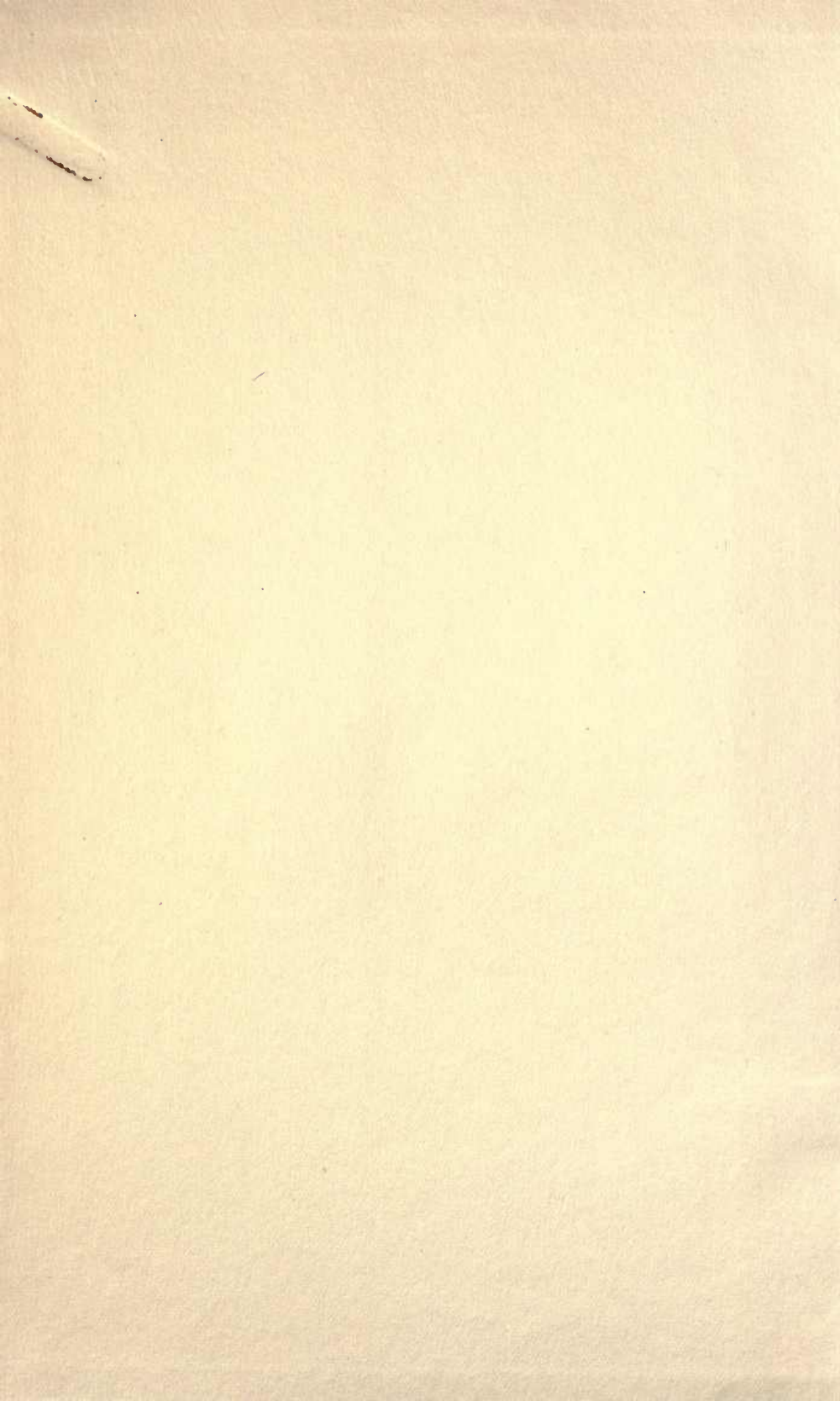


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Y. Song.

Christmas 1944.



UNDER THE FLAG  
and Great Coat of Arms



**UNDER THE FLAG**  
**and Somali Coast Stories**

UNDER THE PLAU  
and Bonelli Court Stables







*Photo by]*

*[Elliott & Fry*

LANGTON PRENDERGAST WALSH, C.I.E.

*[Frontispiece*



# UNDER THE FLAG

and Somali Coast Stories

By

LANGTON PRENDERGAST WALSH,  
C.I.E.

WITH FRONTISPIECE

London:

ANDREW MELROSE, LTD.  
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# UNDER THE FLAG

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## PART I



## CHAPTER I

### MY BIRTHDAY—FEBRUARY 29TH

I WAS born on the 29th of February, 1856, in the British cantonment at Baroda, the capital of the Gaekwar's territory in Gujarat, Bombay Presidency.

The Reverend James Henry Hughes, M.A., Chaplain of the Church of England at Surat, with pastoral charge of Broach and Baroda, baptized me in St. James's Church, Baroda, on the 10th of March. I was christened Langton Prendergast, and registered as the son of Thomas Prendergast Boles Walsh, ensign of the 1st Grenadier Regiment of the Bombay Army. My mother was Euphemia Frances Elizabeth, only child by his first marriage of the Reverend William Spencer Walsh, D.D., T.C.D., of Knockboyne, Navan, Co. Meath, Vicar of Asseyalvoin, Meath, and later Rector of Clonard, Co. Meath, Ireland.

Shortly after my birth, my father's sword-orderly, Private Raghoo, in accordance with the customary treatment of male children of noble descent, employed an astrologer to prepare my horoscope. And therein he records that my birth took place in the "Shoo", or bright half of the lunar month. Some forty years later this document was produced by this old Grenadier when he came to see me at the Residency, Sawant-Wadi. I have no fault to find with its predictions, many of which have been fulfilled to my great advantage and welfare.

## CHAPTER II

### BARODA

At the time of my birth in 1856, Gunpatrao Gaekwar was the ruler of Baroda. He died on the 19th of November, 1856, and was succeeded by Khanderao Gaekwar. Major C. Davidson was the Acting Political Resident at Baroda in 1856 and 1857. Lt.-Colonel W. C. Stather commanded the 1st Bombay Grenadier Regiment, and was also the senior officer in charge of the troops in garrison at Baroda.

My father, Thomas Prendergast Boles Walsh, had joined the Grenadiers in March 1853. He was not the first of our kinsmen to be connected with that city and State, as his uncle, Guy Lenox Prendergast, of the Bombay Civil Service, had been there a few years earlier as the British Resident. At a later date the latter became a Member of Council, Bombay, and, after retirement from India, was an M.P. for Lymington. He died in 1845, and was buried at the main entrance of the church at Tunbridge Wells. In 1856 my father was still an ensign of the Grenadiers at Baroda.

Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, K.C.B., in the early part of 1856 was a captain in the 1st Grenadiers. His company was remarkable for the average height of its rank and file, 5ft. 8½ ins. being tall for Marathas, who are by race small of stature. Rawlinson had been away from the regiment for several years, during which period he had served in the Political and Diplomatic Services in Afghanistan, and at the Court of the Shah of Persia. He retired from the Army in 1856, and in September 1858 became a Member of the Council of India and M.P. for Reigate. Later he was for many years a Member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. He was made a baronet, and died in March 1895, leaving a son, who was created Baron Rawlinson as a reward for brilliant services



in the Great War, and at his death in 1925 held the post of Commander-in-Chief in India.

When Sir Henry Rawlinson decided to leave the Grenadiers in 1856, he wrote to his old friend and comrade Colonel Stather, asking him to select an officer for the command of his old company. Sir Henry required an officer who was likely to evince the same interest as himself in the domestic and financial affairs of the men of his company. In compliance with this request Colonel Stather posted Ensign Walsh to command the company, regimentally known as Rawlinson's. That appointment did not carry with it any rise in rank, nor did it accelerate promotion; but it marked and recorded the Commanding Officer's appreciation of the efficient services already exhibited by that ensign, and at the same time the latter was thereby qualified to draw two full allowances, totalling fifty rupees monthly, in addition to the pay of his military rank.

My father carried out Rawlinson's policy, namely that Rawlinson always exercised his influence with the judges of local courts, and with collectors and the heads of provinces, to impede the efforts of the village *sowcars* (moneylenders) to foreclose the mortgages on the hereditary farms (*wuttons*) of these Maratha soldiers. For the men were recruited from both slopes of the Sayadri range of mountains, in which districts Brahmins possessed considerable influence and had frequently attempted to seduce Maratha sepoys from their allegiance to the Sirkar. The Brahmins' object was the ousting of the British as the paramount power, and a first step towards making the Nana Sahib of Bithur ruler at Poona, thus restoring Brahmin supremacy in the Deccan. Rawlinson thought that by protecting and assisting the Maratha fighting man, Brahmin wiles and intrigues could be frustrated and rendered futile.

The absolute correctness of these views was fully proved by the loyalty and devotion to duty shown by the men of this famous Maratha regiment during the mutiny of the Native Army in 1857. The 1st Bombay Grenadiers had no kind of sympathy with the mutinous sepoys of the Bengal Army, or with the few disloyal men in two or three Bombay regiments.

About May 1856 a couple of bungalows adjoining the native town, but actually within the limits of the British cantonment, were burned by some rascals from Baroda city, who unfortunately got away before they could be caught by the military police. These scoundrels were arrested by the Gaekwari police, and severely dealt with by the magistrates of the Baroda State. The people of Baroda not only showed no sympathy with these incendiaries, but openly expressed their approval of the punishments meted out to them by the Baroda Criminal Court.

My father and mother resided close to the site of these outrages, and Colonel Stather, as a precautionary measure, ordered my father to vacate his quarters and take a bungalow nearer the regimental lines. Colonel Stather also instructed my father to equip his company fully, and keep it in readiness for field service at twenty-four hours' notice, the time judged as necessary to collect transport.

My mother declined to go to Europe, but went to stay with the Collector of Surat, Mr. George Inverarity, I.C.S., who hospitably sheltered European women and children from all parts of Gujarat. She held a facile pen, and wrote weekly, under the heading of "Gujarat Gossip", social newsletters for the Bombay journals, in which contributions she often set forth her personal views of Baroda and Kutch affairs, as she saw and heard them in the zenana and behind the purdah.

My father took a great interest in the affairs and the administration of the Baroda State, and published a book entitled *Goozerat and the Country of the Gulcowar*. The book attracted the attention of the Political Department, and he came to be regarded as an authority on Baroda and its territory. He was offered a political assistantship in that residency, which post he was desirous of filling, but only on the understanding that he would be permitted to rejoin his regiment whenever he wished to do so. The civil and military authorities would not grant the condition asked for by my father, although he had frequently notified them of his preference for regimental employment. Nevertheless, he had constantly acted for short periods in several



Civil offices. He often remarked to me that in early life he could easily have permanently joined a Civil department, but if he had done so it would have restricted and fettered his pen, and he had always intended to use both his pen and his sword during his career in India.

My father was intimately acquainted with the Gaekwars of Baroda, their ministers, and the notables of Gujarat, up to the end of 1858. He was also on very confidential terms with Khan Bahadur Shahabuddin Kazi, then at Bhooj, but before and after a Minister of the Baroda Government. Through the aid and influence of this useful friend my father was able in his personal capacity to obtain valuable and reliable information upon various matters relating to Baroda, which he secretly and expeditiously communicated to the Governor and Members of the Council of Bombay.

Towards the end of 1873 (after I had entered the service of Government on the 7th April of that year) my father went to Baroda to make private inquiries regarding the misconduct of the Gaekwar's Brahmin servants of various grades. He took me with him, and thus early in my official career I gained considerable knowledge of Baroda and Gujarat affairs, and saw clearly enough that the Brahmins, even without making themselves too prominent, completely controlled the Gaekwar and the administration of his city and territory. This insight proved of great value to me in 1879, when I was in charge of a Kathiawar *prant*, in which province there were several Gaekwari Mahals administered by Baroda officials, who also collected the tribute due to the Gaekwar by certain Kathiawar States.

In 1879 I was appointed Acting Fourth Assistant Political Agent, in charge of the Jhalawad *prant* (division or province) of Kathiawar. This appointment was made by Sir Richard Temple, without the "particular sanction" of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, as required by Rule 330C of the Civil Service Regulations. In 1880 I was squeezed out of this Fourth Assistantship by the return of the permanent holder of the post, Major H. L. Nutt. Major Nutt had been appointed to act for two years as First Assistant Resident, Baroda, but was removed from



that position for having, it was rumoured, personally assaulted the Resident, Mr. P. S. Melvill, I.C.S., in his residency.

I was the sole sufferer by this ill-timed occurrence, inasmuch as it occasioned the cessation of my acting duties in Kathiawar, and thereby afforded the "Competition-Wallahs", then rising into power at the Secretariat, the desired opportunity of forcing me out of the Political Service. This opposition and hostility to the employment of an uncovenanted official in the higher posts of a Government department in India necessitated my rejoining the Marine Postal Service between Bombay and Suez.

My patron, Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, heard of this hardship and predicament on about the 4th March, 1880, and he at once directed his chief secretary to rearrange the duties of political officers in such a manner as would provide for Major Nutt elsewhere, without ousting me from the Kathiawar political agency. Sir Richard also asked the Government of India to allow me to act as First Assistant at Baroda vice Major Nutt, and instructed his private secretary, Mr. G. H. R. Hart, to tell me to stop at Baroda, on my way to Bombay, and call on Mr. Melvill, the Resident, to solicit his support to the proposal to transfer me to Baroda.

Mr. Melvill when I called on him was not cordial, nor even officially courteous. He at once threw in my face that I was an uncovenanted officer, and as such ineligible by the regulations to hold a gazetted office in the Indian Political Service, from which I had been very properly ousted. He added that, after his recent experience with Major Nutt, he would oppose the appointment to Baroda of any officer of the Bombay Political Department. He did not offer me any hospitality, and allowed me to return to the railway station in the hired trap which I had picked up there to take me to the residency. I got a meal at the refreshment room, and took the first train to Bombay.

Unfortunately for me, Sir Richard Temple had suddenly resigned the governorship, and left Bombay for Europe on the 13th March, 1880. There was therefore no one personally to advise me as to my course of action, or to appeal

on my behalf to the local government. The Acting Governor, moreover, who was a covenanted Indian Civil Servant, declined to grant me a personal interview.

About a month later Mr. Melvill went to Europe in the P. & O. mail steamer of which I happened to be the mail agent. Walking into my empty office on deck, Mr. Melvill took a chair without an invitation from anyone. I found him there, and at once asked him to leave the office, as passengers, unless guests of the mail agent, were not admitted into it. To me it seemed that I was getting quits with Mr. Melvill for his treatment of me in his residency! I related the foregoing incident to Sir Richard Temple and to Sir Henry Rawlinson, as evidence of the hostility of covenanted civilians to those who are locally known as bearing the "mark of the beast". I suggested that it should be privately mentioned to the Secretary of State, and also to Sir James Fergusson, Bart., the outgoing Governor of Bombay. Sir Richard Temple mentioned this matter to Sir James.

In 1889 General A. G. F. Hogg, C.B., Resident at Aden, showed me a personal letter he had received, asking him to ascertain from me if I desired to act as First Assistant Resident at Baroda. The General observed that if I accepted the offer I would be serving under my cousin, Sir Harry Prendergast, V.C.; and that, no doubt, I needed a change to comparatively healthy India, after so long a service in the exhausting climate of Aden and on the Somali coast. I replied that I wanted promotion in the Aden residency. I explained that I applied to go to India for the limited period of six months, and made it clear that I desired to continue at Aden as the permanent Second Assistant. The reason for this was that, being on the spot, the consulship and administratorship of Berbera and Zeila would fall to me in ordinary routine, when as Second Assistant I became the First Assistant Resident of Aden. The First Assistant Resident was always *ex officio* H.B.M.'s consul and the political agent for the Somali coast, but if at any time the Foreign Office handed over Somaliland to the British Colonial Office, Indian political officers would no longer be employed in Somaliland. If, therefore, I

were there, or at Aden, as the *de facto* First Assistant when the actual transfer took place, I was practically certain to become a permanent servant of the British Foreign Office, a position which I desired to hold. It would, consequently, not suit me to quit the service of the Aden residency, and I would rather remain his (General Hogg's) permanent Second Assistant, and have his support for my claim to become H.B.M.'s representative in Somaliland when that post fell vacant, than to go to Baroda as First Assistant, or to any assistantship elsewhere in India.

In May 1893 General Hogg said that he had already written to Major Evelyn Baring, H.B.M.'s Consul-General in Egypt. General Hogg added that he had personally seen Mr. Julian Pauncefoot (and also had written to him, for demi-official record at the Foreign Office in London) about my future employment under the British Government. I could only thank General Hogg for his great kindness to me, and asked him to stop privately my being offered the Baroda opening, as I had no desire to have placed on record my refusal of that appointment, acting or permanent.



### CHAPTER III

#### "A STRONG MAN ARMED"

I WAS brought up from my earliest childhood by Colonel and Mrs. Stather, who, after my mother's death at sea on the 26th March, 1862, were my guardians, and with whom I resided for many years. This dear, lovable old couple regarded me as their son. Mrs. Stather had no children of her own, and Colonel Stather's four daughters by his first marriage were grown up and out in the world.

In these circumstances, during my boyhood I gradually acquired from my guardians some appreciation of the political affairs, conditions, and ideas of western India. Colonel Stather died on the 27th February, 1893, and I had in that year completed over twenty years' service under Government. During that period I was frequently on leave in England, and I always visited him at his home in Gloucestershire. I sought his opinions on a variety of Indian subjects. For instance, I specially asked his views on the exercise by the East India Company of the laws of "Adoption" and "Lapse", and, as it happened, I had at that time to deal personally with some cases of "Adoption". His replies were very apposite, and of considerable help to me. Colonel Stather was an experienced officer, who thoroughly understood native ways and their mode of thought; moreover, he was an untiring student of the history of India.

In 1853, at Baroda, my mother had taken the only suitable bungalow available, which, unfortunately, was situated near the cantonment boundary, neighbouring the city. The distance from the lines and the mess-house made this abode inconvenient, but on the other hand it was a commodious and comfortable residence. Here on the 23rd May, 1854, my mother gave birth to her first child—a strong, healthy infant, who received the names of Spencer John

George Walsh. The orderly, Raghoo, was specially devoted to this baby. However, notwithstanding the skill of the regimental surgeon-major (Dr. Stile), and the loving care of the mother and Mrs. Stather, Spencer succumbed to croup on the 20th August, 1855.

Colonel and Mrs. Stather, and Raghoo, have told me that my mother's grief was terrible to behold. Although she was in bad health, she insisted (contrary to Dr. Stile's advice) on going to the cemetery, and was driven to the child's grave by Mrs. Stather, instead of making use of the Resident's or the Gaekwar's carriage. Major Stather and my father carried the dead child's coffin to the grave; and the orderlies, Raghoo and Abdool, attended the funeral in full uniform, saluting the coffin as it was being lowered to its last resting-place. Neither of these men had ever previously witnessed a Christian burial, but when they observed the mourners sprinkling earth on the coffin they did likewise. Major Stather, in speaking of these two Grenadier privates (one a Maratha, the other a Deccani Mohammedan), said that, although different from us in race, colour, and creed, they allowed no caste rules or prejudices to interfere with the public exhibition of their love and devotion to my parents. The fact remains that there was a strong bond of union between them and my father, owing to both being soldiers; and they sympathized with him and with Mrs. Walsh, as the wife of a young Jung Bahadur Sahib.

I was my mother's second child, and arrived about ten months before Colonel and Mrs. Stather retired on pension to Europe in 1856. A great intimacy and firm friendship had sprung up between my mother and Mrs. Stather. I had only a few infantile maladies, nevertheless my mother was anxious to send me to England, and for her sake Mrs. Stather offered to take care of me. This was a great relief to my mother, and Major Stather assured my father that as he and Mrs. Stather had no child of their own, he would like to take charge of me and bring me up with the soldiering instincts of a Grenadier. My father was delighted with this arrangement, which both before and after my mother's death was carried out until I was sent to school in France.



My mother lost her third child, George Inverarity Walsh (born the 7th October, 1857; died the 23rd May, 1859), and, being seriously ill herself, started for England, taking me and the orderly, Raghoo, with her. I see, in a letter written by Lady George Houlton, that we arrived direct from Southampton at her residence in Somersetshire on the 1st November, 1859. From there we went to see Colonel and Mrs. Stather at their hospitable home at Woodchester, near Stroud, and in their care I was to be placed, after my mother had shown me to her father in Ireland and to my paternal grandfather in England.

These inspections and introductions completed, I was taken charge of by my mother's aunt, Miss Ellen Slator, Raghoo remaining in attendance on my mother, or making himself useful to her father at his rectory, while she paid visits to her friends and relations in Ireland and in England. It had been arranged that Raghoo would return to India with my mother on the 1st October, 1860, and until that date he stayed with Colonel Stather. Being unable to talk English, he kept up my knowledge of "bad" Hindustani, or, as he called that language, "Laskhari". My mother started for India on the date fixed, and I remained with my great-aunt, Miss Ellen Slator, daughter of the Rector of Naas and of Tonyn, County Longford.

I reached Woodchester in April 1861. Colonel Stather took me in hand at once, telling me that he intended to make me a Grenadier. That intention had rejoiced Raghoo, and made him predict that one day I would command that famous *pultan*. Years later Colonel Stather told me that Raghoo said: "May I be spared to see the Baba Sahib dress a company of our old regiment, and may he command the corps."

Colonel Stather put me up on a pony, and taught me to ride and to jump that handy little animal over bushes and obstacles erected in the paddock, and I soon got over the falling-off stage. Colonel Stather attached the greatest importance to the noble art of self-defence. He pointed out the advantage of hitting straight from the shoulder, and of knowing how to use the point of a sword. He held that it was never too early to teach these



exercises to a child, and daily I was put through a regular curriculum of defensive and offensive methods and tactics.

When I was about six years of age Miss Emily Stather (who had taught me my alphabet) asked her father to let me read to him a few verses of the Bible. He consented, afterwards patting me on the head and giving me sixpence. But at the same time he observed: "That is no doubt useful, but it is more essential to be able to hit hard with your fists, and to use a sword or spear, mounted or on foot. With that equipment a man can make his way and earn his crust anywhere as an efficient man-at-arms under the British flag."

Four years of Colonel Stather's method of training made me for my age, size, and weight a formidable opponent. Once two village boys attacked me, one bigger and the other smaller than myself. However, I stood to fight it out, and systematically went for my biggest adversary. Eventually I knocked him down, and there was no more fight left in him. My smaller opponent ran away, but not before I had been severely punished by this little imp. I had started off in pursuit of my smaller antagonist, when Colonel Stather appeared and called me back. I remonstrated by saying, "That cowardly devil has got off scot-free, as I was quite unable to devote any of my attention to him." Colonel Stather said, "That is so, but the day is yours. You have nearly killed the chap you have laid out, and we shall have serious trouble with his parents. Fortunately, however, there are several women witnesses, who will testify as to who caused, commenced, and provoked the fight." I replied, "Both boys laughed at and ridiculed my clothes. I took no notice of their impudence, but then the big fellow hit me and observed, 'Take that!'—which I did, on my nose!" "My dear Langton," the Colonel answered, "you have behaved well. But what I liked best of all is your judgment in going at all costs to yourself for the big chap. I shall write and tell your father that you are shaping very well to become a Grenadier."

Colonel Stather led me off to the kitchen, and asked the cook to wash me up and place some raw meat over my

eyes and on my cuts and bruises. Mrs. Stather happened to come into the kitchen, and seeing my condition, and my two lovely black eyes, scolded her husband, accusing him of teaching and encouraging me to fight. The Colonel said, "You are a little unfair, Mary. Langton was gratuitously attacked, and defended himself skilfully, in a way which becomes the son of a gentleman." The Colonel was bundled out of the kitchen, and I was petted and patched up. I was then told not to fight, which I had no occasion to do again at Woodchester, as I was never molested by any boy in the village.

Although only a young child, I thoroughly understood Colonel Stather's precepts and advice, namely not to bully anyone, but at once and resolutely to resent anyone, big or small, who tried to bully me. As the Colonel pointed out, if I was known to possess the character for prompt action in such cases, I should always be left in peace. The whole of my experience has convinced me of the correctness of my guardian's ideas. They were identical with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ on the subject of "a strong man armed" (*see* St. Luke xi, 21, and xxii, 36), and should be instilled into every child. Holding such views, Colonel Stather insisted on my being trained as a child to box and to use a sword.

I made a point, whenever in England, of visiting my old friend and guardian at Woodchester. In 1882-83 I came home after the campaign in Egypt, having been mentioned in despatches, much to the delight of Colonel Stather and his wife. Sir Herbert MacPherson, commanding the Indian Regiment in Egypt, suggested to the Military Secretary, Colonel Dillon, that a commission should be tendered to me. At my age it would have been folly for me to accept it. Nevertheless, the official offer of a commission served to strengthen my case, as Sir Henry Rawlinson could use Sir Herbert's despatch in support of my claim on the Government of India for my restoration to the Political Service. This Her Most Gracious Majesty had been pleased to order, but that reward did not terminate the opposition of the trade union corps in Bombay.

Mrs. Mary Caruthers Stather, aged 73 years, died at Woodchester on the 24th September, 1884, and is buried in the churchyard of that parish.

Lieut.-Colonel William Carlisle Stather, aged 85 years, died on the 27th February, 1893, and is buried alongside his wife.



## CHAPTER IV

### BOYHOOD DAYS

NEARLY every year I visited both of my grandfathers. My mother's father, the Reverend William Spencer Walsh, D.D., had served in a Dragoon regiment before taking Holy Orders. When he discovered that I could ride and box, he had the highest admiration of Colonel Stather's methods of bringing me up. The old man was himself a horseman of repute, and in his youth had been a member of the Kilruddery Hunt.

I also stayed with my paternal grandfather, the Reverend John Prendergast Walsh, M.A., who had served with the 95th Rifles (now the Rifle Brigade) at Waterloo, and had changed his green jacket for the more sedate raiments and robes of an evangelical cleric of the Church of England. He was known on retirement from the Service as "Timberleg", and had left the Army for the express purpose of opposing Puseyism on the platform and in the pulpit. He was the owner of the advowson of a church-living in Somersetshire, but did not himself hold a benefice. He resided permanently abroad, chiefly in France, visiting England during the summer months of each year. This grandfather took a house called "Les Tourelles" (the old semaphore station), in the Boulevard du Sud, at Avranches, in Normandy.

I was placed as an *externe* at the Lycée Impériale. There were no English boys at this college, where I rapidly learned to speak French fluently and with the same pronunciation as spoken by my *camarades d'école*. My grandfather was very intimate with an old Napoleonic officer called Le Capitaine Comte de Soule. This gentleman belonged to the *noblesse*, and owned a small estate in Brittany. He hated the Napoleonists, and when asked why he had so loyally served the great Napoleon, he used to reply, "*Ma foi, il était soldat !*"

My grandparents had to go on business to England for a few weeks. Not knowing what to do with me, they placed me as an *interne* in the Lycée Impériale. There a boy rather bigger and physically stronger than myself called me "*un cochon d'Anglais*"; and no doubt in reply I expressed my opinion of him individually, and of his compatriots generally. At any rate, my remarks infuriated all present against me, but fortunately I had closed with my opponent, to prevent his *coups de pied* reaching me, and I took his head into "chancery" with my right arm. My many assailants beat me very severely about the head, right shoulder and arms, in order to make me let go. But I hung on, and bore the consequent punishment. By attacking me on my right side, they allowed me entire freedom to play with my left fist, with which I planted a succession of well-directed blows above and below the eyes, and on the nose and mouth of the *élève*. My opponent could not shake me off, and I presented him with several souvenirs, nearly all delivered on the same spot, until I became exhausted by my own efforts.

When we were separated by some of the under-masters, I was marched off and placed before the *provisieur*, who heard the complaint made against me and saw the bruised features of my late opponent. The *provisieur*, without hearing me at all, called me "*un maroufle*" and "*un enfant terrible et féroce*", and threatened me with solitary confinement. The concierge, however (to whom my grandfather had occasionally given a *douceur*, with an injunction to look after me), seeing that I had got into serious trouble, communicated at once with Captain Soule, my grandfather's old friend, who had brought me to the Lycée Impériale. Captain Soule thereupon drove at once to the college, and was shown into the room in which the *provisieur* was holding forth on my brutality.

Captain Soule listened to this tirade, and then asked for explanations. Seeing that I had a friend to take my part, I exhibited my injuries, rolling up the sleeve of my bloodstained shirt and showing my right shoulder. I also drew attention to the lumps and clots of blood on my head, of which the *provisieur* had not been aware, or

had not chosen to notice. Captain Soule therefore asked for my version of the fracas, and it received some corroborative evidence from obviously hostile witnesses. I was allowed to go, and sent to be cared for by the Sisters who conducted the college infirmary. There I was treated with the greatest kindness, being called "*un pauvre petit*" without a mother, and whose father was in India.

These circumstances gained me a lot of sympathy, and Madame, the wife of the *provisieur*, who regularly visited the sick-wards of the infirmary, was brought by one of the Sisters to see me. This lady was very kind, and as I was the only English boy in the college, she had heard all about me, and announced at once that her husband was quite wrong in styling me "*un enfant terrible et féroce*". I was asked to come and see her and her daughter as soon as I was discharged from the infirmary. I accepted, and often availed myself of that kind and hospitable invitation. Moreover, now that I was personally known to Monsieur le Provisieur I got on very well with him, but I have often wondered what would have happened to me if Captain Soule had not been there to protect me.

At the beginning of 1865, or late in 1864, I left the Lycée at Avranches, and after a short stay with Colonel Stather at Woodchester I was sent to Davenport's School at 20, Rue de Maguetra, Boulogne-sur-Mer. Some months later I went to Avranches again, for the express purpose of visiting Captain Soule, to hear his reminiscences of the Napoleonic Wars, in which he had been engaged, his stories of Waterloo, the Campaign of 1815, and his partings with the great Emperor at Fontainebleau and Malmaison.

Early in March 1865, or late in 1864, I left the Lycée. I bade adieu to Captain Soule, who put me in the diligence for Granville, where I took a passage on board the s.s. *Cornet* for Southampton. She touched at Jersey and Guernsey, and landed me after a very comfortable passage at my destination. Although only a young child, yet, by always having to find my own way about, I had become an experienced traveller; and, taking a cab at Waterloo, I had no difficulty in getting to Notting Hill Gate, where my father, late in 1862, had taken a furnished house, which



he had placed in charge of his sister, Miss Euphemia Walsh, who later became the wife of Captain Townsend Tyndall of the Bombay Army. My aunt had the care of my two sisters and her father, the Reverend J. Prendergast Walsh, and his wife; while my mother's aunt, Miss Ellen Slator, the daughter of the Reverend James Slator, of Tonym, Co. Longford, and Vicar of Naas, was constantly staying with her.

While at Woodchester with the Stathers I frequently came up to see my relatives, and also my father and his second wife. And as a small boy I met at my aunt's house several notable and interesting people. In 1864 she took my sisters to Boulogne-sur-Mer, and later on to Paris.

My father and his wife entertained a good deal. And as they kept a mail phaeton and a pair of horses, I was often taken to the Park by my stepmother and introduced to my father's friends and acquaintances in many parts of London. Although, in fact, an infant at the time, yet I recollect the names of some of those who frequently came to my father's house. I did not, of course, understand the subjects which were often discussed in my presence, but I have since studied the bearings of some of them from my father's papers.

General Sir Robert Napier, R.E., was a frequent visitor. Later he became Commander-in-Chief, Bombay, and conducted the operations during the campaign in Abyssinia. In recognition of his war service, he was raised to the peerage as Baron of Magdala and Caryngton.

I remember the Princess Victoria Guaramma, daughter of the Raja of Coorg. The Princess was a Christian and a godchild of H.M. Queen Victoria. She married a Colonel John Campbell, of the 38th Madras Native Infantry. She was always handsomely dressed, and wore valuable jewellery. She frequently took me to the Park in her well-appointed carriage, and loaded me with presents and large packets of sweets. In consequence, when up from Woodchester, I never failed to let her know of my presence in London.

The Princess died in 1864, and there is a curious story

regarding her husband's fate. My father was well acquainted with Colonel Campbell, and both were members of the Oriental Club, Hanover Square, London. Colonel Campbell was seen to enter that club on the 7th August, 1867, but no evidence of his leaving it could be traced. My father never had any reason for supposing that Colonel Campbell was hard up, but during his wife's lifetime he once observed to my father: "The Princess has a quantity of valuable gems, rings, stones, and pearls, which are useless to her, but for sentimental reasons and traditions she does not desire to sell them." My father said it was generally supposed that, after the death of Princess Victoria, some, if not the whole, of these costly articles had passed personally to Colonel Campbell, and it had been suggested that, as one of the gems in his possession was the stolen eye of an idol, the chief *pugari* of the temple owning that idol desired to restore this precious stone to the place from which it had been removed. This gem, being the property of neither the State nor the last reigning Raja of Coorg, could not, therefore, be legally retained in the safe keeping of his daughter, the Princess Victoria of Coorg.

There is absolutely no evidence to support this tale, but a novel called *The Moonstone* refers to a story of a somewhat similar nature. It would be quite feasible to send an emissary to London to recover, by fair means or foul, the sacred idol's lost eye, especially as in this case it was known that Colonel Campbell was not unwilling to sell some, or all, of the jewellery in his custody. In such circumstances it would be quite a simple matter to invite him to bring this particular gem for the inspection of a potential purchaser; while if he had been thus enticed to exhibit that jewel, he could have been easily murdered, and his body secretly buried or burned, with little risk to the perpetrators of such a crime.

The Maharajah Dhulip Singh, the son of Rumjit Singh, "the lion of the Punjab", constantly came to my father's house to consult him about his claims, debts, and difficulties. My father personally endeavoured to induce the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister, and other influential personages to relieve the Maharajah of his debts, and



to increase his annual pension. I did not see the Maharajah Dhulip Singh again until he was detained by the Secretary of State's orders at Aden in 1886, when he told me of his impoverished condition and his inability to get any kind of redress from the British Government. Dhulip Singh said to me : "I have often used the examples and arguments which your father contended should govern my 'case and claims'."

Shortly before his death I wrote to several senior officials at the India Office, with whom I was personally acquainted, to get the Maharajah a pittance for the relief of his immediate necessities. However, nothing was done for him. He died in abject poverty in Paris, on the 23rd October, 1893.

Mr. Harris Prendergast, Q.C., a bencher of Lincoln's Inn, was closely related to my father. I was taken to his house to be introduced to my cousin, and my first observation to him was : "You are the first Prendergast cousin I have ever seen." In reply he tipped me ten shillings, and desired me not to forget him. I never did, and my sisters and I often went to have tea at his house in Talbot Square, Paddington. Mr. Harris Prendergast was a student of and an expert adviser on, all matters connected with the rights and privileges of military officers. His knowledge on that question is disclosed in his book entitled *The Law Relating to Officers in the Army*.

On the death in 1868 of Mr. Davenport, the principal of the school I attended at Boulogne-sur-Mer, my class-master, Monsieur Destré, had to find employment as an under-teacher in some other school. Having an eye to business, it struck him that he could easily obtain the post he required by offering his services to Monsieur Le Petit, the proprietor and principal of the school at 15, Rue Flauhaut. He could also casually let drop to that pedagogue that, although nearly all Mr. Davenport's pupils were returning to England, yet he believed ten or twelve English boys desired to continue their studies under him in France, and that several of the latter would in all probability join the school in which he had the promise of employment. Monsieur Le Petit readily "tumbled"



to this suggestion, and on the spot offered to Monsieur Destré the same status in his school as he had held under Mr. Davenport. I at once wrote to Colonel Stather, asking to be placed at Monsieur Le Petit's school, as the best way of keeping up my knowledge of that language. My guardian assented to this view, and accordingly arranged to have me transferred to 15, Rue de Flauhaut.

At Davenport's school we wore plain clothes; but at Le Petit's school all the pupils were attired in the *tenue* of a French *école*, or college, the sole difference being the device on the buttons of our garments. In a few days I was dressed as *un élève*, with a *képi*, a dark blue jacket, waistcoat and trousers to match, and was quite delighted with my uniform.

At Boulogne I met a remarkable and well-known man, by name Mr. Launcelot Peyton, who for years was very kind to me, and took me about with him everywhere. He lived at Boulogne with his wife, and, having no children, they desired to adopt me altogether. They went so far as to approach Colonel Stather and my paternal grandmother with that proposal, which, of course, could not be entertained. At the same time, however, it was so genuine and so nicely made that they both thanked Mr. Peyton for it; and they were very glad that I had such a good and desirable friend during my lonely schooldays in France.

I never heard Mr. Launcelot Peyton himself claim any military rank, but he was always addressed as Captain, or Colonel, or even General Peyton, and he was supposed to have had a regular commission in the American Confederate Army. He had been a man of large wealth, the owner of several plantations worked by two or three thousand slaves. He never sold or bought a slave, but they bred naturally on his large landed estates, where each one had a hut and a "cabbage patch". "Colonel" Peyton, as I have always called him, lost in the service of the Southern Confederacy the whole of his immense fortune and property, and it was only by an exceptional stroke of pure good luck that he recovered a considerable portion of the money he had advanced to the cause of the Southern

States in their war against the Northern States of the Union.

Colonel Peyton was sent to Europe to arrange for the conveyance by "blockade runners" of stores for the Confederate Government. For that purpose he had a large sum of money in London under his sole control, but was suddenly instructed by his Government to cease all operations on their behalf, and to apply the money in part payment of the debt due to him. By this means he came into possession of funds, which he invested, and lived on the income derived from that source, which I estimate as yielding several thousand pounds per annum.

## CHAPTER V

### ODSEY GRANGE AND COWLEY

My father took a lease of Odsey Grange, an old-fashioned but commodious house situated about half-way between Baldock and Royston, and about two miles by road from the village of Ashwell. Mr. Herbert Fordham, of Odsey House, owned the Grange, also a large number of acres around it, on which game was preserved and afforded excellent sport. My father and his wife attended the "meets" of the various packs of hounds in the vicinity, and he was invited by the neighbouring landowners to shoot in their preserves.

I spent my holidays at Odsey Grange, and had a good time there. Many hunting men, seeing that I could ride, lent me a mount whenever I wanted one; moreover, as my father had three hunters, and two other corks, I rarely lacked a nag to ride. A Mr. Nash, who maintained a pack of harriers (this gentleman, later, I believe, married Miss Constance Fordham of Odsey House), and the two brothers Merry of Guilden Morden, kept a number of hunters, while a Mr. Gentil, pork butcher and horse-dealer, nearly always had a "likely nag" for sale. From one or other of these stables I could always get a mount for a meet. Mr. Gentil, however, made it a condition that I should not injure his animal's feet on a hard road.

My visits to Odsey Grange gave me an insight into English rural life and etiquette with a pack in the field, of which I had no previous knowledge. It also taught me to ride and stick on the back of a horse, which experience was of great service to me during my varied career in the East.

My father accompanied me to Cowley College, Oxford, in July or August 1869. On arrival there he was told that the principal resided in Oxford, and was not then on the



premises. However, the head master, the Reverend J. G. Watts, M.A., would see us in about ten minutes, when he came out of the classroom.

Sergeant Kent, a drill instructor and in charge of the college batmen, was obviously an old soldier. He had met us at the door, and invited my father to follow the maid to the matron's parlour, where Kent handed the matron my father's card. The matron was a handsome, middle-aged widow, and received us politely. She suggested that while we waited for the head master and chaplain, Sergeant Kent should show my father over the premises, which consisted of the Old House, the brick buildings, and the new (stone) buildings and chapel. My father tipped Kent a sovereign, and said to him: "Look after my boy, Sergeant. He has been brought up in schools in France, and no doubt has some foreign ways and manners. He is therefore likely to be teased, laughed at, and possibly bullied. Now I don't want you, or anyone, to interfere on his behalf. He can take very good care of himself, and has been shown and trained since four years of age to use his fists. It will surprise me if a boy of his size, weight, and age can take him on successfully—even a bigger one will soon find out what he is up against."

Sergeant Kent suggested that I should be placed in the Gloucestershire room, where my companions would be Mr. Chetwynd and two brothers named Boyes, sons of a rector whose brother was an admiral. Sergeant Kent regarded these boys as desirable "nobs". His daughter, Constance, a girl of about nineteen years of age, was the chambermaid of the Gloucestershire room, and my father gave her a small present. Thus, from my start at Cowley, I secured two very useful and devoted friends. My father had a short interview with Mr. Watts, who introduced us to his wife, and it appeared to me that I should get on very well with the head master. We were conducted back to the matron's parlour, and Sergeant Kent had told us that she was a near relative of the principal. Moreover, her son, who resided with his mother and attended the college classes, was French in all respects, his deceased father having been a French Army officer, who had been an

A.D.C. and assistant private secretary to the Governor-General of French Algeria.

After my father had left the college to catch a train for London, as the quickest way of getting back to Odsey Grange, I wandered alone into the quadrangle and playground. There, of course, I was spotted as a "new boy", and had to stand a little good-natured chaff. One boy, however, insisted on calling me "Frenchy", and "a d—— frog-eater". I assured him that I was Irish, but had been educated in France, and that I had no relish for the delicacy to which he had alluded. Nevertheless, he repeated the above abusive epithets, and it struck me that my new comrades were watching to see if I would put up with it. In these circumstances, I felt compelled to act.

I said to my aggressor: "I have already told you that I am not French. But since you persist in disbelieving me on that point, I must provide you with evidence in support of my assertion." I made that remark calmly, and without exhibiting any heat or temper. He himself then struck out at me, and I lost no time in returning the attack. As he had exposed himself, I landed him a right-hander between the eyes, and, being the taller and stronger, he tried to close with me. At that, by good luck, I caught him fairly with my left. The weight of this blow, added to his own impetus, upset his equilibrium and caused him to fall sideways. Getting up speedily, he gallantly renewed the fight. He attempted to rush me, and, thereby again exposing himself, he received three or four well-placed left-handers at close quarters. By those scientifically planted blows he was completely beaten, and gave up the fight.

My opponent's injuries had to be attended to in the infirmary, but there was no bad blood between us, and we soon became very intimate and dear friends. Here I may observe that during the rest of my time at Cowley I never had occasion to fight anyone. I owed my success to Colonel Stathers' training and principles, which, besides being sound, are those of a gentleman.

Sergeant Kent witnessed the fight from afar, but, recollecting my father's wishes, he did not attempt to stop



it, as it was his duty to do. After the scrimmage was over, he went to report it to the Reverend England, the master on duty for the day, and stated the facts of the case faithfully enough, but also placed them in a favourable light for me. I had evidently gone up in Sergeant Kent's estimation. A little later he came to me and, saluting in the correct Service way, said: "Mr. England, the senior class-master of division two, wishes to see you, sir." He conducted me to the master's parlour, where I found the Rev. Mr. England seated in a chair at his writing-table.

I put my heels together, saluted, and then stood at attention in French fashion. Mr. England said: "You have been fighting. Are you not aware that fighting is absolutely prohibited?" I respectfully denied that I had been fighting, pointing out that my clothes were not even deranged. I then explained that a boy had called me a "frog-eating Frenchy", and would not believe my assertion that I was Irish. I was therefore, I said, compelled to provide evidence of the truth of my statement, and the boy was no longer in doubt of my Celtic origin. Mr. England smiled and said: "You must never again furnish that kind of evidence here." I apologized, and expressed regret at having transgressed the rules of the college. Whereupon Mr. England invited me to sit down and explain how and where I had been brought up. I told him, and was glad to have so early an opportunity of doing so.

There were three other under-masters in the room, one of them the professor of French. He spoke to me in his own language, and engaged me in conversation. Then, suddenly taking up a French book, he directed me to read from it the paragraph he had indicated. I readily complied, and monsieur declared that I should be put in the highest French class. I wanted to translate into English what I had read out, but I was not allowed to do so, although I protested I could render the passages in question. Mr. England answered me: "It is not necessary, as we all see, from the way you delivered them, that you thoroughly understood what you had read out." Monsieur also added: "Your knowledge of French would, under ordinary circumstances, put you at the top of the first class. But



I regret to tell you that, in my opinion, you will only take the second place. It will, I dare say, be a near thing, and as regards general knowledge you are a long way above your rival. The latter, however, happens to be French, and was educated entirely in France. He is also older than you, so you will stand little or no chance against him." I replied: "I have already met the pupil to whom you allude, and fully realize that he will be above me in the French class. I am really sorry at this misfortune, as now I shall not have the satisfaction of being certain of the top place of any class in the college." A bell rang, and, apologizing to the professor, I said, "*Voilà le tambour.*" The three Englishmen in the room were sufficiently conversant of French to know that "*tambour*" meant a drum, but they considered me "dotty" until the professor explained to them that in French *lycées* bells, bugles, and trumpets were not used, all commands and directions being announced by beat or tap of the drum. I said good night to all present, and thought I had not created a bad impression on my new masters. Mr. England told me to see him the next day in the second division classroom half an hour before the pupils assembled there, and he would then examine me to decide as to the division and class in which he would recommend the head master to place me.

I went off to bed in the Gloucestershire room, where I made the acquaintance of three very jolly stable companions. With one of them, Herbert Chetwynd, I have been a lifelong friend, and he was a constant visitor at my home until his death. The other two I lost sight of. I had a large cake and a quantity of fruit in my valise, which Constance had not disturbed, and I proceeded to share these "good things" with my new friends. I had been cautioned by Sergeant Kent that feasting in the bedrooms was against the regulations, and that a sneaking underling might creep upstairs to catch and report us. I told Chetwynd of this danger, and he said: "Yes, most probably. But we can frustrate an attempt to catch us. I have a plentiful supply of broken nutshells to strew on each of the treads of the staircase; and I have also placed some other obstacles for a sneak to blunder over, thereby

warning us of his presence." Probably these precautions protected us. Be that as it may, we ate our cake in peace. Next morning, however, the chambermaid complained of the mess we had made, which, if not cleared up at once, would get all of us into trouble with the head master. We expressed sorrow and gave her a liberal supply of cake, and it restored her equanimity.

At Cowley College Mr. England befriended me in many ways, giving me some sound and useful advice, which I have followed with success to myself. I recollect his observing to me: "Memory and power to retain in the brain knowledge acquired by reading is very limited, especially as regards the details of an intricate subject. My advice to you, therefore, is not to waste time with questions unlikely to arise, but to be always mindful of where to refer and to find full particulars of any matter. Supply yourself on starting in life with a small portable reference library, and add to it whenever circumstances permit you to do so. Endeavour to gain experience as a scribe by writing paragraphs and announcements for the Press, but don't expect to be paid for such contributions. If you can induce an editor to publish your communications in the columns of his newspaper, it will amply repay you in the end. Endeavour, also, to become known as an authority on some particular subject or country. . . ." I have invariably followed and benefited by that advice.

Cowley has no connection with the Cowley Fathers, beyond the fact that some members of that fraternity resided in that hamlet. In my own time there, for some reason or other, the villagers made an effigy, and intended to burn it on Bullingdon Green, close to the Cowley College cricket ground. The boys, as a whole, resented the burning of an effigy of a minister of any religion; but I believe I took a leading part in driving off the villagers, and in effecting the rescue of the effigy from its intended fate at the hands of these ignorant peasants. I obtained reinforcements from the college to recover the effigy, and we hung on to it and drove off our assailants. Mr. England highly approved of my views and action, as being what he called very proper behaviour in the matter.



There was no Cowley College Rowing Club, but several of the pupils had their own boats at Sandford Lock. There we could always hire an old "eight" for a scratch crew. On condition that we rejoined by train on the 16th July, 1870, some of us obtained permission to go downstream in the "eight" we had hired, and of which I was coxswain. We arranged to stop for two or three nights on the trip at River Bank Inn, and to hand over our boat to Messum, at Richmond, who would send it back by barge to Sandford. We arrived at Richmond and put up at the Talbot Hotel, facing the bridge. My grandfather and my father frequented that hotel, and for many years sat with a coterie of their friends, drinking port wine in a window overlooking the bridge.

I should here mention that when I went to Cowley I had already some experience of boating, thanks to the kindness of some of my father's friends. At different times on the Thames I had learned to pull and feather an oar and generally to handle a boat, as well as how and to what part of a boat or barge a tow-line should be made fast for haulage purposes. It was entirely owing to such knowledge and experience that I was specially mentioned in the despatches of the Egyptian Campaign of 1882, while it was, of course, very useful to me at Cowley. Except on the Liane at Boulogne, where I merely paddled about anyhow, I never had any other kind of boat training.

To return to the occasion of the jaunt of the Cowley eight on the 16th July, 1870. Each member of the crew wore the college cap, tie, and blazer, and, as I have said, we put up at the "Talbot", Richmond. There we were seated in the bar-room facing the street, when a foreigner went up to the counter and asked for a drink, which the barmaid handed to him. The foreigner then emptied on to the bar counter the contents of his overcoat pockets. I happened to notice that he had a watch-chain in the buttonhole of his great-coat, which he let loose. As the bar of his chain got through the buttonhole of his overcoat, no doubt he intended to place it (I presume it had a watch attached) on the counter, together with the pile of other



articles from his pockets. Walking across the room, he hung up his greatcoat and then returned to the bar. Upon failing to see his watch, without making any search he rushed into the street and fetched in a constable of police. He accused the barmaid of having stolen his watch, which she denied ever having seen. The constable had no legal right to interfere, but this peeler marched off both the complainant and the accused to the nearest police-station. The crew of the Cowley eight followed; and I acted to some extent as an interpreter, and wholly as an indignant spectator of the illegal arrest of an English girl without a warrant from a magistrate.

The superintendent in charge of the station saw at once that the policeman had exceeded his duty; nevertheless, he endeavoured to shield the erring constable. The foreigner, who turned out to be a Frenchman, insisted that the barmaid should be locked up. That, of course, the superintendent could not do, and he finally referred the complainant to the court, as the charge was not cognizable by a policeman who had not himself seen the theft committed and whose information was derived from the complainant's unsupported statement of the case. The court-house in question, where the petty sessions were being held, was in Paradise Road, Richmond.

I was slightly acquainted with Mr. Francis (or Lt.-Colonel Sir Francis) Burdett, Bart., J.P., of Ancaster House, Richmond, a magistrate for the Richmond Division of Surrey, who happened to be in the vicinity of the police-station. I went up to him and explained the circumstances, but he said that until the case came up before the Bench he could not intervene in any way. Nevertheless, he spoke to the superintendent, and a little later the superintendent told the barmaid that she was free to go. This announcement was greeted with cheers by the members of the Cowley eight, and, indeed, by the crowd generally, and we escorted the maid back in triumph to the Talbot Hotel. Mr. and Mrs. Grunhold, the proprietors, thanked me profusely, and always attributed the release of their barmaid, and the hushing-up of the case, to my efforts in the matter. Their gratitude, indeed, was somewhat embarrassing, as

till the day of their death they would not allow me to pay for anything I might order in the hotel.

The crew afterwards sat down to dinner, and decided that when they had handed the "eight" over to Messum—whose store for boats, in those days, was under one of the arches of Richmond Bridge—they would return next morning by an early train to Oxford. Later, the waiter came to the smoking-room with a telegram for me from my father. My father was then in lodgings in South Moulton Street; his wife, with her mother, was at Ealing. The telegram ran: "Come at once to see me here."

I managed to get to London that night, and the decision then made altered my intended career. Since then over fifty-five years have elapsed. Do I regret the decision? No, I would act similarly now, with all my experiences.

## CHAPTER VI

### WAR CLOUDS

ON my reaching London the night of the 16th July, 1870, my father told me it seemed to him that war between France and Prussia was now inevitable, as the French Minister had actually left Berlin. The French people demanded the immediate invasion of Germany, and this enterprise was supported by Marshal Le Bœuf, Chief of Staff of the French Army, and in attendance on the Emperor, as well as by Monsieur Emille Ollivier, Head of the Ministry.

All parties and classes had resolved on war with Prussia, but, owing to the unpreparedness of the French Army, a delay in the date of the declaration of war was advised by the French Foreign Office. It was, indeed, also advised by Napoleon himself and some of his senior generals. Monsieur Thiers endeavoured to defer the commencement of hostilities solely on the grounds of it being premature to attack at this juncture; however, he strongly advocated an early date for commencing hostilities as essential to the safety of France.

It was hoped that French diplomacy would be able to gain time by averting an actual collision between the opposing armies, and so, at least, bring about the neutrality of Austria, Italy, and even some of the southern States of Germany. The French were terribly disappointed at Bavaria joining Prussia, as the latter kingdom had been regarded by some as a possible French ally. The Emperor, however, was forced by public opinion, and by the fear of being driven off his throne, to declare war, regardless of whether his army was fit to take the field or not.

My father's connection with the campaign arose in the following manner:

A group of Indian and other newspapers decided to



have an expert writer as a correspondent of their own, and to attach him to one of the French Army Corps. Under the regulations, such a correspondent must be *un officier de carrière* on the Active List, and wear the uniform of his rank in the army to which he belonged. These restrictions favoured my father's chance, and he was selected as war correspondent.

My father and I left London in the forenoon of the 19th July, 1870. Arriving in Paris after an uneventful journey, we called on a Count Walsh de Serrant, at No. 7, Rue de la Baume. He was very kind, and gave us a letter to Marshal Canrobert, commanding the 6th French Army Corps, whom he knew intimately. Even with Count Walsh's personal assistance, my father had not been able to purchase a riding-horse in Paris, and his search for a couple of chargers revealed that the Government had impounded every serviceable animal in all parts of France.

At Marshal Canrobert's headquarters we were politely interviewed by a senior staff officer. He examined our papers and found them *en règle*, and sent them to the Marshal, who received us a few minutes later. The Marshal and my father (who wore his British captain's uniform) saluted each other in the most correct military manner, and the Marshal directed his chief-of-staff to assist my father in every way.

At Châlons we then discovered the servant of a Mexican *attaché* willing to sell a horse for two thousand francs. My father agreed to pay that sum if the servant would throw in the saddle and horse equipment. My father was thus ready to take the field, but I was still without a mount.

Eventually, however, we found a farmer's wife who had a donkey-chaise, in which she used to take fruit, vegetables, and eggs to market. Her garden and stores had been wrecked by the remount parties quartered on the farm, and she had therefore now no occupation. Her husband, a weak old man, was unable to work and had left the farm, with his married daughter, leaving his wife without food or money to shift for herself.

Suzanne, the farmer's wife, was in great tribulation at

the breaking-up of her home, and feared starvation—this last a condition shared by many of her neighbours. My father suggested that she should sell us her chaise and donkey and enter our service. She could look after our chaise and traps, and do any job required of her, we undertaking to share our food with her, and give her a weekly wage of twenty francs. This arrangement met with her approval, and she then sold the chaise and the donkey to us for five hundred francs, and expressed her willingness to start off with us in a couple of hours. I remained at the farm, and my father, being now mounted, went off, ready to march to the eastward with an advance guard of Marshal Canrobert's cuirassiers. My father could give me no definite instructions, but told me to move in the direct line for Saarbrücken, where the French *douaniers*, on the 19th July, 1870, had fired the first shots of the war.

Suzanne either gave the money she had received from me to her husband or had buried it. I was afraid to let her out of my sight, so waited until she was ready to start for Châlons, where I returned to the quarters we had taken at a small hotel.

After an early breakfast on the 24th July, I paid the hotel bill and drew some more cash, in small gold pieces, from the agents of my father's bank. I gave Suzanne some money to buy oats for the moke and to load the chaise with a fortnight's provisions for ourselves, as we were unlikely to find any for sale as we advanced to the eastward. Her arrangements showed that she was an excellent, thoughtful, and economical caterer.

Since my father had left Paris he had written several articles and three news-letters for the Press. He gave me these papers with instructions to make two copies of each, one of them to be posted to India and the other to London. As I had to copy these papers before leaving Châlons, I commenced them as soon as possible, partaking of coffee and rolls and butter while so employed. The trouble was how to get off similar papers in the future. My father said if he could not deliver them to me he would get the British military attaché to include them in his bag for London,



addressed to Mrs. Walsh, and she would distribute and attend to them. This course eventually he had to adopt.

On the 28th July I was still in search of my father, but could get no information regarding the whereabouts of the cuirassier regiment to which he was attached. On the 30th July I heard that a French attack on Saarbrücken had failed, and that the French had deemed it prudent to retire to their own side of the frontier. The evening of the same day I found my father encamped with a party of cuirassiers three miles on the French side of the frontier. My father was delighted to see me, and we related to each other our adventures since we had parted at Châlons. He had with him eight articles to be copied and sent off to India and to London. These he handed to me, and I was fortunate enough to find a stationer, from whom I bought paper, pens, and ink. The stationer very courteously permitted me to copy my father's papers on his premises, which kept me pen-in-hand for eight hours.

After I had finished my father's articles I saw him for a few minutes. "A German invasion of France," he told me, "is certain within the next week or ten days. The moment you hear of an important French defeat, leave the frontier at once. Don't on any account stop to see the fighting. Make direct for La Chapelle and then to Laon—don't return to Châlons. If the French fail to stem the German invasion, pay off Suzanne, give her the chaise and donkey, and make for England."

On the 4th August guns and ammunition passed me, on their way across the frontier, and others to join artillery units on the French side. About 6 p.m. the same day I heard that the Crown Prince had defeated Marshal Frossard at Wissemburg and Gelsberg, and had actually crossed the French boundary. No one believed this report. On the 5th August, however, the Frossard defeat was confirmed, and also the report that General Douay had been killed in action. From what I saw, my father's prediction was coming true, and, as I did not desire to be overtaken by the Germans, it seemed prudent to leave the vicinity of the frontier.

On the 7th August some French infantry halted



near my bivouac, and I at once presented myself to the officer in command. I explained who and what I was and how I came to be there; and that until I could obtain some authentic news as to the movements of the German and French Armies I thought it prudent to remain where I was. This officer was very polite and kind, and I invited him to breakfast with me in my donkey-chaise. At first he said that he had not the time, as he had to march without delay on Rheims so soon as his men had partaken of their morning meal. He consented, however, to view my equipage, which was only about 300 yards from where we stood talking.

On our arrival Suzanne welcomed him with *la révérence* due to *Monsieur le Colonel*, and at once announced that she had prepared an "omelette" for him. Alluding, then, to me, she expressed her astonishment that my parents allowed *un petit enfant comme lui courir tout seul*; but, *mon Colonel*, she added, no one interferes with, or restricts the movements of *ce brave enfant*. I was at the time 14½ years old, and did not consider myself in any way or sense "*un enfant*". I think my six weeks on the French frontier, in daily contact with the soldiers of France, both officers and men, widened my mind and increased my knowledge of the world; and in that respect I was in advance of an English-brought-up lad of my own age. I had told Suzanne that if she was questioned about me she was to reply: "He is English. His father is an officer of the British Army and a war correspondent attached with Marshal Canrobert's consent to the cuirassiers and now at the Front." I wanted *mon Colonel* to know my position, and to derive that information from Suzanne.

We gave *mon Colonel* a good breakfast and a bottle of excellent red wine. He rose to go, and thanked me for my hospitality to him, observing that my *entrer en compagnie* must have given me many pleasant experiences and an insight into the conditions of French military affairs on the Haute Marne. As he mounted his horse he said: "If you go to Rheims, make inquiries for me."

I wrote on the 5th August, telling my father that I was starting to the westward in accordance with his

orders, and would hang about as long as I could avoid the Germans. But the French postal arrangements had broken down, and letters directed to the care of the Chief of Staff of the 6th Corps d'Armée never reached him. I then asked H.M. Embassy to put a letter addressed to my father in the bag sent to the British officer attached to the 6th Army Corps. That letter, however, only reached him after he had severed his connection with the French Army. Not knowing what to do in the absence of all communication with my father, I went on to Rheims, partly on foot and partly in the donkey-chaise with Suzanne. There I saw *mon Colonel* again, and he entertained me very hospitably.

I left Rheims on the 23rd August, a few hours before Marshal MacMahon arrived there to dispatch his army to the eastward. Together with Suzanne and the donkey-chaise, I took the road for Laon, distant about thirty-five miles by road. We travelled by easy stages, and arrived there safely without mishap or hindrance of any kind. On the 2nd September I discharged Suzanne and gave her the donkey and chaise. She was delighted with the way in which she had been treated, but decided not to return to Châlons until the Germans had left that town and district. My adventures were over, and I arrived back in London on the 5th September, 1870. There I heard of Napoleon's surrender, and of the establishment of a Military Government for the defence of Paris.

After paying a short visit to recount my adventures to my guardian, Colonel Stather, at Woodchester, I returned to Cowley College. I was warmly welcomed by the Rev. Mr. England, my friend and class-master; also by the Rev. J. G. Watts, the head master and chaplain, and Mr. Herman, the principal. They all congratulated me on what I had seen and on the way I had taken care of myself.

My father was not present at the surrender of Napoleon at Sedan on the 3rd September, 1870. He had remained with the cuirassier regiment, whose fortunes he had followed since being attached to that corps at Châlons on the 23rd July the same year. The French Armies were driven back, and a Republican Government was established at Paris on the 4th September, 1870. My father asked



that the permits and papers accrediting him to the Imperial Government of France should be recognized by the Republican Government and their officers in the field, but his request was refused, and he ceased to be a war correspondent with the French Army. Having thus been forcibly ousted from that post, he crossed over the German frontier with his horse and made his way through Luxembourg and Belgium to England, where he arrived on September the 12th.



## CHAPTER VII

### BOMBAY

ON my return from France and my adventurous war-time experiences I found it very difficult to settle down to the ordinary routine of Cowley College. My class-master, Mr. England, continued to take a great interest in my studies, and wanted me to gain a "place" in the college examinations. This, thanks to his coaching, I succeeded in doing.

I did a great deal of boating from Sandford Lock, and frequently went to Abingdon and Newnham Harcourt. The rector and owner of the latter property, the Reverend William Vernon Harcourt, was always most hospitable to all Cowley boys, and we used to leave our boats at the "Fisherman's Rest", a small inn at the bend of the Thames, and have tea at his residence in Newnham Park. I had a Rob Roy canoe, fitted with a centre-board and a bilge-piece, and spent a good deal of my time in learning to manage and sail my little craft. The practice thus gained was of great service to me later on the freshwater canals in Egypt.

Late in September 1871 I fell into the lock at Sandford, and in spite of my wet clothes sailed my Rob Roy canoe on to Abingdon. By that folly I caught a terrible chill, cold, and cough. The latter settled on my chest, and brought on inflammation of the lungs. I spent a full month in bed, and the school doctor became anxious about my condition. Finally, in consultation with another practitioner, he decided that I should be sent home and taken to the South of Europe.

On my arrival in London, my father took me to a specialist, who advised my leaving England for the winter months. My father agreed, but said that he was starting for Bombay on the 17th November, 1871, and

consequently there was no time to arrange to whose care I should be sent. On hearing that, the specialist said: "Take the boy to the East with you. The sea voyage to India, and the climate of the western coast of India, will restore him to health sooner and better than if he went to Italy or anywhere in Southern Europe." I was at this time 15 years, 8½ months old.

My father and I arrived in Bombay early in the morning of the 21st December, 1871.

After breakfast, my father, wearing a white uniform, called to autograph the arrival book at the Brigade Office in the Town Hall, Elphinstone Circle. He sent his card to the Brigade Major, who greeted him cordially and handed him a note from the Governor of Bombay, Sir Seymour Fitzgerald. This note directed my father to go at once to Government House, Parel. Major Karlake said: "The Chief also desires to see you some time to-day. As you are encamped within a few yards of the Cooperage, call on his military secretary on your return from Parel. You could, I think, arrange to get an interview at about 4 p.m." We then left the Town Hall, and were about to step into our hired buggy when a footman announced that Sir Albert Sassoon, of Sans Souci, Byculla, had placed his carriage at Major Walsh's service. We drove off, therefore, in grand style to interview His Excellency the Governor.

On reaching Parel, my father and I both autographed the Government House callers' book. An A.D.C. received us, and he was told to acquaint Sir Seymour Fitzgerald that Major Walsh sought an interview. The A.D.C. returned in a few minutes to say that His Excellency would receive Major Walsh at once, and we were conducted to the library, where Sir Seymour awaited us, seated at his desk.

Sir Seymour got up and greeted my father warmly. "I am afraid," he said, "you consider that I treated you badly. You were not sent to Abyssinia to command the transport train, nor to carry out the scheme which you had drawn up, after it had received the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, Bombay. But it was not possible

to write to you officially, explaining the cause of the unfair treatment and ill-usage meted out to you. In the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief and myself, however, it is only just and fair to tell you the position in which we were placed. The Government of India insisted that the transport arrangements for Abyssinia should be placed under the command of an officer of the Bengal Transport Department. The Chief wrote to me on the subject, and I sent on his letter asking for a reconsideration of the orders of the Bengal military authorities. I urged that to pass you over was an injustice ; also that it was against the wishes of the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, who had selected you for the duty in question, and had accepted the scheme you had drawn up. The Military Department of the Government of India, however, would not listen to our representations made in your favour. Later you took furlough, and started off "on your own" as a volunteer to Abyssinia, but the Chief told me that when you turned up there he had not any post vacant which he could offer you. The Commander-in-Chief asked me to see that you received official credit for your scheme, which was successfully adopted during the campaign. And this I have done." Sir Seymour added : "I also took care that in the official history of the war your scheme was quoted in full ; and that it was placed *in extenso* with the official compilations of the war in Abyssinia, recorded by the Bombay Military Department."

Sir Seymour then went on to say : "In the foregoing circumstances, you ought to receive compensation for the loss and hardship inflicted on you. It is therefore a pleasure to me to offer you an important and lucrative post which you can hold for over three years. A minor native prince needs a guardian personally to supervise his education, to teach him to ride and shoot, and to impart to him the ideas and culture of an English gentleman. You are particularly fitted for these duties, and you will have a competent staff of European and native teachers to assist you. The Prince's State will be under your direct administration as the British officer resident at his Court, and not in any way under the control of a British political



agent or a commissioner of a presidential division. The monthly salary is fifteen hundred rupees, with residence and everything found, as well as a travelling allowance of two hundred rupees per mensem."

My father warmly thanked Sir Seymour for this very handsome offer, the acceptance of which he had very reluctantly to decline. His Excellency, however, did not seem surprised, and said : "You are not personally acquainted with the present Commander-in-Chief, but he knows all about you. He told me that you had specially applied to him for regimental service, which he was prepared to give you at once ; he also remarked that he wished it was in his power to appoint younger men with the up-to-date ideas and knowledge you possess to the command of native infantry battalions. In his own words, 'Walsh has made a study of his profession, as can be seen by his accounts of the battles, manœuvres, and tactics of the 6th and 2nd French Army Corps under Marshals Canrobert and Frossard.' I have read," Sir Seymour said, "with great interest your experiences on the Marne during the campaign of 1870."

My father then explained his position by saying : "I am a soldier, sir, and under the present regulations I shall render myself ineligible for appointment as commandant of a battalion if I have not 'put in' three years' continuous regimental service. Thus, with nearly five years of absence from a regiment, I cannot, in the ordinary course, join any corps. However, since the Commander-in-Chief has in my special case abrogated that rule, that difficulty is gone. In these circumstances I trust that your Excellency will understand the reasons which have compelled me to decline your offer of political employment in a department in which I should like to serve, and the pay of which post would be very acceptable after three years on half-pay. My ambition and desire is to get command of a regiment, qualify for a brigade, and finish up as a general of division on the Bombay Military Establishment. And to make that career possible of attainment, it is essential for me to join a regiment at once."

Sir Seymour observed : "With those views and aims

you have adopted the right course, and I understand that, after having served for one year with a battalion, you would be glad to get a civil appointment. Unfortunately, my term as Governor of this Presidency ceases in May next, so I shall not be here to help you obtain a well-paid position under the Civil Government. I will leave on record my appreciation of your services and claims, and will personally and officially urge my successor to recognize and reward them. I had hoped to get another Governorship, but the Prime Minister has requested me to obtain a seat in the House of Commons as soon as possible, and I have already asked my former constituents at Horsham to return me as the Member for that Borough."

During the interview between Sir Seymour and my father I sat as an attentive listener. At the end, Sir Seymour, turning towards me, said to my father : "Your boy, Walsh, eh ? I suppose you want his appointment to the Bombay District Police ; a very good Service, and as in future it is not to be officered by men of the Indian Army, it offers a splendid career for a youngster who can shoot, ride, and hold a hog-spear. The Forest Department is also an excellent Service, but it appears to me that the India Office intends to pass over locally appointed men in favour of candidates trained at the various Forest schools in France and Germany."

My father thanked Sir Seymour, and explained that he was sending me back to England now that I had recovered my health, to have me "coached" for the Army Competitive Examination, which new scheme had lately been introduced. Whereupon Sir Seymour, speaking to me, said : "Your father is taking the best course for your career in life. My experience is that if a man takes any office under the Government of India, he should belong to one of the covenanted Services. Your age would render it difficult for me to appoint you to one of the local uncovenanted Services, so I wish you success at the examination."

My father told Sir Seymour that on second thoughts he thought it would be prudent to have my name down for the Police. Sir Seymour replied : "It will be quite useless



to do so, as the new Governor will tear up his predecessor's list of candidates. But I can do better than that. If your son applies for appointment to the Police, and urges the claims of his family for employment in this Presidency, I will, on public grounds, recognize them and appoint him substantively to the second or third Police vacancy which occurs." Sir Seymour then sent for his son, who was also his private secretary, and directed him to write to me officially in the above sense. I hoped that, with this prospect in view, my father would not send me back to school in England; and Doctor Rogers, the Presidency surgeon, recommended that I should remain in India for at least another six months before being exposed to the winter rigours of the climate in England.

Sir Seymour asked us to stay to lunch, observing that if my father went direct from Parel to the Cooperage he would catch the Commander-in-Chief before the latter had closed his office. We left Government House, therefore, shortly after lunch, and my father dropped me at our tents before going on to his interview with the Commander-in-Chief. On inquiring from the Military Secretary, my father was told that the Commander-in-Chief would see him at once.

My father explained to the Chief his reasons for seeking immediate regimental employment. His Excellency replied: "You are on twenty-one days 'joining time leave'. If you cancel that leave, I will attach you at once to the 19th Native Infantry now in Bombay. I may tell you confidentially that the Commandant goes on furlough shortly, for six months at least, with, I think, the intention of extending it, as he could do, up to two years. In that case, if you are *de facto* attached to the 19th N.I., you would as a matter of seniority succeed to the command, and retain that position until someone senior to you was appointed by me to that temporary vacancy. Moreover, as he has only applied for short leave, I am not likely to disturb you."

This arrangement suited my father's plans and requirements, and he announced them to us when we were having tea in the canaught of the tent. There my uncle, Captain



W. P. Walshe, was also seated, and on seeing me he said : "Put on your flannels and bring your cricket bag." The latter contained a couple of good bats, a pair of pads, and indiarubber finger-protected gloves. I was then taken to the Bombay Gymkhana—located in one large tent and several smaller ones, pitched on the Maidan and close to the statue of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

My uncle got me made a member of the Bombay Gymkhana. In those days (1871) the permanent club house which now exists had not been built. I was introduced to several members, and W. A. Baker, manager of the National Bank of India, went to the net for a spell. He was not wearing gloves or pads, and before bowling I called out to him : "Round arm, fast." Now the unfortunate feature of my bowling was that, though very swift and well pitched for length, it was frequently wide to the offside of the wicket. I sent up several ill-directed balls with that defect, and I suppose that they must have annoyed Baker. At any rate, he shouted out to me : "Throw your balls at the wicket !" My next two balls were dead on the wicket, but passed just above the bails and were very difficult to play. The third ball was very fast and broke Baker's thumb. I was in no way to blame for this mishap, and expressed my sincere sorrow at his misfortune. Curiously enough, we became and remained great friends until his death many years after in London, where he was managing director of the National Bank of India in Bishopsgate Street.

I played cricket regularly, and soon got acquainted with the members of the Gymkhana. Although my form did not warrant my inclusion in any of the elevens, yet, as many men could not get away from their offices to attend matches played up-country, or could not afford the expense of day or week-end trips by rail for that purpose, I frequently played for the Gymkhana at Almedabad, Colaba, Surat, Poona, Kirkee, and other Mofusil towns. This was a very enjoyable way of seeing the country. And as I was generally "put up" wherever I stopped, I met many pleasant people, with whom I often got a few days' shooting, and

occasionally a "mount" to pursue with spear the "mighty boar".

My father, on learning that he would be attached to the 19th Native Infantry in Bombay, purchased an Arab horse which had never been trained. He had already a lovely docile animal for Mrs. Walsh, and a pair of "crocks" for the landau, which he had brought out from England. He had therefore to procure a charger capable of carrying seventeen stone, which was his total riding weight with "all up". An Arab, or Cape horse, up to that weight is very rare and expensive, and such an animal was not then on the Bombay market. He was thus compelled to purchase a "waler", which stood over seventeen hands high and was a wicked, vicious beast.

The first trouble was to get on the back of this wild Australian brute, and then to be able to remain there. This waler objected to any rider, and tried to get rid of his burden by plunging in the air, doubling his back like a cat and simultaneously kicking like a donkey. I endeavoured to "stick on" during these antics, but, much to my chagrin, was easily flung off. The Australian rough-rider, generally called a larrikin, who had come to Bombay with a batch of unbroken horses, told me that this particular horse had thrown him out of the saddle on several occasions. At last, however, the rough-rider had devised a means of sitting this beast, despite all efforts to dismount him. On my eagerly asking to be shown this device, he proceeded to place a rope under the horse's belly, with a loop close to the crupper end of the saddle, and another rope to the withers inside the forelegs, with a loop adjoining the pommel of the saddle. He then manœuvred the horse under the bough of a tree, dropped from it into the saddle, and with each hand seized one of the loops. He had a flexible cane attached to his wrist, and wore a pair of sharp heavy spurs. The horse kicked, plunged, danced on two legs, curled his back, breaking the girths of the saddle, but could not get rid of his rider, who flogged and spurred him unmercifully, until the brute became tame and docile by exhaustion.

My father observed that, with proper handling and



training, he felt certain this waler could become a suitable charger for a man of his weight. The question was, who was to "break in" this redoubtable quadruped? The seller asked Rs. 700, and to make delivery on the spot; but my father tendered Rs. 600, with delivery at his camp in the Strangers Lines Fort, and all the horse's gear and fittings, including the set of ropes with which the animal had been controlled. The offer was accepted, and the arrival of this waler with such an evil reputation caused Mrs. Walsh considerable anxiety. She did all she could to persuade her husband not to mount the horse until it had been cured of its vices and thoroughly trained.

My father ordered the horse to be saddled and taken the next morning on to the firm sand in Back Bay, opposite the Cooperage. It struck me that I might, unknown to anyone, render the waler manageable before my father got on the brute's back. Shortly before five o'clock, therefore, I had the waler saddled and equipped under my personal supervision, in the same way in which the animal had last been ridden by the larrikin. The beast was then conducted over the railway metals into Back Bay, where after considerable exertion I managed to scramble into the saddle. I fully expected the waler to plunge, kick, walk on his hind legs and do his best to throw me off; instead, he simply ran away with me. Such behaviour did not disturb me, as the beach was clear for about four miles and the going as level as a billiard table. I allowed him to "keep his head", and did not attempt to check his speed until we got nearly to the foot of Malabar Hill. There I guided my "runaway" to the left, so as to get all the available width for turning round. This induced the animal voluntarily to slacken his pace, but made him exhibit several pranks in his efforts to get rid of his rider. I met those tactics by application of the whip and spur, and forced the animal at his top speed back towards the Cooperage. It appeared to me that there was still a lot of the spice of the devil left in this "waler from under the Southern Cross", and so, much against his inclination, I raced him back as far as the burning-ground for dead Hindoos. He had thus travelled at a great pace for over



eight miles, and now showed exhaustion and docility. For this I was truly grateful, as I myself was nearly dead with fatigue.

My subdued steed carried me to our encampment, and there I handed him over to my father's rough-rider, Charbuk Sowar (literally 'a horseman with a whip'), who put on a couple of syces to rub the horse down and remove all traces of that morning's exercise. At 9 a.m. the waler was brought to the entrance of the sleeping-tent, where my father had great difficulty in overcoming the horse's objection to let him mount. After a sharp struggle, however, he got into the saddle, and found the animal had become fairly amenable to a heavily curbed bridle, spurs, and hunting-crop. Without doubt my father's great weight largely contributed towards his steed's comparatively quiet behaviour.

This waler's manners and temper were never very dependable, and he constantly gave trouble for no apparent reason. Nevertheless, by careful methods and judgment my father rode this horse on parade for several years without any serious mishaps. When the Prince of Wales visited India in 1875, six field officers formed a guard of honour around the royal carriage. During the procession through the city of Bombay my father, being posted on the left-hand door, passed in full view of the Bombay Club on his well-known waler, and received a great ovation from the members seated on the veranda. A few years later this waler died, and Mr. Schenk, an American citizen, manager of the horse-drawn cars of the Bombay Tramway Co., had the animal stuffed and set up in the hall of the head tramway building on Colaba Causeway, where for many years it stood labelled as the charger ridden in the Royal Procession by Major T. Prendergast Walsh of the Bombay 19th Infantry.

On one occasion the waler by his behaviour stood me in very good stead. Early one morning, in response to an invitation, I rode the animal to No. 141, Mabbar Hill, the residence of the Honourable Mr. Justice L. Holyoak Bayley, a prime judge of the Bombay High Court. I found Mr. Bayley on the veranda of his bungalow, and

he asked me to come in and have some *chota hazari*. My steed would not approach the house, but plunged, kicked, and nearly caused me to ride over a gentleman seated in the drive sketching before an easel. I eventually managed to get off the horse's back, and made him fast with my steel rein to a tree. The man sketching turned out to be Sir Richard Temple, and on my being introduced to him he remarked that Mr. Bayley had told him of my desire for a Police appointment on the Frontier. Sir Richard then went on to say that, after seeing me manage an unruly horse, he could testify to my skill in equitation, and would also place on record that in his opinion I was specially fitted for employment on the Frontier in the Police Service of the Government of India. This was my first meeting with Sir Richard Temple, who later was my patron, and who elected me for the Indian Political Service.

Sir Richard and Lady Temple were going by sea to Calcutta, and had arranged to land at Marma Goa to visit Old Goa. I also happened to be travelling as far as Venguria by the same coasting vessel. During this voyage I became more closely acquainted with Sir Richard, and I owed everything to this piece of good fortune. Some years later Sir Richard was appointed Governor of Bombay. In that position he became aware that I had for some years been a regular contributor to the local Press, and had frequently furnished the political authorities with useful information regarding the affairs and intrigues on both shores of the Red Sea littoral. This fact enabled Sir Richard to post me as an assistant political agent in Kathiawar. When doing so, however, he was mindful to remark that the Secretary of State would probably remove me from that office, as many of the competitive covenanted Civil Servants objected to the employment of an "outsider" in the exclusive preserve of the Indian Political Service. Sir Richard, nevertheless, wished me well, and said: "I shall have left India before you can be turned out, but if you are ejected, write to me and I will personally explain your claims to the Secretary of State. Your case will also be strongly supported by Sir Henry Rawlinson (formerly of your father's old regiment), and now a member of the



India Office Council. We will fight the matter out moreover, as I intend to enter Parliament, I shall be in a position to invite attention in the House of Commons to the absurdities of this ancient regulation, which restricts and curtails the freedom of the Government to select candidates for several offices under the Local and the Government of India."

My father joined the 19th Native Infantry, and, having no appointment in the regiment, had practically nothing to do except garrison duties. On all possible occasions I accompanied my father to the places he had to visit, so I soon knew a good deal about the Land Defence and topography of the islands of Bombay.

I was greatly amused by my father's method of bringing his knowledge of battalion drill up to date. He took several pairs of privates and gave the ends of a rope to be held by each of the two, by this means turning a pair into a company. The Adjutant, Captain Wandby, said to my father: "Well, sir, you know more about battalion drill than any officer in the regiment, and I have grouped in your records the officially expressed opinion by several senior officers on that subject." My father replied: "That may be quite correct, but I want that fact to be known to my present officer commanding. I, of course, attend all the C.O.'s parades, but am practically a mere spectator. I want the C.O. to call me out to execute any manœuvre he may direct me to do, and, if it is done to his satisfaction, to acquaint the Commander-in-Chief of my fitness to command a battalion." Colonel G. W. Price, Commandant of the 19th Regiment, readily complied with both of my father's requests. In the meantime I had been handed over to Captain Wandby, to be taught company drill and to practise musketry. Although I possessed a certificate of fitness from the Cowley College Cadet Corps, a little extra drill in the ranks with sepoy did me no harm, and I thereby got to know the native soldier.

As my father was only drawing the bare pay of his rank, he declared that he must devote as much of his time as possible to writing for the Press. He estimated that the remuneration thereby gained would recoup him to a



great extent for his loss of staff or civil employment pay. He possessed a brass-bound box containing what he called his "portable library", which consisted of the following books : *Webster's English Dictionary* ; *The Dictionary Appendix*, by the Rev. Thesaurus ; *Manders' Treasury of Knowledge* ; *Cruden's Concordance of the Bible* ; *Haydn's Dictionary of Dates* ; a law lexicon ; *Whitaker's Almanack* ; *The Queen's (Army) Regulations* ; *The British Army List—Official* ; an Indian Army List ; a Hindustani dictionary (Forbes'). Most of these he left to me, and are regarded by me as treasures. His library box was always left open on two chairs at the right-hand side of his writing-table, and he placed with it any book which he might have to review. Pen, ink, papers, rubber, and ink-eraser completed the box's equipment.

My father was preparing an article for a home newspaper, when Mr. M. Maclean, proprietor and editor of the *Bombay Gazette*, drove up in a *shigram* (generally called a "Brandy-case on wheels") to the tent. Mr. Maclean said that H.E. the Governor had asked him to write a series of articles on the Slave Trade Treaty or Agreement with Zanzibar, which Sir Bartle Frere was endeavouring to negotiate with the Sultan of Zanzibar. My father asked Maclean if the Treaty had been actually ratified, or if its provisions were still in draft and under discussion. Maclean had no definite information on those points, but said that His Excellency would let him see, in confidence, some particulars which had come to his hand. Maclean added that there was a rumour that Sir Seymour Fitzgerald had appointed his son (afterwards Sir W. G. S. Vesey Fitzgerald, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India) to a new post in the Persian Gulf, to control the operation of the Slave Trade Treaty with Zanzibar and Muscat ; the Secretary of State, however, had declined to sanction the creation of such an office.

My father replied to Maclean : "I could not write the articles you require, as I know nothing about Zanzibar, Muscat, and the slave trade. There are about 7,000 natives of India trading with Zanzibar, but it is commonly supposed that the Zanzibar slave trade is financed by native merchants from the Gujarat, Kathiawar, and Kutch

ports. I am personally acquainted with the heads of several large native firms who have agencies in Zanzibar ; and almost certainly the immense business carried on by them at the latter place does indirectly subsidize the dealers in slaves, who buy goods in Zanzibar and exchange them for slaves, which is often a cheaper and more effective method than capturing them by force of arms. No doubt if the slave trade (which includes the purchase and conveyance of ivory to the coast) was stopped entirely, Gujarat merchants would lose the best market for the sale of their goods. There is a party at Zanzibar, chiefly Arabs, desirous of emancipating all slaves, in order to annoy the Sultan, whose slaves pick and collect the crops from the large pepper plantations owned by His Highness at Pennbaam and elsewhere. If slave labour could not be used for that purpose, the Sultan would be compelled to pay for coolies, or to give contracts for the collection of pepper. It is considered that if either course were adopted the farmers would make large profits and the Sultan would receive little or no revenue. This Zanzibar question, therefore, has many aspects and needs to be carefully studied."

My father continued to the effect that, if he went into the matter, he could only do so by approaching the important merchants whom he knew, which would attract attention. He offered, however, to introduce me to the merchants in the ordinary way, and he could then easily pick up or extract their views on the subject. "I will send my son to see Shahabuddin and to investigate Sir Bartle Frere's proposals, and thus open communications with the secretary to Sir Bartle Frere's mission, who could easily supply full particulars." Mr. Maclean replied that he would talk the matter over with Faichnie, assistant editor of the *Gazette*, and then get him to discuss it with myself. Eventually, with the adoption of this course, I was invited to study and to write articles on the burning question of the day : the traffic in slaves on the East Coast of Africa, and the extent to which the merchants of western India were implicated. For several years I contributed to the *Bombay Gazette* and *The Times of India*, continuing to



do so right up till my appointment in 1884 as Administrator at Berbera, Somaliland, which brought me officially into contact with the slave trade between the Gulf of Tajura and Turkish Arabia.

I had to go over to the *Gazette* office three or four times a week to read the proofs of my father's articles, and often did not complete that work until two or three o'clock in the morning. As I generally had to wait idly until the articles were set up in type, I frequently filled in the spare time by helping Faichnie to read the proofs of contributions from the pen of Mrs. Kipling (the mother of Rudyard Kipling, and the wife of a drawing master at the School of Art) on Bombay society gossip; also those of Colonel C. M. MacGregor, B.Sc. (whose sister Annie I married in 1891), on the defence of the Indian Frontier and the aims and advance of Russia in Central Asia. Both Mr. Martin Wood (editor of *The Times of India*) and Mr. Maclean used to employ me to write short paragraphs on the theatrical performances, concerts, public dinners, and entertainments occurring in Bombay. This was a most useful occupation, and incidentally kept me supplied with pocket money. It also introduced me at the early age of sixteen to the editors Wood, Maclean, Robert Knight (of the *Statesman*), and staff of the Press in the Bombay Presidency. After entering the Marine Postal Service between Bombay and Suez in 1873, I kept up my connection with all the newspapers published in Bombay, and contributed to them regularly on the following subjects: "The slave trade"; "The hardships borne by, and the injustice done to, the natives of British India making the pilgrimage to Mecca"; "Treatment of British ships by the Suez Canal Company"; "Egyptian quarantine regulations used to delay passage of British mails by rail through Egypt"; "The dual control on the land of Pharaoh"; "The Khedival debts"; "The war between Egypt and Abyssinia"; "The freshwater irrigational canals of the Delta fed by the Nile, and the small coast-traffic towed through some of those channels"; "The efforts of European Powers to get a footing on the shores of the Red Sea, and on those of the Gulf of Aden"; "Political affairs



and intrigues on both littorals of the Red Sea"; "Gordon in the Sudan"; "Captain Richard Burton's mission to look for gold in Midian".

My father, my uncle (Mr. W. P. Walsh), Maclean, and Grattan Geary (the editor of *The Times of India*) encouraged my "ink-slinging" inclinations; and, looking back over a period of more than fifty years, I see clearly that such success as I have had during my humble career in the East was entirely due to my connection with the Press of western India, and to the high officials and others whose acquaintance I made in connection with my pen.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MUTINY—INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS

I WOULD remind my readers that the Mutiny broke out at Meerut on the 10th May, 1857, and as far as the native soldiers, as organized mutineers, were concerned, it was suppressed in the same year, or early in 1858. The troops and inhabitants of a few native states, notably Oude, were in rebellion against the British rule up to 1859, the date of the capture and execution of Tantia Topee. The Nana Sahib of Bithoor, the chief instigator of the Mutiny, and the murderer of our women and children at Cawnpore, successfully escaped capture, and was officially reported to have died in the Terai jungle, where he had taken refuge. The death of this notorious and treacherous scoundrel was not believed, and certainly natives deemed him to be living in disguise. In 1872 several fanatics in various parts of India, claiming to be the Nana Sahib, gave themselves up to the police, while another of them was arrested in Bombay, but at the inquiry it was proved definitely that he was not the infamous outlaw.

I arrived in India, say, twelve years after India had been transferred to the Crown in 1858; consequently the majority of the officers of the Indian armies of that date had served in India during the Mutiny campaigns. Competition for entrance into the covenanted Civil Service was introduced in November 1858; the latter recruits were styled "competition wallahs", and by reason of their being still juniors had not risen in 1872 to power and position in the covenanted Civil Service of India. The members of this service, who governed the country, had all come from Haileybury, and they looked down upon the newcomers as their social inferiors. As regards the first three batches of "competition wallahs", I saw no distinction between the new and the old Civil Servants in class or caste. Later

on, however, the difference was very obvious ; not only in their status, manners, and bearing, but also in their ideas. The "competition wallah" was simply and entirely a "trade unionist" attempting to dictate the policy of Government, and considered himself to be in all respects vastly superior to all military and uncovenanted servants of the Crown.

A group of "competition wallahs" publicly attacked Sir Bartle Frere (who had himself been an Indian Civil Servant of the Haileybury brand) for the way in which he exercised his patronage. They claimed that under an Act of Parliament a Governor's power of selection of a candidate for certain important offices was restricted to his choosing a member of the covenanted Civil Service to fill them. Sir Bartle resented such dictation from Civil Servants under his jurisdiction or command, and dealt with the matter in an able and well-reasoned despatch, dated December 1864, to the Secretary of State for India. Nevertheless, claims of this nature were constantly cropping up, and with a weak-kneed or "civilian-ridden" governor caused serious trouble and embarrassment to the Government of the Presidency.

When Sir Richard Temple became Governor of Bombay he appointed a Mr. G. H. R. Hart, an uncovenanted officer, to be his private secretary, so as not to have in his personal cabinet one of the Secretariat group of "trade unionists". This action was the first terrible blow Sir Richard levelled at the "competition wallah" combination. The latter became alarmed and organized an opposition to Sir Richard's policy ; especially since he had appointed me an Assistant Political Agent in Kathiawar. For this post they asserted that under the Regulations no uncovenanted officer was eligible, and they tried to prevent my joining it. But Sir Richard stood firm, and would not brook any dictation or interference with his patronage. I had therefore to face and fight these opponents to my employment, and I was loyally supported by Sir Richard Temple, as well as Mr. E. W. Ravenscroft, C.S.J. (an old Haileybury Civil Servant in Bombay), and by Sir Henry Rawlinson, a member of the India Office Council in London.



Although the "competition wallahs" pressed by all means in their power not to allow my appointment to the Political Service, yet many of them personally wished me well, and made several efforts to effect a settlement of my claims. With that object in view, I was offered a Presidency Magistracy, the Clerkship of the Court of Small Causes, Assistant-Commissionership in the Salt Department, and an Assistant-Superintendentship of Police, in a district where the Superintendent was about to take two years' furlough, which arrangement would at once make me an Acting Superintendent. In point of mere pay, the emoluments of these offices were equal to, and in some instances exceeded, my pay as a political officer. Sir Richard Temple had appointed two other uncovenanted men to the Political Service, but the Secretariat got rid of both of them, these gentlemen taking offices in other Departments. I myself could easily have secured similar preferment and treatment, but on my father's advice I demanded reinstatement in the Political Service as my first and only compensation, and said that after my name had been published as a political officer in the *Bombay Government Gazette* I would consider any offer of transfer made to me. If, however, the Local Government did not reappoint me to the Political Department, I desired to place on record my intention of appeal to the Secretary of State, and if I failed to obtain redress at the hands of the latter, I purposed placing my case before Parliament, and even to lay it at the foot of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria's Throne.

I could afford to hold out, as when ousted from the Political Department I reverted automatically to the Marine Postal Service, upon which Department I had been mindful to retain a lien. Mr. H. E. M. James (afterwards Sir Evan James, K.C.I.E.) had tried to keep me in the Postal Service, and proposed to count my "sea time" for seniority as a Superintendent of Post Offices, and then to give me the first acting or permanent vacancy as Deputy Postmaster-General. In point of pay and pecuniary prospects, the acceptance of this kind offer would have benefited me to a much greater extent than re-employment in the Political Service, or in any Department; since in all of them,

salaries, in the early stages, were small and promotion very slow. I declined, however, any kind of advancement in the Indian Postal Department, whereupon Mr. James asked me why I did so. My reply was very simple, but it opened his eyes. I explained: "Suppose I became a postal official, it would probably be impossible, and certainly it would be difficult, to get elected to a club in Bombay, or even to one in an up-country station. Even pure-white European postal servants nearly all belong to the order of 'C.B.' " (i.e. "Country-born", or "Country-bred"), and are classed as Eurasians, half-castes, or chee-chees."

Appointments in the Marine Postal Service were entirely held by white men brought up in England, and were much sought after by the sons and near relatives of the high Civil and Military Servants of the various governments in India. One of the chief attractions was a notification to the effect that officers of the Sea Service were not ordinarily eligible for advancement to shore offices of the Indian Postal Department. But as a matter of fact, the policy of keeping white men out of the Postal Service could not be, and was not, carried out; since the Government of India, not having a staff from which suitable promotions could be made, had been compelled to appoint several mail agents to the highest offices in the shore post offices, and they occasionally managed to pick up two other uncovenanted men to fill Postmaster-Generalships. As the covenanted Civil Servants had in the past had a monopoly of the Director-Generalships and all the Postmaster-Generalships, they did not desire those lucrative posts to be given to men brought up in the Postal Service; and young covenanted Civilians of under ten years' service were pitchforked into positions of Provincial Postmaster-Generals over the heads of men of the Postal Department who had been twenty and thirty years in that Service.

My father and I did something towards bringing to public notice this injustice and abuse of power by supplying Lord Randolph Churchill with information and particulars which he could not have obtained from any official source. My share in exposing this scandal became known, and in the end that publicity was to my advantage, though at the



time it exasperated the competition wallahs against me.

I therefore told Mr. James that the independence and comfort of the Marine Postal Service suited me, but I realized it would lead me nowhere. It was consequently necessary for me to determine upon some definite course for my future career. In my present position I was fairly well paid; having, in addition, "the run of my teeth" and my hotel bill guaranteed, as well as credit for wine and spirits at the bar. I regarded my mail agency as being worth, in "meal or malt", the equivalent of at least Rs. 600 per mensem; moreover, as I had not much official work to do on board ship, it afforded me a *pied à terre* as a contributor to the Press, giving me the leisure and opportunity of earning on an average £125 per annum with my pen. Then, again, it furnished several openings for making money by joining small syndicates to salvage cargoes of wrecks, and for carrying out profitable "notions" in China and other places. In these circumstances I was naturally very loth to relinquish my lucrative billet at sea, but I had definitely decided to leave the Marine Postal Service and intended to get married and settle down after my pleasant wanderings, which had not impaired my health in any way.

I was anxious to obtain some other employment, such as the Consulship at Jedda, or those in the Persian Gulf and at Zanzibar, which carried good pay, half of each being paid by India and half by the Home Government. I pointed out to Mr. James that a testimonial from him as to my character and abilities would be of great use to me, but that I thought my re-entering the service of the Government of India unlikely, as I had been offered the sub-editorship of a Bombay newspaper, and had been asked to purchase a share in that concern. I also desired to have the means of pressing my personal and family claims for employment on the Government of Bombay, and his certificate would be of considerable value to me. Mr. James, being a gentleman of the old school, had no antagonism towards uncovenanted Civilians, and very cordially wished me success in any career I might take up.



In bidding me good-bye, he observed that he would report to the Government of India the information gathered from me during our conversation, and would draw attention to the fact that the sons of over a dozen high officials of the Indian Civil and Military Services had declined to remain in the Postal Service, or to accept any advancement in that department. The Government of India thus lost the services of men who, with experience, would be in every way qualified to become Director-Generals and Postmaster-Generals, for which positions, under the present régime, the country-born or bred postal servants were by no means fitted.

I must not forget to mention Mr. Macfarlane, I.C.S., Postmaster-General of Bombay in 1873. Mr. Macfarlane, under exceptional circumstances, placed me provisionally in charge of the homeward mails and the Viceroy's despatches, thereby making me at the early age of seventeen a servant of the Crown in India. He held and practised the ideas of the old school, and was bitterly opposed to any kind of trade unionism among covenanted Civil Servants.

In the foregoing circumstances I had a difficult position to hold in Bombay during the early years of my sojourn there. My father was very busy with his pen, and I also had been busy writing the first of a series of articles on the slave trade and Sir Bartle Frere's mission to Zanzibar. My father, however, had to abandon his literary labours on receipt of an official letter from Major-General W. F. Marriott, R.E., Bo.S.C., C.S.I., Military Secretary to the Government of Bombay, which appointed him as the Bombay representative on a committee for visiting, inspecting, and reporting on the Laurence Asylums for the children of British soldiers in India. During my father's absence in that connection I completed my articles on the slave trade, and apparently my efforts met with the approval of the editor.

In this way began my long connection with the Bombay Press, to which I have already referred. And I may add that, being acquainted intimately with many influential newspaper men in India, the steady and reasoned backing

I received in their columns during my many "fights" with the covenanted Civil Servants and the India Office made it practically impossible for any Government to ignore the unjust treatment I had received from the opponents to the employment of uncovenanted officers in the Indian Political Service. I consider it a very unique experience to have been removed or squeezed out of four different political offices, and yet in the end to have been reinstated in the Political Service. No doubt I had many good and useful friends, but I think that the recognition and publicity given to me in the Press in no small degree encouraged my father's friends to support me.

There was a great deal of gaiety and amusement in Bombay. I played football, and in a match between the Celts and Saxons I had the good luck to drop-kick a goal for the former. I never joined the Bombay Boat Club, which during the season had a large tent pitched in the dockyard near to the site on which the Royal Bombay Yacht Club now stands. This club had no "bottoms" of its own, but many of its members owned various kinds of boats. I was frequently asked to pull an oar in an eight belonging to assistants in the banks, and I found and purchased an old Rob Roy canoe, fitted with a centre-board and sails, and a rudder fixable at both ends. In this last craft I nearly got drowned in Bombay harbour, and had similar experiences at Moses' Well, Suez, and in the Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal. Eventually, however, I became an experienced canoeist, and manœuvred my small craft in fairly rough waters without mishaps.

Mr. George Ingle, a retired Indian Navy purser, was secretary to the Superintendent of Marines in 1872. A few Europeans still used palanquins, a light-covered litter or boxlike carriage used in India. One day Mr. Ingle was being carried in his *palki*, when the bottom fell out. The bearers were quite unaware of this mishap, and their unfortunate passenger, being unable to make heard his frenzied shouts to stop, was compelled to run with his head inside the palanquin and his legs on the ground. I witnessed the disaster, and could not help laughing. However, I at once pulled up the bearers and liberated Mr. Ingle,



who, on being freed, told the men very plainly what he thought of them and their rotten *palki*.

Mr. John O'Leary, B.A., First Judge of the Court of Small Causes, Bombay, owned and sailed a twenty-ton lateen-rigged yacht, the *Rustom*, in which he visited all the little ports on the coast of the Colaba Collectorate. I frequently accompanied Mr. O'Leary on these pleasure trips, during which voyages he taught me to handle this native craft under canvas. The knowledge thus gained proved of great value to me on several occasions in the Red Sea; and, indeed, as I shall explain later on, added to my usefulness in the Marine Postal Department and on field service in Egypt. The Indian Navy was abolished in 1863, but the Bombay Government had to keep up in a reduced form the dockyard and a number of small vessels and hulks. About a dozen retired Indian Navy officers were given command of the latter, and the whole establishment was called the Bombay Marine, its European officers being entirely recruited from the Merchant Service.

A few days after my father's return from the Laurence Asylum mission the second-in-command of his regiment went on furlough to Europe, and my father, as the next senior officer with the corps, took command of the battalion. A few days afterwards my father was selected to ride with the Umpire's staff, and to act as secretary to the committee preparing the report on the field manoeuvres to be held at the Camp of Exercise at Chindwad, near Poona. As this staff appointment was complimentary to him, my father was naturally pleased. Later, however, when the command of his regiment was within his reach, he went to the Brigadier and asked not to be compelled to serve on the Umpire's staff, since by remaining with his battalion he would, as a matter of routine, obtain the acting commandantship of the 19th Regiment at the Camp of Exercise. This matter was explained to the Commander-in-Chief, and he was pleased to grant my father's request. The 19th N.I., under my father's command, marched from Bombay up the Ghats to Chindwad, and the regiment was well reported upon for its efficiency



in the field at manœuvres. My father valued this appreciation, as it meant that on becoming sufficiently senior he would be given the command of a battalion of the Bombay Army, and this it was the ambition of his life to obtain.

The flying squadron under the command of Admiral Rowley Lambert, in the flagship *Narcissus*, arrived in Bombay, and the officers and men were welcomed and fêted by the inhabitants of the second largest city of the British Empire. It was intimated to my father by members of the Bombay Corporation that the "City Fathers" intended to invite the bluejackets and marines of Her Majesty's Naval Forces then in Bombay to a feast. This was to be held in tents lashed together on the Maidan, opposite the new Secretarial Buildings, and the European troops quartered at Colaba, and on and around the island of Bombay, were to be included in that public entertainment of Her Majesty's sea and land forces. The Municipal Council asked if they might propose my father's name to take entire charge of all the arrangements, with the aid of the staff of the Municipality, which was to be placed under his orders. My father accepted this purely honorary office, and pitched on the Maidan a double line of two-poled tents in the centre of the riding row.

On the appointed day over 2,500 men sat down to a very sumptuous repast, at which one quart and one pint of bottled Bass's Pale Ale was provided for each diner. No spirits or wine were served, but from a separate table there were quantities of mineral waters of all kinds. After dinner, dancing, singing, and speechifying took place, while finally, as bluejackets and marines were about to fall in to march to their boats, a tot of rum was offered to each man. Some took it neat and, after getting it down, sipped a drop of water. The tables groaned under the magnificent spread of eatables, and the bottles of ale had been placed in line down the centre. About 3,000 European spectators attended this feast and walked round the tables, shaking hands and cordially welcoming the guests of the City of Bombay. The sides of the tents had been lifted up, so that thousands of natives could see how their white brothers took in a cargo of grub. The entertainment was

a great success, and I think I rendered my father some aid in carrying it out. He received an address from the Municipality for his services, at a dinner given in his honour and presided over by Mr. John Connon, the Chief Presidency Magistrate and Chairman of the Corporation. The latter also wished me a successful career, and mentioned my name as likely to follow in my father's footsteps in the Bombay Presidency. This was my first introduction to the public of Bombay.

It was very difficult to get a house suitable for a European near to the Fort, and the Government gave an officer £7 10s. od. towards the expense of house rent. My father, indeed, was compelled to take a house in middle Colaba, nearly three miles from the lines of his regiment.

At Colaba a very old lady, the daughter of a General Officer commanding at Bombay during Wellesley's service in India, resided in a house which the B.B.E.C.I. Railway obtained power from Government to acquire by compulsory purchase. Mrs. Hough, however, successfully resisted all efforts to remove her from the home in which she was born and had passed her long life. Her son, General C. S. Hough (retired), resided with her, and she treated him as if he was still a small child. I knew the old lady well, and she was acquainted with my aunt, Ellen Slator, she, like the latter, also claiming to have danced with Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington). Mrs. Hough had a great reputation as a maker of toffee and sweetmeats, quantities of which she gave to me.

Archdeacon Maule, the Chaplain of Colaba, lived next door to us. He was always at war with the Bishop of Bombay, and refused to take any orders from that prelate. His contention was that, like any other officer, he was legally under the Secretary to Government in the Military, Marine and Ecclesiastic Department, and, except as a matter of courtesy, he was not under the Bishop in any form or degree. In General Orders he was directed to perform the Church of England services and the duties connected with his office in accordance with the regulations, the Rubrics, and the Thirty-nine Articles; he could not, therefore, properly perform them in any other way than the Bishop



might ordain or desire, and would not and did not accept the Bishop's views and orders regarding the celibacy of the clergy and prohibition of the marriage of divorced persons.

Mr. C. W. Terry was the Head of the Bombay School of Art, and his senior architectural sculptor was Mr. J. L. Kipling, father of the famous Rudyard Kipling. Both were very well known in Bombay, but neither was in the social swim of the island. One day Mr. Terry came to me with the sketch of a watchdog with three heads, and wanted a photograph of my father for one of them. The other two heads when completed belonged to Mr. Frank Souter, C.S.I., Commissioner of Police, as the Catcher of Rascals; and to the Presidency Magistrate, Mr. Cooper, who sentenced the Rascals to prison. My father, who at the time was the Acting Governor of the House of Correction, was shown as the Keeper, under lock and key, of these convicted scoundrels. All three sketches were good likenesses of the well-known officials in question, and depicted some peculiarity of each. This work was exhibited in a large frame alongside "The Money School", on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's visit to the city of Bombay.

My father had to vacate his house in Middle Colaba, and take another near the Royal Artillery mess in Upper Colaba. Colonel Bond commanded the Artillery, and a Major G. J. Smart a battery. The latter treated me with great kindness and hospitality at his mess, where there was a billiard-table on which he taught me to play. As a result, as soon as I had a permanent residence of my own I invariably erected a billiard-room; and I think that as I have built seven billiard-rooms, I hold the record for erecting that class of building!

Before leaving Bombay for the Camp of Exercise, my father had definitely decided that if Dr. Rogers, the Presidency surgeon, reported me fit to return to England, I should be sent there to cram under a "coach" for the first Army Examination held in London after the 28th February, 1874. Upon that date I would attain the age of eighteen years. I begged hard not to be packed off to school again, and pointed out that Sir Seymour Fitzgerald's



letter made a certainty of my early appointment to the Bombay District Police. My father invariably replied that he did not want me to join any Department as an uncovenanted servant of the Government of India, but if I passed for a commission in the Army he could get me posted direct to a British regiment in India. After serving with that corps for one year, I could be attached to a Native regiment for twelve months, and at the end of the latter period of probation would be qualified to join the Bombay Staff Corps, the officers of which were eligible for appointment to the Political Service, and for employment in several other civil offices under the Indian Government.

Towards the end of 1872 I was completely restored to health, but Dr. Rogers advised against my being sent to face the severities of an English winter, and consequently I was to remain in Bombay until April or May 1873. By this arrangement I would get one year's "cramming" at home to prepare for the Army Competitive Examinations. The questions put were easy enough to answer, but the trouble was that there were seven or eight hundred candidates for about eighty commissions. This rendered it necessary to pass well up on the list—not at all an easy matter, with such severe competition. Arithmetic was my weak point, and my father engaged a native of India, an L.I.B. of the Bombay University, to coach me. The latter, after seeing the questions set at the last Army Examination, told my father I lacked sufficient mathematical knowledge to compete successfully for a commission. He thought, however, that I could qualify under the old system of entering Her Majesty's land forces, if I was exempted from competition.

After the breaking-up of the Camp of Exercise, my father obtained the sixty days' leave to which he was entitled, and went to Matheran, a hill station near Bombay. I was left in Bombay with my uncle, Captain W. P. Walsh, and a passage was booked for me to Southampton in a P. & O. mail steamer, leaving early in April 1873.

In March 1873 I went for a few days to Matheran to say good-bye to my father and my stepmother. I had never visited this hill resort, and did so then under rather

curious circumstances, which introduced me to the Right Hon. Dr. H. A. Douglas, Bishop of Bombay.

I had travelled from Bombay without a servant to Narel, which was the nearest station to Matheran. At Narel I had been advised to jump out of the train and take the bridle off the pony I had engaged by wire to carry me up the hill. This I did, and returned to the platform to look after my luggage and have it forwarded to Matheran by the carrier. I then replaced the bridle on my steed, mounted, and started on my journey. I had gone about two miles from the railway station, when I was overtaken by a European on horseback, who informed me that I had taken the Bishop of Bombay's pony, and his lordship was sitting at the station until he could obtain a tattoo (country pony). I felt certain that I had not commandeered the Bishop's pony, as the man from whom I had taken the animal held a telegram in his hand. (Afterwards it transpired that the stationmaster at Narel had served out the telegrams for ponies indiscriminately to the wrong tattoo-wallahs.) However, I thought it best to ride back to the station, and there I explained to his lordship that in the unlikely event of my having taken his pony, I had done so in complete error. I then tendered my apologies, which were accepted. His lordship with that rode off, and I had either to wait six hours at the station, when ponies would arrive there to meet the next train, or to foot it on my own digits up the hill. I decided upon the latter course, and wired accordingly to my father. He sent a horse to meet me.

I happened to go on board the Jinghera State yacht *Sultan*, then anchored off the Apollo landing-pier. Mr. G. Larcum, a son of Sir Charles Larcum, Bart., was the Political Officer at Jinghera, and spent a great deal of his time on his vessel. Mr. Larcum had served in the Rifle Brigade on the Frontier of India, but when his battalion was ordered home he realized that he had not sufficient private means to soldier in England, and he resigned his commission. Adopting, then, the garb of an Afghan, he resided in that disguise for several years in Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia, where the Russians were



annexing the Khanates and intriguing against the British Raj. Of these matters Mr. Larcum kept H.B.M. Foreign Office fully advised, and the latter, in recognition of his services, ordered the Secretary of State for India to appoint Mr. Larcum to the Indian Political Service. The India Office remonstrated, and quoted the regulations against the employment of an uncovenanted officer in the gazetted grades of the Political Department. The Home Government, however, insisted on the admission of Mr. Larcum to the Indian Political Service.

On one occasion I had been on the firman of the *Sultan*, clewing in several places the sail to the yard, and on descending to the deck I found a nautical-looking man seated on a settee, singing sea ditties. One of these narrated the adventures of Captain Noah, who, owing to careless navigation, a bad look-out, and the lack of a correct chart, had run the "Ark on Mount Ararat" and lost his Board of Trade "Certificate". There was also in the song a description of some of the live stock embarked "two by two—the elephant and the kangaroo". I got into conversation with this sailorman and learned that, having had his master's certificate suspended for two years for piling up his vessels on the east coast of Arabia, he had joined the Marine Postal Service as a mail agent. He had, however, resigned that post in order to go to Australia to marry a lady, on a date already fixed, at Melbourne. The wicked Postmaster-General, nevertheless, would not release him until a man had been found to fill his place, and unless he got off by the next P. & O. steamer he would be late at the hymeneal altar.

My new acquaintance, referring to his watch, asked, "Are you lunching with Larcum to-day?" I replied, "Yes, at 1.15 p.m., but not on board this craft. I have to meet him at Smith's refreshment rooms on the Apollo Bunder just opposite to us." My nautical companion further remarked that if I wanted a job the Postmaster-General would, he thought, take me on as a mail officer. My age would be likely to create a difficulty, though in all other respects I possessed the social position, table manners, and qualifications to fill that post. Said my surprising



acquaintance : "Let me introduce you to Mr. Macfarlane. He is now in his office at the G.P.O., and will not leave there until close to 1 p.m., so there is a clear hour in which to have an interview with him." I accepted this proposal, and explained that my father was not in Bombay. I also confided that I was being sent to London to prepare for the Army Examination, and that I was very reluctant to return to school again.

We got into a buggy and drove to the G.P.O., where my new friend wrote his name on a piece of paper and under it my own. In a few minutes we were ushered into the presence of the Postmaster-General, to whom my sponsor in very nautical phraseology introduced me as a first-class "top man, hand reef furl, a pretty sight to see aloft, and just the man suitable to take charge of the Viceroy's despatches and Her Majesty's mails". Mr. Macfarlane observed that I was too young to be employed in the Marine Postal Service, and, moreover, that he had no power to appoint me to carry out those duties. He then addressed me in French, and my ready reply and accent satisfied him I could speak that language fluently. He next inquired if I was a relative of Major Prendergast Walsh, commanding the 19th N.I. I replied: "Yes, sir, he is my father." Mr. Macfarlane at that said, if I would hold myself available to take Collier's place, he could let the latter leave for Australia. He further explained that he would turn round mail officers arriving in Bombay and send them off to Suez; so that he might never need my services, and certainly not for some months to come. "But when your services are required, I will put you in the Marine Postal Service provisionally, as I have no power to appoint you permanently to that Department. I shall not report this arrangement, and I advise you, if you want confirmation in the Sea Post Office, not to communicate with me or to let me see you until you have attained the age of at least eighteen years, or preferably nineteen years. Take this letter of appointment from me to Mr. C. A. Stewart, the Postmaster, and intimate to him that you will take charge of the mail whenever you are called upon to do so."

I thanked Mr. Macfarlane and delivered in person his

letter to Mr. Stewart. The latter invited me to dine with him that evening. Collier and I then went off to Smith's refreshment rooms for a drink, and afterwards to lunch with Larcum.

I thus became a potential servant of the Crown under the age of seventeen years, and thereby released my sponsor, who a few days later left India for Australia. He took me on board the outgoing mail steamer and introduced me to the skipper; he also showed me how to "tally" the mail bags, and to keep those with leather tops handy to move in case of shipwreck. When he finally bade me good-bye, he wished me the best of health and luck, and observed: "If you have a few dollars to spare, place them into one of the small syndicates got up by the P. & O. Company's mates. They purchase onions in Bombay and shark fins at Aden for the China market, and mother-of-pearl shells at Aden for shipment to Trieste, all in a small way lucrative speculations. You will have frequent opportunities of buying salvage cargoes from steamers wrecked in the Red Sea, a most profitable enterprise if you hire and command a native craft yourself. I have done very well in these speculations, and, with care, you will have equal success. Moreover, as you already write for the Bombay newspapers you will have ample time and copy to use your pen on Red Sea and Egyptian affairs. I could never write a line for the Press, although constantly invited to contribute to their columns."

## CHAPTER IX

### SUEZ AND EGYPT

ON the 7th April, 1873, I joined the Marine Postal Service as a Probationary Junior Assistant Mail Agent. I had a salary of sixty rupees per mensem, with a daily shore messing allowance of three rupees and twelve annas, and furnished quarters in the General Post Office on the Esplanade, the Fort, Bombay. In Suez, if there was no vessel on which to reside, an hotel allowance of £1 2s. 6d. per diem was paid to the officer in addition to his monthly salary.

I travelled in the P. & O. Contract Packet *Ellora*, and arrived safely at Suez after being about twelve days at sea. The contract speed in those days was ten knots per hour, but for convenience of hours of arrival at ports that rate was not adhered to. On arrival at Suez I visited Moses' Well, Ras Attica, and the Suez Canal entrance and offices. I also inspected the site of the annihilation of Pharaoh's host when in pursuit of the Israelites, but did not find any chariot wheels or relics of that army!

One day I went to have a look at the lock of the Fresh-water Canal, where it opens into the head of the Suez Creek. There I discovered an old canoe which it was said had been abandoned some years previously by the celebrated canoeist, John MacGregor—of European, Syrian, and Egyptian waterways, known as "Rob Roy" MacGregor. I at once seized upon the idea of traversing the freshwater canals fed from the Nile, and ordered from Malta a canoe to be constructed according to my specifications. I had a centre-board and extra wide bilge-pieces, rudders at both ends, and a sail, so that this canoe could be paddled, towed, or manœuvred under canvas. This little craft was 16 feet by 27 feet over all, and perfectly seaworthy, and proved herself to be a great success. The hundreds of miles I made in her gave me an insight into the irrigational system,



and a knowledge of the inland canals of the Delta, which were of the greatest use to me during the Egyptian Campaign of 1882. Then my personal information regarding their capacity for the conveyance of produce and goods caused Sir Herbert Macpherson, V.C., with the sanction of the Government of India, to attach me on special duty to his personal staff.

Since my father was a voluminous writer for the Bombay Press, and for over a year I had had the instructive task of correcting in the editor's room the final proofs of my sire's literary contributions, I was now well acquainted with several Pressmen. These allowed me to publish paragraphs on Sir Bartle Frere's slave mission to Zanzibar, and on local gossip. I soon learned to scribble short accounts on those subjects, which, apart from the small payments I received for them, were of great educational value to me. Before leaving Bombay I had arranged to send a weekly news-letter from Egypt, and one article per month. The remuneration amounted to twenty-five rupees per column of leading article matter, not too strictly measured; twenty rupees per column for news-letters; and fifteen rupees for reviews of the Administration Reports, drawn up by the commissioners and collectors of Bombay Presidency Divisions and Districts. On an average, I earned about one hundred rupees per month, which, with my pay, lodging, and free "run of my teeth", gave me a comfortable income.

On the homeward journey, and during the twelve days' stay in Egypt, a mail officer has practically no work to do; I therefore utilized the time at my disposal in writing my contributions for the Bombay Press. I visited Cairo, Zagazig, Benha, Tanta, Alexandria, Ismailia, and Port Said, and became acquainted with those towns, in which it would be necessary for me to gather information and materials for my self-imposed literary labours. I also found it preferable to stop at the Hôtel de L'Orient at Suez, as there the frequenters and regular boarders discussed local and Egyptian affairs, of which I became a veritable news-savenger. At the English hotel at Suez those matters were never mentioned.

As a mail officer I held a first-class pass between Suez and Alexandria, but the Egyptian Railway officials regarded it as a general free pass over the whole Egyptian Railway system. The £1 2s. 6d. daily shore money (or hotel allowance) that I drew, together with the saving of a free railway pass, provided me with nearly sufficient funds to pay all expenses during my wanderings in the Delta. I always stopped at the best hotels—in Cairo at Shepherd's; in Alexandria at the Hotel Abbat; at Ismailia at the hotel near the landing-stage kept by a Frenchman named Paris.

One morning I engaged two donkeys and set off to see the Pyramids. On one of the donkeys I rode, and the other carried my food and water for the excursion. I had climbed about one-third of the way towards the summit of the Great Pyramid, when I came upon a man in a thick tweed suit, lying down in a state of extreme exhaustion. I gave him a nip of raw brandy (whisky was not much drunk in those days), and after a little he imbibed another fair dose, mixed with a small quantity of water, which served to put him on his legs again. He thanked me warmly for my ministrations, and we sat chatting until he pronounced himself fit to resume his climb. We reached the top, where we had another rest, and I despatched my donkey-boys to fetch some more brandy and fill my water-bottle. During the latter's absence we cut our names, in true tourist style, on one of the huge boulders. I finally left my companion seated alongside his sculptural effort, and walked to the opposite edge of the Pyramid. There I was addressed by an officer in an undress military uniform, who asked if I was aware that I had been talking to His Imperial Majesty the ex-Emperor of Brazil. I could only remark that as my fellow climber was not labelled, and bore no indication of that exalted rank, I must be pardoned for not having paid him the respect due to his position as a late reigning sovereign. In reply, I was told that he perfectly understood the cause of my ignorance, His Majesty delighting to talk to strangers who were unaware of his identity. I felt, however, in a somewhat awkward position, and decided to apologize to His Majesty for any rudeness or familiarity which I might have



unintentionally exhibited to him. He laughingly replied : "That stupid A.D.C. of mine has given me away ! Come and dine with me to-morrow night." I readily accepted the invitation, and spent a very pleasant evening with His Imperial Majesty.

Monsieur Chartrey of Suez had invited me to meet his Chief, the Baron de Lesseps, President of La Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez. Monsieur de Lesseps was supposed to be very anti-British, and as a matter of fact had made it his policy not to employ Englishmen in any capacity on the staff of the Maritime Canal Company. I had been introduced to the Baron as "Agent de la Poste Anglaise", whose duties afloat ceased at Suez, and as not in any way a servant of the P. & O. Steam Navigation Company.

In the course of conversation with the Baron I dropped the remark that the P. & O. Company's officers—with whom, by the nature of my duties, I was thrown into daily contact—often said that there was only one English Canal Pilot. This was Captain Hibbert, a master mariner who had formerly commanded a British India Steam Navigation Company's vessel. I went on to say that Captain Hibbert had not been told off exclusively to pilot British steamers through the Canal, although about seventy-eight per cent. of the vessels passing through the "Ditch" did so under the red ensign. The French line to the East, Messageries Maritimes de France, had been permitted to select their own pilots, and it seemed to me that a similar concession would be appreciated in Leadenhall Street, London. Monsieur de Lesseps made no remark following my observation, but he complimented me on the fluent way in which I spoke French, and cordially invited me to call on him at Ismailia.

My canoe from Malta arrived safely at Suez, and I at once started in her for Ismailia, via Nefisheh. I took with me one Mubarak, a Zanzibar negro and jack-of-all-trades, employed as a packer in the Marine Postal Service. Part of the way I "paddled my own canoe", or proceeded in her under canvas when the wind was favourable. As a last means of progression, Mubarak sometimes towed the little craft from the bank.



I reached Ismailia without any mishaps, and passed through the freshwater canal lock into the cutting which connects it with Lake Timsah. I finally put the canoe up in the boathouse attached to the hotel near the landing-stage. This hotel is often called the Hotel de Paris, but is properly Paris' Hotel, after the name of the proprietor of that comfortable establishment.

I saw some ladies bathing in the lake, and perceived that they swam through the figures of quadrilles and lancers. On inquiry I ascertained that Madame de Lesseps and some of her intimate friends of both sexes, all expert swimmers, were invited to these bathing-parties. In the hope of being asked to attend, I called about tea-time on Madame la Baronne de Lesseps. As her husband was not in Ismailia, I had to explain that he had promised to present me to her. Madame de Lesseps accepted this statement, and she received me very hospitably. I mentioned presently having witnessed from my hotel the ladies disporting themselves in Lake Timsah, and I was at once asked pointedly if I could swim. On my replying in the affirmative, I was invited to join the next bathing-party.

I became very friendly with Madame de Lesseps, and spent hours under the vines in her garden. From these vines her gardener collected edible snails, but I did not partake of that delicacy! Madame de Lesseps spoke English fluently, but with a "chee-chee" accent and expressions used by country-bred whites. La Baronne, who had travelled all over Europe, was a very well-informed woman, and a most pleasant companion and conversationalist.

As my stay at Ismailia was limited, I deemed the best and quickest course was to take the canoe back through the lakes and maritime canal as far as Shaluf, the Bashi Bazuk encampment which adjoined the sea and the freshwater canals, and was within easy reach of Suez. I had been out in the canoe nearly every day on Lake Timsah, a large inland piece of very salt water, often as rough as the open sea, and subject to violent storms of which there were no previous indications.

The canoe, with her centre-board dropped, was quite seaworthy, but care had to be taken not to crowd on her too great an expanse of canvas. When powerful gusts of wind were prevalent all sails were stowed away, and the canoe was controlled by paddling. I had rather an anxious time of it in crossing the Bitter Lake, but by careful handling my tiny craft fetched up at Shaluf in safety. There she was hauled out of the maritime canal, and carried by four stalwart Bashi Bazuks to the freshwater canal, the two canals at this point being close to each other. The canoe had been fitted with several watertight compartments, which provided ample dry storage for clothes, a repeating rifle and British Service revolver, ammunition, a fishing-rod and tackle. I carried also a small stove which consumed solidified lumps of petroleum; although Mubarak preferred a fireplace scooped out of the soft sand.

I called to bid adieu to Madame de Lesseps and to thank her for her hospitality. She was kind enough to tell me, on my next visit there, that they could put me up. I was also, if possible, to make my visit fit in with the date on which the *bal costumé* was held at the Khedive's lakeside residence.

Eight weeks later, therefore, I again landed at Ismailia from a P. & O. steamer conveying the heavy, or long, sea mails via Gibraltar to Southampton. On reaching the Châlet de Lesseps I was cordially received by both Monsieur and Madame de Lesseps, and given a room overlooking the vinery. The guests in the house were numerous, and comprised two officers of H.B.M.'s Guards, several French, Russian, and Austrian noblemen and notables, some with their wives and a few with their daughters. It was, in fact, a gathering of distinguished personages, cosmopolitan no doubt in character, but quite different from anything of the kind I had ever seen before. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the brilliant talk and stories of these pleasant and witty conversationalists.

My partner at the dinner-table was a young woman of pleasing manners, the wife of a senior Canal officer. I soon got on friendly terms with this lady, who said to me: "You cannot possibly, by reason of your ready spirit of



repartee, be a stiff-necked John Bull! I have therefore judged you to be a Celt." I replied that I was Irish, whereupon she proclaimed me to be "*un bon Catholique*". I told her that she would soon see me "a Roman *ecclésiastique*", which remark she did not understand until some days later. Then, in fancy dress as a priest with a shaven crown, I respectfully asked to be made her father confessor, and promised to deal very leniently with her misdeeds, frailties, and sinful thoughts. At first she did not recognize me at all; then suddenly she tapped me with her fan on the top of my tonsorial patch and called me "*un mauvais sujet*", afterwards inquiring if I expected her to dance with me in that garb. I replied: "Madame, when you witness the reception it will receive in the ballroom, you will be pleading to have me as your partner!"

Although I was actually staying at the Châlet de Lesseps, Madame la Baronne did not discover my identity when I made my obeisance to her at the top of the staircase of the Khedive's Châlet. I therefore informed her that my costume had apparently been a success, as it became me and disguised me completely.

I had purposely refrained from asking Madame de Lesseps for a dance, as I knew she had a large number of "duty dances" to do, which would keep her on the "light fantastic toe" during the whole of the evening. I therefore passed on into the ballroom, where I was immediately accosted by a Frenchman, who introduced himself as a colleague. He claimed to be the representative of His Satanic Majesty the Devil, and was attired in the robes of his master, Beelzebub. I bowed, stating that I was flattered by the attention of so important a personage as himself. I told him I felt honoured by his invitation to dance, but stipulated that he should act as lady. My new acquaintance agreed, and soon showed that he was an admirable dancer. As it happened, we suited each other on the floor, especially in a wild but well-timed galop which attracted the attention of the whole room. No one present had ever seen a dance performed by a denizen of the Lower with a member of the Upper World. Without any introduction we solicited and obtained dances with all classes; and,



although the Canal official's wife did not actually plead to be accepted as a partner for a round dance, yet she willingly entertained my invitation for a "*deux temps valse*", with one arm round the waist, "*Valsa Vienna*" fashion, which permitted the gentleman to fan the lady with his free arm.

On this occasion I left Ismailia to see Port Said. The two towns had been lately connected by rail, and the latter was rapidly extending in size and equipment as a first-class port. I took a steamer to Alexandria and proceeded to leave my card on H.B.M.'s Consul; the Agent of the Eastern Telegraph Company; the P. & O. Agent; Morice Pasha, head of the Egyptian Lighthouse Service and the club of which I was made an honorary member. By this method I made the acquaintance of the leaders of the British community in Alexandria, and was frequently asked by some one of them to contribute certain trade and other particulars to the Bombay Press. In return I picked up from them useful hints, information, and details regarding local and Egyptian affairs, which provided me with ample "copy" for my weekly news-letters and articles.

I went to Cairo, and deposited my card on the principal European and Egyptian residents whose acquaintance I desired to make. I also called on H.B.M.'s Consul-General, autographed his visitors' book, and was asked to dinner. Although I could not accept the invitation, the Consul-General courteously granted me a personal interview and promised to assist me in any way in his power. He observed that he might need the publication of some information and remarks in the columns of the Bombay Press, and would, if I called on him, supply me with local gossip. He further promised to impart to me, in so far as he could, the views of the Egyptian Government on many projects and matters of general interest. I had put up at Shepherd's Hotel, and found that with that address on my card my admission into any circles in Cairo was easily obtained by the mere presentation of that card. I was made an honorary member of the Circle (Club) of Mahomed Ali.

I left a few days later for Suez, where I received charge of the Indian mails and the Viceroy's despatches, which I

delivered safely to the G.P.O., Bombay. My uncle, Captain W. P. Walsh, formerly of H.M.'s 32nd Cornwall Light Infantry, was in those days Governor of the Military and Naval Prison, and Superintendent of the House of Correction, Byculla, Bombay ; I therefore stayed with him, instead of at my official quarters in the G.P.O.

I thus oscillated up and down the Red Sea for, say, about seven months of each year. I had, much to my father's disgust, determined to remain at sea, and to prosecute with assiduity my contributions to the Press. I soon came to be regarded as an authority on Egyptian questions and those of the littorals of the Red Sea, and this brought my name and literary efforts to the notice of the Bombay Political Department, the Political Resident at Aden, H.B.M.'s Foreign Office in London, and the British Representative in Cairo. This form of introduction eventually obtained for me, through the influence and kind assistance of Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, a permanent appointment to the Indian Political Service.

## CHAPTER X

### THE MARINE POSTAL SERVICE

I LIKED this Service—its freedom, the nature of its duties, the pleasant acquaintances and firm friendships made with several fellow passengers on board ship as well as with men in the service of the P. & O. Company. But, more important still, the emoluments of my office, the money earned by my pen by journalistic work, and the profits from the ventures and “notions” of the organizer of the small trading syndicates in which I was often a partner, made me very comfortable, besides enabling me to put by for a rainy day and pay the expenses of frequent trips to the “village”.

Unfortunately, however, there was no advancement, and very little opportunity of appointment or transfer to a “shore billet”. All my senior colleagues were desirous of obtaining the latter, but many of my contemporaries declined all postal promotion on shore, being candidates for the Police and the Forest, Salt and Customs Departments in India. Having been appointed without any application on my part to the Political Service, and arbitrarily removed from the same, I demanded restoration and refused to enter any other Department. This course kept me at sea. I served about eight years on the “ocean wave”: from 7th April, 1873, to 3rd July, 1879; and from 21st March, 1882, to 28th May, 1884. During those periods I retained a lien on a post in the Marine Postal Service until I severed my connection with my “Alma Mater” on 7th October, 1885.

My first mail agent chief was a Mr. A. Row. Mr. Row had been a sailor in his youth, and was still very nautical in speech and ideas. He received me cordially, and said he agreed with the Postmaster-General that I was too young to join. He had, however, been directed by



the Postmaster-General to take care of me. Mr. Row observed that I looked as if I could "hand, reef and furl", and had the set-up of a smart topman; but as a mail officer I had a soft and easy job on deck, or under cover. I had, nevertheless, to learn my duties speedily, as at any moment I might be called upon to act in charge of Her Majesty's mails and the Viceroy's despatches. He gave me a printed copy of *Instructions for the Guidance of Officers of the Marine Postal Service*; also a log-book, which I was to fill up during each "watch" and bring to him to initial. As regards the *Instructions*, he remarked: "I do not advise your following them out, as if you use the official phraseology set forth therein you will put any 'skipper's' back up and get yourself disliked." He suggested it would not do to go on to the bridge and repeat the phrases which were directed to be used. For example:

- I. Are you the Master of this Contract Packet?
- II. I am H.B.M.'s Mail Agent, and have embarked and stowed in the Mail Room H.B.M.'s Mails and the Viceroy's Despatches. I will enter the "time" on your Log-Book, and direct you to proceed to sea without delay.

Mr. Row said: "I always make friends with the skipper, which makes matters work smoothly. When I go on the bridge, I call the skipper by his name, but if he is a stranger to me I address him as 'Commander', and make my reports. The skipper invariably asks the agent to defer filling in the 'time', and requests him to return in an hour or so to make that entry. He always pleads, truly enough, that the cargo in barges alongside has to be taken on board, and if he fails to induce the mail agent to extend the time, he must leave it and be cursed by some shore office boss. It is seldom that I do not comply with these requests. I ask the commander to introduce me to the mate in charge of the mail arrangements of the vessel, and desire the latter to show me the fully equipped and provisioned boat suspended at her davits and reserved for the exclusive use of the mail

agent and his staff. I also ask for the attendance of the purser. The skipper thereupon directs a quartermaster to bring that officer to his cabin, and to order the steward to take brandy, soda, and tumblers there."

By the contract, the mail agent has a well-appointed cabin to himself, and the first chair on the commander's right is reserved for him. In the case of an assistant mail officer, he is only entitled to a berth in a first-class cabin, and the second or third chair on the port side of the vessel. The purser, nevertheless, endeavours to give the assistant a first-class cabin all to himself, and seldom fails to do so. All mail officers dislike chairs at the table unless they can arrange matters with the chief saloon waiter. Joints, fowls, and other dishes requiring to be carved are placed opposite the chairs, and the occupants of those places thus have a very warm and fatiguing job to perform in a hot saloon. As soon as these small matters have been arranged and attended to, the mail agent goes on to the bridge and says: "Time up; please produce your log-book, so that I can sign it." In this spirit, and with such a method, the mail agent becomes popular, and is considered a good fellow.

Mr. Row instructed me to report myself to him each morning immediately after breakfast for orders. I had to obtain from him the key of the mail-room, which it was my duty to inspect during each watch, and then I returned the key to his custody. I was also directed to make the personal acquaintance of the principal Indian Civil and Military officials on board. There was a lot of practical common sense in the foregoing advice, and as a result in a few voyages I got to know a large number of "big-wigs" in power in India. In this respect my knowledge of whist helped me greatly, since at the whist table the social status of the white sojourner in the East is determined. If a man has started in life below the standard for immediate candidature to one of the leading clubs of the Presidency in which he resides, he is generally considered socially ineligible for membership of that club; whereas if he has no position at all on arrival in India, but is a "white" man and has been bred up as a European, he easily makes his voyage

through the ballot-box. Mr. Row did not play whist, or any other card game, but he was in much request, as he sang a good song, played the banjo, and was an agreeable conversationalist.

Mr. Row showed me how to stow leather-headed letter-bags so that they could be easily lashed or "laganed" to a spar. Thus, in case of shipwreck, these bags would float on the surface of the water and not go down to the bottom of the sea with the vessel. The bags were collected and stacked in separated heaps, in order to be ready for delivery. The heavy, or Southampton, portion of the mails remained on board for passage through the Suez Canal, and were stowed out of the way at the back of the mail-room.

I was leaving a P. & O. vessel alongside a wharf in Alexandria, when a stranger to me gave me a telegram to the Aquarium, London, and one pound to pay the cost of sending it at the Press rate. (This stranger afterwards turned out to be a Mr. Wilson, of Wilson's Wide World Circus.) I handed the message and the money to my assistant, Mr. G. A. T. Bennet, who was going to the telegraph office. Mr. Bennet regarded the telegram as a joke, in that it requested the addressee to have the white-haired, tree-residing, speaking monkey and his wife met at the London Docks. Mr. Bennet therefore utilized the balance of cash in his possession by paying at Press rates for some extra words, announcing to the London public that a talking gorilla would appear as the singer of a love song, together with one or two more wonderfully educated animals. Some six months later I received a handsomely printed card, headed "For a good boy", giving me for life a front seat in Wilson's show.

I visited the Wide World Circus on the Maidan at Calcutta, and paid for my seat. After the performance had concluded I sent my card to Mr. Wilson, who came out and pressed me to stop to supper with his troupe. I accepted the invitation, and entered a large circus tent in which an elegant feast was laid all ready for consumption. There I also found the Viceroy and the chief equestrienne jumping over sofas and through paper hoops! The



famous horsewoman, Madame Sheumacher, was conducting the great Satrap of the Empire hand in hand through a couple of hoops, one for him and one for her. I noticed, on entering the supper tent, that the Government House staff looked askance at me, but Mr. Wilson assured them that I was "the right sort". I happened to be slightly acquainted with Lord William Beresford ("Master of the Horse", as he familiarly was styled), who was Military Secretary of the Viceroy. I therefore went to speak to him, and thus put myself right with the staff.

Captain Hobson (formerly of the 2nd Queen's Regiment), manager of the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, asked me to collect the best acrobats, snake-charmers, mango-tree growers, conjurers, jugglers, and producers of full-grown boys from a basket into which a small dog could barely be squeezed, and to send them to Europe. My instructions were to put up at the best hotel in Poona, and to have several troupes to perform daily and show off their tricks before me. The residents in the hotel considered me mad, and an old civilian warned me that I was wasting my substance by incurring such a large and useless expense. I selected, however, one or two of the more skilled artistes from each of the various groups, and formed them up into two troupes for despatch to London. My choice proved that these performers were the best ever sent from India, and in no way inferior to those from China and Japan, who practically monopolize this enterprise in Europe. I anticipated that Captain Hobson would regard the bill as a very heavy one, but he considered I had done very well, and said that his company would now spend several hundreds of pounds in placarding on the walls of London the arrival of these troupes. He added that the public would be informed that each performer had been personally chosen in Western India by a distinguished British District Magistrate! Captain Hobson's venture was a financial success, and he warmly thanked my father and myself, who had originated the idea of my employment.

I got on very well with the mail agent chief, Mr. Row. He encouraged me to write for the Press and learn Arabic, and suggested my applying for one of the British consulates

which were maintained at the joint cost of the British Foreign Office and the Indian Government. In about 1883 the British Foreign Office appointed a retired naval officer as a regular Consul at Jedda. That gentleman crossed over to the African littoral, and was killed at one of the battles between the British and the Hadendaa Beaux. After his death it was the turn of the Indian Government to nominate the British Consul at Jedda, and as the Government at Bombay were endeavouring to remove me from my position as Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden, they desired General Lock, the Resident at Aden, to offer me the post in full satisfaction of my claim on the Indian Political Service. General Lock, however, never communicated that proposal to me, and I understand he reported I was not fit for the post, which was so nearly allied to the Indian Political Service. His contention was that my acceptance of it would strengthen my claim for restoration to the Political Service, which was contrary to the policy of the Indian Government with respect to uncovenanted officials. This policy, moreover, was one which had the full support of the Political Resident at Aden.

I left London to rejoin the Marine Postal Service at Alexandria, and stayed a week in Cairo to ascertain if, with the sanction of the British Government, I could obtain a suitable post in the Egyptian Service. Sir Edward Malet was kind as usual, and wished to keep me in Egypt and to aid me in that line. However, neither he nor I saw any prospect of my employment in the land of the Pharaohs. I therefore went on to Suez, and took charge of the first outward-bound mail for Bombay.

On arrival in India I resumed my ordinary duties, and worried the private secretary, the Political Secretary to the Local Government, and His Excellency the Governor of Bombay for restoration to the Political Service. Sir James Fergusson, an old whist friend, was particularly kind; he said he would await orders for a few months, but that he had promised Sir Richard Temple eventually to reinstate me on his own responsibility and to let the Secretary of State remove me again. Mr. H. Evan



James, Bo.L.S., C.B.I., the Postmaster-General, as I have already mentioned, desired to retain me in the Indian Postal Department, and with that view made me a splendid offer. He proposed to count my "sea time" for seniority as a Superintendent of District Post Offices, and thus to place me in a position from which in a few months I could be appointed to act as a Deputy Postmaster-General. If I had accepted that opening, I should have been a substantive Postmaster-General before attaining the age of thirty years, and from a purely financial point of view much better off than I ever was in the Indian Political Service.

The Local Government offered me several offices—an Assistant Commissionership in the Salt Department, a Cantonment Magistracy, and the Head Clerkship of the Court of Small Causes. But I had decided, with the advice of my father and my uncle (Captain W. P. Walsh), not to take any appointment, and to await at sea my restoration to the Indian Political Service.

I returned to Suez with the homeward mails, and made several trips in my Rob Roy canoe over the freshwater canals. I used to stop the night in any village where the inhabitants were friendly, and often I read to them a tale from *The Arabian Nights*, much to their edification. I noticed that many of my male hosts were not very cordial to me, and on inquiry I gathered that there were several Englishmen engaged as tax collectors, who distrained for the early payment of taxes and dues. The Greek collectors allowed time, accepting payment for that accommodation. I asked my Arab friends what the latter course cost them, and inquired if the Englishman was equally on the look-out for tips. It is a pleasure to record that these simple villagers stated that the Englishman did not solicit or accept buckshish; nevertheless, he was regarded as a first-class fool for his honesty.

I attended the courts. Each bench consisted of three judges—one European and two Arabs. Mr. John Scott, a barrister and later a puisne judge of the Bombay High Court, with two other English barrister-judges named Law and Royle, were all three prominent members of these tribunals. I contributed several articles on the judicial



system then prevailing in Egypt, and it appeared to me that these mixed courts suited the requirements of the people, and were popular institutions. H.B.M.'s Representative at Cairo was much interested by my investigation of this and other kindred matters, and constantly asked me to dine at the Consulate to discuss these questions with him. I benefited greatly as a result, being able to produce his views and revise my own in my articles for the Bombay Press. In the course of time I came to be regarded as an expert on Egyptian affairs. I could read, write, and speak colloquial Arabic, and was called the "Bedouin" because I talked Yemeni. Unfortunately, though, I never became a scholar, and was often amazed at my ignorance of a language which possessed more words than any other tongue in the world.

The mail agents made a large number of friends on board ship, who invited them to up-country stations and districts, where game of all sorts and all-round shooting were plentiful.

Most of my shipmates, before and after joining the Marine Postal Service, occupied many positions in life. For example :

1. Mr. Ham was a mate at sea ; later an accountant in a bank, he became director of the Indian Railway Mail Service.

2. Mr. Hutton, a banker, retired as the Postmaster-General of Bengal.

3. Mr. Pryce Todd was a mate at sea.

4. Mr. A. Row, a mate at sea, and a bank clerk, became Postmaster, Bombay City, and committed suicide in 1880.

5. Mr. Collier was a master mariner.

6. Mr. Hynes was a banker ; later Deputy Director-General of Post Offices.

Among the younger men there were :

Mr. C. Lander, son of an Indian colonel, later the Postmaster-General of the Nizam of Hyderabad's territory.

Charles Morrison Moyle, the only son of Major-General Moyle of the Bombay Army, later an officer of the Sindh Commissioners.

Mr. E. A. U. Price, son of Colonel George Uvadale Price, of the 19th Bo.N.I., who became a major in the Army in 1905 and was drowned in the Channel when the *Stella* was wrecked.

Mr. Leckie, son of Colonel Leckie of the Bombay Army, who entered the Salt Department.

Mr. Betham, son of a retired purser of the Indian Navy, who was for many years a Superintendent of District Post Offices.

The two Wilkins, sons of a master in the Indus Flotilla ; afterwards a Conservator of Forests, the other in charge of the Land Records Office.

Mr. Cornwall, son of a colonel in the Bengal Army, who retired as Director-General of the Railway Mail Service.

Mr. Bennet, son of a Major Bennet, was formerly of a Bombay European Regiment.

Finally, L. Prendergast Walsh (the author of these reminiscences) was the son of Major Thomas Prendergast Walsh of the Bombay Army ; who entered the Indian Political Service in 1879, and was Administrator of British Somali Coast, 1884 to 1893, when he became a Political at Sawant-Wadi, Bombay Presidency.

Several of the gentlemen, therefore, who served in the Marine Postal Service rose to high offices in India, but they would have done better if they had remained servants of the Indian Post Office. As I have already said, the latter Department was largely recruited from Eurasians, half-caste and country-born or bred Europeans (known as "chee-chees"), and they occupied a low social status in India. The men in the Marine Postal Service, on the other hand, belonged to a higher grade of life, and would not join a Department full of half-castes, as was the case in the Indian Post Office.

At Aden I saw Captain Hunter and General Blair, who had kept on applying to have me reinstated at Aden. Up to date, however, neither of them had received an authoritative or satisfactory reply. Captain Hunter had sent me a personal note to hand to Sir James Fergusson. In the note Captain Hunter stated that he had received a con-



fidential hint, but no actual orders, to occupy Berbera, and had been told that under no circumstances would troops be told off for any annexation requiring military assistance, while rifles, ammunition and military stores would only be provided by the Aden arsenal to the Police for some stated purpose sanctioned by the Resident. Captain Hunter referred to the Secretary of State's despatch dated September 1883, and requested Sir James to act at once on the authorization contained therein.

On landing in Bombay I happened to meet Sir James Fergusson in the yacht club, and gave him Captain Hunter's note. Sir James said: "This ends the case, and fortunately at a convenient moment. General Blair, V.C., the Resident at Aden, has wired to me for three months' leave to Europe, and on hearing officially of that application I will appoint you to the vacancy created by General Blair's departure. In order not to give Captain Hunter away, I shall not announce your appointment in the *Gazette*. Nevertheless, you should arrange at once to relinquish your duties as a mail agent, and get away to Aden with as little delay as possible. Captain Hunter needs your services at the latest on the 28th May, 1884." Sir James thereupon read Captain Hunter's note to me. I thanked Sir James warmly for his extreme kindness, and rejoined at Aden on the morning of the 29th May, 1884. I was interned on Quarantine Island in Aden harbour. I had, as a matter of prudence, retained a lien on my post in the Marine Postal Service—but my troubles and precarious position were at last over.

In bidding adieu to the Indian Postal Department, I take this opportunity of recording my gratitude for the kindness and invariable good treatment (with one exception) which I received from all the Postmaster-Generals under whom I served, and of the life-lasting friendships I made with some of my comrades in the Marine Postal Service.

My dear old friend and colleague, Captain Hunter, was delighted to see me, and in exhibiting that pleasure he nearly got himself located in durance vile for attempting to grasp my hand in violation of the quarantine regulations. On my release from quarantine, I stayed with Captain



Hunter as a guest at his residence. I was busily engaged in training my party to shoot straight, and in making the preparations for a sudden descent on the Somali Coast.

At about 3 a.m. on the 2nd August, 1884, Captain Hunter dug me out of bed. My servant at once produced whisky, soda, ice and cigars, and as soon as I could disentangle myself from the mosquito curtains I inquired the object of visiting me before "cock-shout". Captain Hunter opened the conversation by observing that he had a wife and three children, was without any private means, and had just earned his first pension of £250 per annum. I replied that I knew all these facts and circumstances, and did not see the necessity for his communicating them to me before dawn.

Hunter then said that if with my private means I would not act in the way he suggested, he would himself, in spite of his comparative poverty, carry out his long-projected scheme of not allowing any European Power to occupy the Somali Coast. "Of course," he said, "I quite expect to be turned out of the Service, or compulsorily retired, for doing it. But you have already been twice removed from the Political Service and have managed somehow or other to regain your former offices, and I dare say that, though you will be cursed and probably kicked out on this occasion, yet you will be reinstated. Now my proposal is that you should fully arm and equip the forty expert riflemen you have already enrolled and trained, and take them over to Berbera in the Indian Marine vessel on the 4th instant. There I have actually been authorized to place you as H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul. If questioned with respect to your armed party, you should point out that at several ports in the Persian Gulf British Consular and Indian Political Officers have armed men stationed at their residences for their protection. This matter is urgent and very important. I have reliable information that the commander of a French transport has been ordered to disembark one hundred infantry to occupy Berbera, if that town has been vacated by the Egyptian authorities. In fact the Egyptian flag, if hoisted there, will be disregarded, in the same way as the British have done at Zeila, which is still under their control.

The Jack over your Consulate has no signification of military occupation or rule, so have a flagstaff ready at the Custom House and the fort in the town from which to hoist British flags if any foreign vessels approach the port."

Captain Hunter concluded: "I have also heard that a German naval officer has been directed to hoist the German flag at Berbera, should he get the opportunity of doing so. We should recollect in this matter how we lost Sagallo!"



## CHAPTER XI

### ADVENTURES IN SUEZ

WHILE I was a mail officer I had a few adventures, some of which I will set down here.

Suez was, indeed, a very dangerous town, where many murders had been committed with impunity. Captain Agnew of the 16th Lancers, for instance, was playing at a gaming-table in the Luxemburg café, when he was stabbed with a stiletto in the abdomen. He died the next day on board the homeward-bound transport, near Ismailia.

One night, in the company of my old friend and then shipmate, C. M. Moyle, our ship's doctor, and three other men from the P. & O. steamer lying at the wharf in Port Ebrahim, I was myself in the Luxemburg. By then the gaming-table had been removed, and the place was entirely devoted to music, singing, and dancing. A girl violinist accepted an invitation to dance, which meant that she would have a drink for the benefit of the establishment. A fully armed Albanian, however, claimed the girl as his partner, and ordered her to leave the Frenchman with whom she was seated. The Frenchman refused to give the girl up, and an altercation ensued. Each party took to threatening the other with revolvers; the audience thereupon took sides, and a pretty disturbance seemed likely to occur. Our doctor, in order to protect and screen the violinist, drew his revolver and told her to return to her parents on the daïs. Unfortunately the doctor's revolver went off, and a bullet from it passed through the fleshy part of the girl's thighs. At that all the foreigners in the room turned upon and attempted to lynch our doctor. There were eleven well-armed Englishmen in the hall, and they formed a cordon round the doctor, which cooled the ardour of



our potential opponents. I had meanwhile sent my man Mubarak to Captain Mustapha Effendi, Head of the Police, for assistance. Mustapha Effendi turned up with twenty infantry with fixed bayonets, and sent all the Englishmen under a small escort to the Zuptieh, where our doctor was locked up and the rest of us discharged.

I went off to see the British Consul, who had gone to bed, and he very politely saw me. I explained the case, and he said: "I shall be sent for to-morrow, but I suggest the best course is to settle the matter out of Court and without Consular intervention." I then bought a ball of twine and a bottle of whisky and visited the doctor in his "durance vile". The doctor let one end of the string out of his window, and the faithful Mubarak attached it to a bottle of comforting-mixture, in Arab jails and lock-ups no spirits or wines being allowed. I next set out the case to the doctor, as follows: "The girl is not severely injured, but you will be kept here at great expense to yourself if the matter is dealt with by the Egyptian and Consular authorities. I therefore suggest that you authorize me to settle the case with the girl and her parents by the payment of not more than one hundred pounds sterling." The Consul, incidentally, privately considered that to be the most desirable course of settlement. The doctor entirely agreed, and asked me to make the best terms I could on those lines.

After leaving the doctor, I again interviewed the surgeon in attendance on the violinist, who assured me that his patient had not been seriously wounded. He expected she would be up and in her usual health in about ten days, and she would not be lame. I asked him to express those opinions to the father and mother of the wounded girl, and he said he had already done so, and desired to know if my friend would pay him his fee. I answered that such matters would be settled after I had seen the parents and asked them to arrange with their daughter the amount of the compensation they demanded of my friend.

Evidently the matter had been already discussed, as

the parents promptly requested three thousand francs. My friend was also to pay the surgeon and all expenses, provided their daughter was restored to health within a given number of days. We haggled over the amount, and after consulting their daughter the parents accepted, in full settlement of all expenses and claims, three thousand francs—the equivalent of about a hundred and sixty pounds. I returned to our doctor, who was glad to get out of the trouble even at that price. I personally considered the price exorbitant, but it was the best that I could do for him. The next morning the doctor got a loan from the P. & O. Company, and the matter was settled in a way approved of by the Consul. I have purposely refrained from giving our doctor's name, because later he entered the Indian Medical Service and rose to high rank and position.

Englishmen having to return to their ships at Port Ebrahim used to meet at the Luxemburg café, and start off from there in a single gang for their tramp along the lonely railway spit. On another occasion Charlie Moyle and I had a final drink before our friends were ready to depart, and, there being no matches on our table, Charlie got up and struck a match for his cigar from the earthenware matchstand on an adjoining table. There two peaceable and well-behaved Frenchmen were installed, and purely by accident Charlie set alight all the matches in the stand, which burst into a big flame. In order to smother it out Charlie seized the tarboosh from the head of one of the Frenchmen, and with this truly perfect instrument completely extinguished the blaze. The Frenchman, not unnaturally, felt grossly insulted at this treatment of his Turkish headdress, and showed it by rushing at Charlie, who fully expected to be attacked. As a defensive measure, therefore, Charlie interposed a chair between him and the angry Frenchman, who toppled over this impediment and barked his proboscis on the sanded floor. Charlie, cap in hand, bowed to his opponent and assured him he was desolated with grief at the injury done to monsieur's nose. But the Frenchman was still more infuriated by these tactics, and, revolver in hand,



gallantly made for Charlie, who had also a six-shooter in his hip-pocket.

The chairs of the Luxemburg café were very light articles, very similar to the rush-seated ones generally found in churches in France. And, wielding one of these, Charlie brought it down on the skull of his assailant. The force used caused the latter's head to be driven through the rungs of the chair, where it was held as in a vice. The other Frenchman now wanted to assist his friend; but I objected on the grounds that, as we had nothing to do with the origin of the quarrel, neither of us should interfere in it, but leave the combatants to fight it out by themselves. I suggested to the Frenchman who had taken no part in the affray that he should take charge of his friend and release his head from the chair when they reached his home. The other, however, desired to let free his companion upon the spot; whereupon I pointed out that such a course would only lead to a revolver fight, which we ought to stop. With that the other agreed, and the two Frenchmen left the café, the one with his head firmly gripped by the chair, roaring everlasting vengeance against Charlie Moyle.

Their departure closed the incident. Charlie Moyle admitted that he had been in the wrong, but he had only intended using the tarboosh as a joke. He contended, however, that the Frenchman had repulsed his conciliatory efforts by calling him an English bandit, a badly brought up "Chevalier d'Industrie", and generally abusing him.

One night when we were playing whist in the saloon, the steward in charge walked up to the card-table stark naked except for a cabin door-curtain about his loins. He told us that opposite the Terreplaine Viaduct he had been waylaid by four or more armed dock labourers, and stripped of his clothes, boots, watch and chain, and money. Charlie Moyle at once told the man to come with us, and we would try to regain his property for him. We made a party of four, with our revolvers, while the faithful Mubarak had his Somali *budd*, now painted in various colours and through the centre of which he had driven a spike. We discovered the thieves in their lair in an empty sandpit,



and demanded the restoration of the stolen garments. They were promptly given up, and we also recovered the steward's watch and chain. These rascals were then ordered to strip off their clothes in their turn, and when they had done so we made a heap of the garments and burnt them. We then left them in their nakedness, adding that if they gave any more trouble we would call again with the triangle and a nine-tailed cat.

It was a great blessing when the docks were finished. Between fifteen hundred and two thousand workmen belonging to the cut-throat inhabitants of the Levant were then discharged and left Suez, and the latter town, together with Port Ebrahim, became once more desirable resorts.

Captain Weston was the harbour master at Port Ebrahim, Suez. He had been a commander in the P. & O. Company's service, but had been removed on account of his peculiar methods of navigation. There is constantly a heavy mist off the eastern side of the Horn of Africa and the coast of Sokotra, making it always a very dangerous neighbourhood. At one time in this vicinity ten ships had been wrecked, or had run aground, during twenty-two months. Captain Weston held that in the above zone a "look-out" man was useless, and should not be kept on duty for that alone. He maintained, instead, that a bucket of sea-water should be brought in his cabin every five minutes and its temperature taken, as from such readings the distance from the shore could be accurately ascertained. The directors of the P. & O. Company regarded Captain Weston as a dangerous lunatic, and declined to afford him opportunities of putting one of their vessels ashore in that fashion.

Captain Weston once told me that some forty years previously an old sailor had given him a plan of the site of buried treasure on the Island of Perim, where the buccaneer Evory had his chief stronghold before he moved it to the coast of Madagascar. After I had become Assistant-Political Resident at Aden, with Perim included in my jurisdiction, Captain Weston forwarded me a copy of this plan. I sent a gang of coolies to Perim, and spent a week

there myself searching for this cache. I did not discover it, but I did find several shafts, which might equally well have been sunk to find water or for the concealment of jewellery torn from the fingers of pirate victims before they were made to walk the plank.



## CHAPTER XII

### GENERAL ULYSSES GRANT, EX-PRESIDENT U.S.A.

I TRAVELLED on board the P. & O. s.s. *Venetia* in 1879 as mail agent with General Ulysses Grant, ex-President of the United States. With General Grant there was also his wife; his son, in the U.S. Cavalry; Mr. Borie, late of the U.S. Admiralty; Mr. Young, of the *New York Herald*; and Doctor Keating, in medical charge of the party.

The President came on board about midnight, when I handed him a special despatch-bag. He and two or three of his party came into my office on deck, where the bag was opened at once, and they partook of whisky and soda while so employed. We sailed at four that morning. I found in the ordinary mail-bag letters for Mrs. Grant and several members of her party, which I delivered to them. After breakfast I met the President at the top of the saloon staircase, and asked if I could assist him in any way. Mrs. Grant, coming up a minute later, observed to her husband: "Is he not like our Jesse?" The President held out his hand and, taking mine in his grasp, said: "Very glad to have met you, sir. I agree that there is a great resemblance between you and my son Jesse." Colonel Grant, who was standing alongside his father, gave me a cordial handshake and assented to his mother's and father's remarks. Mrs. Grant then turned to me and said: "Young man, give me your arm"; and the next moment, to the astonishment of all in sight, I was promenading Mrs. Grant up and down the quarterdeck.

I became very intimate with the Grant party, and played cards with them every evening. It was impossible to induce General Grant to converse if a third person was present; but he used to spend a good deal of his time smoking a long cigar in my office on deck, where he would talk freely on all subjects, and I spent a very enjoyable



time in his company. He produced on one occasion a bundle of newspaper cuttings relating to Ireland and the connection of Great Britain with that country. From his conversation it was clear that he approved of the attitude, conduct, ideas, and policy of the Ulster Loyalists, who opposed any separation from Great Britain. He said it was not generally understood that the question of maintaining the Union and British supremacy in Ireland was, on the part of the British and the Ulster Loyalists, at bottom a military one, not a racial or religious question. The Protestant Loyalists of Ulster would always oppose any party hostile to England, or any foreign Power using Ireland as a jumping-off ground for an attack on the west coast of England, Wales, and Scotland. That irrefutable fact would always operate as a safeguard of British interests, and would also protect the industry of the working men and merchants of Northern Ireland. General Grant instanced the huge shipbuilding yards in Belfast, and the success with which they were carried on. I gathered from these remarks that General Grant's family was originally of Irish origin, and that he was personally a friend and admirer of the British.

One day Lord Ralph Kerr happened to come into my office, and I introduced him to General Grant. His lordship then invited the latter to stay with him at Multra, where he was commanding a cavalry regiment.

I knew the bailiffs of the "Court of Small Causes" well by sight, as they frequently came on board to arrest officers and others for debt when the latter were on the point of leaving Bombay for Europe. On one occasion a steamer was very strenuously searched for a subaltern of the Royal Artillery, who was known to be endeavouring to escape to Europe by that particular vessel. This debtor had been definitely traced to the ship, nevertheless he could not be found. A bailiff thereupon asked me if I could assist him in his search. I considered his request an impudent one, and I told him that even if I could do so it would be unbecoming for a gentleman in my position to serve writs and processes for the Sheriff. The ship was by then under way, and the pilot about to go off in his tender to

the outer light-vessel; the bailiffs had therefore to leave the steamer in their boat or to be carried on to Aden. Not being desirous of a sea voyage, they elected to return to Bombay.

As soon as the ship was on her direct course, I descended to the orlop deck to see that the bags had been separately and safely deposited in the mail-room. At the mail-room door I was accosted by the gunner officer. He had a piece of string in his hand called a "tally", on which a knot is made for every ten bags passed down the hatch; he had also a pencil and a sheet of foolscap paper, on which he had scored the destination of the various bags stowed in the mail-room. He confided to me that Charlie Moyle had put him on to count the mail-bags, by which simple ruse he had escaped the bailiffs, who had on several occasions inspected the orlop deck. I said: "If Charlie's action in this matter becomes known, he will get into a serious row. Don't, therefore, give him away by telling his game as a good story, but keep it to yourself." Fortunately Moyle had never mentioned anything to me, and I was thus honestly able to express my indignation to the bailiff when he spoke to me on the subject. I think, however, Moyle was wrong, and ran a great risk of being seriously hauled over the coals by the Postmaster-General.

Fifty-odd years ago there were a number of master mariners of the "under canvas" type; that is, capable seamen in command of a windjammer who navigated their vessels by rote, personal observations of the sun, moon, and stars, and by their dead reckonings. By these methods they could fudge a day's work, and define their position on a chart with sufficient accuracy for their purposes. These old sea dogs were practically illiterate, and one of them with whom I became slightly acquainted, when I met him on the wharf at Port Ebrahim, asked me to accompany him on board his ship, where he desired me to write a letter for him.

I went with him into his cabin, where on the table he had a supply of pens, ink, blotting and writing-paper. His chief mate, of the same sailorlike breed as himself, was



standing alongside the table with an English dictionary in his hand, awaiting orders to look up the spelling of difficult words. In fact, all preparations had been made for concocting this epistle and for getting it off as quickly as possible. The skipper, with his coat off, the sleeves of his shirt tucked up and beads of perspiration rolling down his face, had already started his literary efforts with the words: "I say, Owners . . ." He could, however, get no further, and his chief mate could make no suggestion as to how to commence or to frame the second sentence.

It was explained to me that the skipper preferentially wished to careen his vessel, in order to scrape the barnacles and seaweed growth off her bottom and sides, which he deemed would be cheaper than taking her into a dry dock for that purpose. I was therefore requested to write to his owners on this subject, and to solicit telegraphic permission as to which of the two courses should be adopted. As a recent senior pupil of Cowley College, Oxford, this was a simple and easy letter for me to write. The skipper and his chief mate thanked me warmly for the assistance I had rendered them, and proposed to express personally to my skipper their appreciation of those skilled services. They were astounded on learning that I was not a sailor at all, and that the skipper had involuntarily "roped in" the services of such an important official as the officer in charge of H.B.M.'s mails and the Viceroy's despatches!

One day the odour in the mail agent's cabin rendered the place simply uninhabitable. I sent for the steward, and he discovered that the offensive smell came from the locker beneath the bunk, where the Viceroy's despatches were deposited. Still further investigation showed that a Madras Government despatch-bag was the source of the evil. I had this bag placed on the saloon table opposite my cabin door, and asked three Government servants to form themselves into a committee to witness my breaking the seal of such a sacred charge. I then opened the bag in the presence of this committee, and found therein one pair of lady's dancing-shoes; one pair of up-to-the-knee silk stockings; one pair of up-to-the-elbow white kid



gloves ; a novel, and several unstamped letters for the domestics of the personal establishment of the Government of Madras ; and finally a number of cardboard boxes containing pieces of wedding cake. The cake had attracted two rats, and, the latter dying inside the bag, their carcasses had caused the stench complained of. The bodies were at once removed, the bag was repaired and its contents restored, and a certificate was endorsed relating the exact circumstances of the tampering. The bag was then sealed with my signet, and no doubt reached Madras without any injury having been done to its contents.

It struck me that a despatch-bag should convey more important contents than the documents I had found in the only despatch-bag ever opened by me !

## CHAPTER XIII

### INDIA AS A MARRIAGE MARKET

THE mail officers had occasion constantly to wear a frock-coat at marriages in the Cathedral, Bombay, and at wedding breakfasts and receptions at one of the chief hotels in the Fort. In those days a large number of engaged girls came out to India in charge of the captain of the vessel in which they travelled, to be married as soon as possible on arrival in Bombay to men from up-country stations, who were themselves strangers in the neighbourhood. A mail officer was often asked to act as best man, at the particular request of the young lady concerned.

I have had a number of curious experiences of these marriages, and will here relate a few of them, as fair examples.

A younger son of a naval officer was a fellow passenger with me on an outward-bound steamer of which I was the mail agent in charge. He was engaged to be married, and explained that he hoped in less than three years to save out of his salary a sufficient sum of money to pay for the girl's outfit and first-class passage to Bombay. This gentleman was only a casual boardship acquaintance, but to my great astonishment he wrote to ask me to look after his fiancée, and to transfer her at Suez from the Southampton to the Bombay mail steamer.

I went on board the Southampton vessel and got the skipper, an old friend of mine, to introduce me to the young lady I had to take care of. On my confiding the circumstances to him, the skipper said: "It won't work." I nevertheless got into communication with this pretty girl, and transported herself and her baggage into my boat. I had noticed that there was a soldierly-looking man hanging round the young lady, and as a matter of fact the skipper's remark that it would not "work" alluded to that individual. This unknown person did not wish the young lady to go



in my boat to the Bombay steamer, and I did not invite him to accompany us.

On arrival on board, Purser Liversage (a huge man of six foot three or more, nicknamed "Peter the Lion-hearted") gave me a really snug cabin for the use of my protégée, who was only entitled to a first-class berth, and I arranged with the chief saloon waiter to reserve for her the first seat to my right on the first or second settee. The military swell, who still hung around my companion, turned out to be a Major of Sappers, and he objected to all my arrangements, as they kept him away from the young lady. I had told my assistant to break into any conversation there might be on deck between this couple, and did all in my power to keep them apart. It was, however, plain enough that she was in love with the Major and he with her. When we reached Bombay, my charge's fiancé came on board to meet his bride, and to leave her at Watson's Hotel in charge of a duenna she had met on board. The wedding was to take place the next day, and I was to act as "best man". The prospective bridegroom was very happy, and had no suspicion of anything being wrong. He even shook hands in cheerful ignorance with the Major himself, and learned that he also was going to Watson's Hotel.

The next morning, rigged for attendance at a marriage ceremony at the Cathedral, I called at Watson's Hotel. I announced to the lady that her lover had sent a carriage and pair to convey her to St. Thomas's, and that I was to accompany her there and meet him at the porch. Later, the lady, splendidly attired, was seated in the hotel reception room, shedding tears and exclaiming she could not marry the man who was even then awaiting her at the church door. The Major was in attendance, and he asked me to convey at once to the expectant bridegroom the news that the marriage would not take place; while the bride supported the decision, saying it would be wrong and wicked of her to marry a man with whom she was not in love. Time pressed, so I had to hurry off to tell the poor devil that his marriage had been broken off—a most unpleasant and difficult message to communicate.

I delivered my message, and advised the victim to go at once to the lady, plead his case, and ask her to reconsider her decision. This he did, but all in vain. I myself endeavoured to persuade the lady of her fault, pointing out that by breaking off her marriage at the church door she was placing the man in a very ridiculous position. But that appeared to make not the slightest difference to her; consequently her wedding cake and dresses went back with her to England, and we travelled together as far as Suez. I never met the parties again, but subsequently she married the Major.

One day, just as we were about to enter the harbour of Bombay, I met in the fore saloon a lady and a gentleman, with both of whom I had a boardship speaking acquaintanceship. They asked me to sit down, and the lady said to me: "You know the officer of the Hyderabad contingent to whom I am engaged to be married to-morrow? He is coming off to the vessel, to take me ashore at once. I want you to see this gentleman as soon as he steps on board and tell him that I have determined not to marry him. I am not engaged to wed this gentleman"—indicating her neighbour, who smiled but made no comment. "You may tell my late intended bridegroom this gentleman's name, and please let drop to him that the latter is not engaged to marry me." I remonstrated with her for the ill-treatment she was inflicting on the man she had accepted as her husband, one whom I personally knew to be a good fellow, and who probably had paid for her outfit and passage. She admitted the truth of my surmise, and replied that she and her companion would pay all the expenses he had incurred. She would not, however, move from that position or attitude.

I asked the skipper to let me receive my expected visitor in his cabin, and he was shown in there by the quartermaster. I broke the news to him with all the delicacy of which I was capable. He naturally requested to see the lady and hear her decision from her own lips, and inquired if she had transferred her affections to any other man. I replied that she probably had done so, but that as far as I could gather she was not engaged to him,



or indeed to anyone. I added that, as the individual to whom I alluded was actually on board, he should see him, since the lady had placed her affairs in his hands. This unfortunate man had an interview all alone in the captain's cabin with the lady, but entirely failed to restore himself to her favour. She left him, and I returned to the stricken lover and pointed out that he had been lucky in ascertaining her true feelings for him before he had married her. In these circumstances I considered that he should be thankful for having got rid of her before it was too late and he had tied himself up to a woman who did not want him for her husband. He took, nevertheless, this unexpected blow sadly to heart, and was absolutely prostrated with grief.

A P. & O. Company's commander, who also held a lieutenant's commission in the R.N.R., was an intimate friend of mine. Our grandfathers had both served at Waterloo. One day my shellback friend came to tell me that he was in the devil of a mess, and might be keel-hauled by his directors. He said: "You know the girl who sits at table on my right hand? Well, she came out to marry a very well-to-do senior covenanted Civilian stationed in Upper India. This fellow is coming on board on the vessel's arrival to meet his bride-elect and to marry her if possible on the same day at the Cathedral, Bombay. The lady is now engaged to marry me, and as she was placed in my special charge, my directors may jump on me for breach of my duties and nonsense of that kind. I shall have to meet this 'swell' when he comes on board; in any case, I cannot avoid seeing him sooner or later. It has struck me that you might interview him for me and explain the position; and if he threatens to report the matter to my directors, you might suggest that such a course would certainly create a public scandal, which should be avoided in the interests of all concerned in the case."

On my friend's behalf I saw the Civilian in the captain's cabin. He became mad with fury on hearing the communication I made to him, and at my suggestion he sent for the lady. She asked his pardon and observed that the



great disparity between his age and hers rendered their marriage very undesirable, the more so as she entertained no kind of affection for him. At that the other was absolutely speechless; he made no threats, declined to see the man who had deprived him of his bride, and obviously desired to hush the matter up to avoid scandal. He then "hopped it", and we saw him no more. My skipper friend a few days later married the lady, with myself for his "best man", and that closed the incident. A couple of years later I stayed on a visit with them at Venice. They had pulled well together in double harness, and were very happy.

Fifty or more years ago European parents generally brought their daughters out to India when the latter were about sixteen years of age, after finishing courses at Brighton and Paris. Papa's career under the mosquito curtains was then verging on completion, and before leaving India he desired to afford his girl an opportunity of meeting marriageable men of her own station in life. She herself was generally penniless, but, with her father in a highly paid and influential post, the man she was about to marry was pushed into lucrative Civil employment, which put him in a materially better position than if the woman of his choice possessed an income of two or three hundred per annum. Moreover, until Papa actually retired he had the means from which to give the couple a monthly allowance, and to assist with cash in setting up a home for the newly married couple. One of the advantages of this system was that the man and woman, by constantly being thrown in each other's company at an up-country Indian station, soon got to know each other intimately before their marriage took place, and their respective families knew all about each other's status in life.

A very well-to-do Australian purchased a nice house and property in England. He took his wife and three unmarried daughters on a trip to India, intending to do the "Grand Tour" round the Peninsula. By accident they stopped in a travellers' bungalow at a small country station near Mahableshwar, where there was a scratch station mess. Three members of this mess (two soldiers and a

Civil Government engineer officer) were all unmarried men without a "brass farthing", or savings of any kind, and living simply on their Indian pay. The Australians partook of all their meals in the mess-house, merely sleeping at the travellers' bungalow. As a result the young people fell in love with one another, and during the intimacy which followed, one of the parents (or, more likely, one of the daughters) told the men that "Papa" would settle two hundred or three hundred pounds per annum on each of his girls if she married with his consent. Within three weeks or a month after the parties had first met all these girls were engaged to marry the men they had run across in the wilds of Western India. The tour round India was abandoned, and the parties travelled with me as far as Suez, and we all went together to Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo. The three couples were married in England, and some years later I stayed with the parents and one married daughter, the other two being in India. I may add that all three marriages were entirely successful. This story shows that India was in my time a good "marriage market", and particularly so for a girl with a small income in her own right.

Speaking with the experience of a mail officer, I attribute the breaking-off of marriages at the last moment to the long period of engagement, the lack of opportunities for the parties to become intimately acquainted with one another, and the fact that their families were absolute strangers to each other. After six years' service in India an Indian official can obtain one year's furlough on half-pay, but unless he gets leave to Europe on a sick certificate, for a period fixed by the medical board, he seldom can afford to take more than six months' leave. In consequence he meets a lady in England, proposes marriage to her and is accepted, but has then no money to pay for her outfit and passage to India, or for the purchase of a horse and dog-cart, and the cost of furnishing a house in India suitable for her reception. He therefore has to put off the actual marriage ceremony for at least two years and a half, or three years, in order to save up the necessary money. Returning to India, he does not see his affianced wife again



until he meets her in Bombay harbour a few hours before the wedding is appointed to take place. He is by then practically a stranger to the lady, and it often happens that she has fallen in love with a fellow passenger during the voyage out.

In passenger parlance, shipboard attractions are known as "affinities", or as engagements during the voyage; they are a condition which is understood by all, and with which no one would interfere. I have already mentioned the case of the lady engaged to marry an officer of a Hyderabad contingent regiment; she broke off her engagement under exactly similar circumstances. Was she wrong? There is something to be said on her side of this difficult subject. I myself think she acted wisely, but of course she badly injured the feelings as well as the social standing of the man she had so unceremoniously jilted.

There is also the girl who comes out to India on "spec", to look for a husband. She is generally the guest of a schoolfellow, has no relatives or connections with India, and is "on her own" in that country. If she has a small private income, she soon finds a husband; if not, she frequently makes a good marriage in the East. But she is always in a precarious position, and gets the name of the "mercenary spin" portrayed by Major Walter Yeldman in "Aliph cheem" in the *Lays of Ind*, to which collection of interesting doggerels of Indian life I refer my readers.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A MEETING WITH SIR RICHARD BURTON

I CONTINUED to write for the Bombay Press. Mr. Geary, the editor of *The Times*, however, said that he preferred articles for his leading columns to my weekly news-letters containing Egyptian gossip, and, becoming ambitious, I wrote an article styled "The Khedive's Latest Financial Project". This article was published in *The Times of India* on the 29th May, 1876. The fact that I was entirely ignorant of the subject was of no consequence at all, and the editor was pleased with my effort, as it caused him to be addressed by several scribes who claimed expert knowledge of Egyptian financial affairs.

I followed the above article up with a series of contributions regarding the obstructions given by the Turkish port authorities at Jedda to British native of India subjects who were making the pilgrimage to Mecca. On this question I possessed considerable information, as it was one on which the Jumnas of many Moslem institutions in India had repeatedly petitioned the Local and Indian Government to have removed by diplomatic action at Constantinople.

One of my articles regarding this matter attracted the attention of Sir Richard Temple, the Governor of Bombay. One night, when Mr. Geary was dining at Government House, Sir Richard discussed with him the circumstances regarding Indian pilgrims to Mecca disclosed in his article. Mr. Geary told the Governor that he himself was not the author, but that the article in question had been written by "young Walsh", the mail agent. Mr. Geary added: "I have often wondered why Your Excellency has not employed that officer in the Bombay Secretariat. He speaks seven languages, and is desirous of leaving the Marine Postal Service, from which, except in the Postal Department, a



permanent appointment or advancement cannot be easily secured. I have offered him the sub-editorship of my newspaper, and I can arrange for his purchasing a share in it. Walsh has not declined my proposal, and I think he will accept it unless he gets a really good and lucrative post under Government."

His Excellency replied: "It is not an easy matter for me to employ Mr. Walsh. I know the young man very well, he having made a voyage with me on board the s.s. *Mount Stewart Elphinstone*. I personally considered Walsh to be very intelligent and competent, but he is being strenuously opposed by a group of covenanted competition wallahs, who have already petitioned the Secretary of State not to permit his appointment to any office exclusively reserved for covenanted Indian Civil Servants. Nevertheless, I intend to put Mr. Walsh into a socially good and well-paid post, whenever I see my way to do so, and then to let the Secretary of State remove him from it. Mr. Ravenscroft, my senior member of Council, will support Mr. Walsh's appointment to any office I may propose, and in civil matters the Commander-in-Chief never opposes the Governor in Council. Major Henry Rawlinson, formerly of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, and now a member of the Secretary of State's Council in London, also Colonel Owen Burne, Secretary to the Political Department at the India Office, have both unofficially desired me to recognize Mr. Walsh's useful services by appointing him to a Bombay political post. The idea would be then to await the action of the Secretary of State, and if necessary to fight the question out in the India Office Council. If unsuccessful there, we should have the question of a Local Governor's powers discussed in the House of Commons." His Excellency said that he intended adopting that course; but it might be a couple of years or more before a suitable vacancy was available, as in the Political Service these posts were few and far between.

Mr. Grattan Geary, on his way home that night, dropped me a pencil note at my quarters in the G.P.O., in which he advised me at once to obtain a personal interview with Sir Richard Temple. At seven a.m. the next

morning, therefore, I drove to Government House, where I saw Mr. Hart, the private secretary, and asked him to arrange an interview for me before my ship left Bombay. Mr. Hart gave me some tea and toast and told me to wait until he returned. He said he might be able to induce Sir Richard to see me now, as the latter was at that moment partaking of his *chota bazar* at his office desk. Mr. Hart came back and said: "You are in luck. His Excellency will admit you, if you go at once to his room."

I entered Sir Richard's office, and found him writing at his table. On my entrance he ushered me to a chair, but went on writing for a minute or two. I nervously remained on the edge of my seat, awaiting the great man's pleasure. Sir Richard opened the conversation by saying that he was glad to see me, but that the only post then at his disposal was an assistantship in the Bombay Revenue Survey. This he was prepared to offer me, as he understood from Mr. Geary that I desired to leave the Marine Postal Service as soon as possible. If I accepted this post, I should then be a servant under the direct orders of the Government of Bombay, and such a position might facilitate later on my transfer to a better-paid position under the Local Government. I thanked His Excellency for having so kindly borne my name in mind, but pointed out that when a survey was completed it left its officers out of employment. Moreover, I ventured to state, although I wished to obtain an appointment on shore, I expected an office the salary of which would be about £600 per annum. I observed that I already received in my work at sea (taking free board and lodging, and the remuneration earned from the Press into consideration) the equivalent of £800 per annum. I therefore declined his Excellency's kind offer, and he remarked: "Perhaps you are right, but you are likely to have a long wait before I shall have the opportunity of offering you a salary on or near that scale." Sir Richard, nevertheless, was not at all offended with me, and desired me to call on him on my return to Bombay.

There were two packet agents in Egypt—Mr. Henry Levick at Suez, and Mr. Leach at Alexandria. Their



duties were to take charge of the homeward and outward mails, and to forward them by train to Alexandria and Suez. These two postal establishments cost a useless expenditure of over £2,000 per annum. The Government, therefore, to effect a saving, decided that these duties should be performed, free of expense, by the mail officers of the Marine Postal Service. Consequently, on arrival at Suez, I continued in charge of my mails, delivering them at Alexandria, on board the P. & O. mail steamer, for Brindisi or Marseilles as the case might be. As a result of this arrangement, Alexandria became the headquarters of the Marine Postal Service instead of Suez. At Alexandria I always put up at the Hotel Abbat, and became a member of the very cosmopolitan club there.

During the cholera epidemic I was specially detained for six months in Alexandria to push British mails through Egypt—an extremely unpleasant duty, from every point of view. On the other hand, as a result of my stay I learned a great deal about Alexandria and its affairs. In my work I received considerable assistance from Mr. G. B. Alderson, who resided at Ramleh, and there entertained the British community. The Sunday parties at Mr. Alderson's hospitable abode were, indeed, greatly appreciated by his numerous guests. Mr. Alderson was one of the contractors who had constructed the harbour works and wharves at Alexandria, and he was reputed to have made a large fortune at that port. I was almost daily in his office, and consequently obtained useful "copy" for my weekly news-letter to the Bombay Press.

Adjoining the mail officers' quarters in the G.P.O. at Bombay there was an immense empty chamber. This, without any special sanction, had been for some years past used as a *Salle d'Armes* by the mail agents and their personal friends. About half past five o'clock one afternoon Charlie Moyle and I were fencing with foils, when Mr. Foster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot, Collector of Bombay, walked into the room accompanied by Captain Richard Burton, the famous traveller. After introducing Charlie and myself, Mr. Arbuthnot announced that Captain and Mrs. Burton were stopping with him at his house at Bandora, and that



he had come to ask us to attend a bout of arms there to-morrow, at which he hoped to witness in the forenoon an exhibition of Burton's skill with sword, foil, and revolver. We both accepted the invitation, and were told to bring all our tools with us. We were unable, however, then and there to induce Captain Burton to take a turn with the foils; but, seeing that there were singlesticks close at hand, the Captain inquired if we ever used them. In reply I at once handed him a stick, and threw myself on guard. After I had greatly enjoyed a turn or two with him, the Captain very pleasantly said: "We will have an all-round tussle to-morrow, but your hanging guard is a mistake, and useless against a trained swordsman."

Mr. Arbuthnot was an excellent host, and in the wide verandas of his residence there was ample space for several couples to fence at the same time. The following day, therefore, we knocked off for tiffin, followed by coffee, a smoke, and a siesta; then had early tea, more fencing, a sumptuous dinner, a rubber of whist, and a drive home in the cool of the early morning as an end to a delightful day.

A week or two later Mr. Arbuthnot came to my "diggings" to ask me to induce my father and my uncle to take up Burton's case in the local newspapers, and to get it pressed on the military and civil authorities. I knew nothing about Captain Burton's career in the Bombay Army, beyond that he had served in the 18th Native Infantry, and had resigned his commission before he had earned a pension. These circumstances had been published in the Press, but those meagre facts had been inserted without comment. Mr. Arbuthnot drew up a short memorandum on the subject, which I communicated to my father and uncle, but neither of them seemed at all keen to take the matter up.

Captain Richard Burton's forebears belonged to a "respectable" family of Irish origin. Captain Burton had been entirely brought up on the Continent, his father residing at different places, and being a remarkably well-educated man of gentlemanly ideas, a sportsman, and an efficient "man-at-arms". Captain Burton himself entered

the Bombay Army in 1842, and relinquished his commission in 1849-50 (i.e. before the declaration of the Crimean War). After his resignation he took various Consularships under the British Foreign Office. He appears to have quitted those posts, and in between to have made several voyages of exploration in Africa and in other countries, together with a pilgrimage to Mecca. He spent some half a dozen years in his wanderings, and at the end of that period he had completed over twenty years abroad. This apparently he considered service under the British and Indian Governments, and claimed that if he had remained in the Bombay Army he would have been entitled to a pension of £200 or £250 per annum. Such a claim, however, was really ridiculous, as there was no connection between the two services, and he had resigned with his commission all pensionary rights and privileges.

Captain Burton did not get on with any British or Indian authority. He had received cash advances from the India Office with which to pay exploratory expenses and the hire of coolies. Captain Rigby, H.B.M.'s Agent at Zanzibar, was not satisfied with the accounts rendered by Captain Burton, and Mr. H. L. Anderson, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, more or less shared the same view. Captain Burton was therefore told that, owing to the displeasure of the Government of Bombay, he would not again be so employed. (See Mrs. Burton's *Life of Sir Richard F. Burton, K.C.M.G.*, published in 1893.)

Captain Burton's own account and views of these matters are set forth by him in his book on Zanzibar, published in 1872, and in his widow's work on the career of her husband. I refer my readers to those publications for fuller particulars than I am able to give here.

In 1854 Captain Burton, accompanied by two well-known ex-members of the Aden Police, went to Zeila, where he was the guest of El Haj Shermarki, the former Governor of that Pashalic, who had frequently proved himself to be a very loyal friend of the British and had been officially recognized as such. For some reason or other Captain Burton, attired as a Persian and calling himself



El Haj Mirza Abdulla al Bushiri, started for Harar under the auspices of El Haj Shermarki, by a route lying to the eastward of the regular caravan road, via Gildesa. There was absolutely no necessity for his disguise, which deceived nobody since Captain Burton was well known to be a British officer possessing a student's knowledge of the Koran and the religious rites of Moslems, as well as a perfect mastery of the Arabic tongue. When nearing Harar, however, Captain Burton abandoned his character of a Persian merchant and wrote to the Amir of Harar as an officially accredited envoy from the British Political Resident at Aden. Although he was in reality no such thing, he was received in that capacity by the Ruler of Harar and hospitably entertained during his stay. He wrote a vocabulary of the Harar language (*First Footsteps in N. E. Africa*, published in 1857), in which able work he gives a full account of travels in North-East Africa, and in my humble opinion a wonderfully accurate description of the Somali and their habits. I was myself Administrator in sole charge of Berbera in 1884, thirty years after Burton's visit there, and I was particularly struck by his word-picture of Akil Mahomed Shermarki, who was the Governor of Berbera in 1854, and in 1884 was the senior Stipendiary Akil in the pay of the British. I may remark that Burton faithfully described other old residents of Berbera in his most interesting and useful book, which still remains the best authority on Somaliland.

Captain Burton rode the whole way from Harar to Berbera. He covered in all, on the last three days of his journey, 110 miles, and experienced great difficulty in doing so, owing to the absence of water in the wells on the road to the coast. Thirty years later these long hot-season rides are still spoken of as a great feat, while others stigmatize them as a fairy tale. Captain Burton predicted that these rides would live in local annals for many and many a year—and they have done so. His colleagues, Captains Grant and Speke, Mr. Herne and Mr. Stroyan, were awaiting him at Berbera. As Captain Burton had got up and organized the expedition, with some pecuniary assistance from the Government of India and other sources,

he was therefore naturally in command. He also claimed the right, however, to supervise (if not, indeed, to direct) the scientific operations of Captains Grant and Speke. To this, very naturally, both those officers objected; and thus from the start there were dissensions in the camp.

When El Haj Shermarki was ousted from the Governorship of Zeila, his son Mahomed was compelled to abandon his control over Berbera. And he never regained it, although always a man of importance and great influence in Berbera. All rulers of Berbera have desired to abolish the Abban fee system prevailing at that port, but none of them ever dared to do so. Captain Burton had publicly expressed his disapproval of the levying of Abban fees by the Ayal Ahmed, owners of Berbera, and predicted that those exactions would be completely suppressed under direct British administration of the town. He strongly urged an immediate occupation on the British Resident of Aden, and also on the Government of Bombay. These views, together with the incorrect assumption that Captain Burton desired to restore Mahomed Shermarki to power over Berbera, rendered Captain Burton very unpopular with the Habr Awal tribes.

In this connection I may here refer my readers to an amazingly inaccurate book, *The Horn of Africa*, by Mr. James. In this book Mr. James comments on the maladministration of the Somali Coast generally, and particularly on that of Berbera by Major F.M. Hunter and myself. The author mentions that I favoured the restoration of Mahomed Shermarki as Governor of Berbera under British protection. This kind of nonsense was spread by Mahomed Shermarki's head-man, Duali Idris, as an excuse for his illegalities. Burton's remarks on this subject are mentioned in some of Captain Speke's personal and published papers on Berbera.

In 1874 I had by appointment a special interview at Aden with Mahomed Mahmud, a pensioned Havildar of the Aden Police, who had been the head-man of Burton's party and was generally known as "the *Hammal*" (the Porter). I was also personally acquainted with several Somalis who had been in Berbera on the day of the attack

on Burton and his comrades. Mahomed Mahmud blamed Captain Burton entirely for the disaster, pointing out that he had not even posted watchmen, or made any preparations for the defence of his camp. On the other hand, Balyuz, the envoy (a Somali of the Mijarthayn tribe, who was a member of Captain Burton's party and present at the fight at the well near Berbera), states that Captain Burton had posted two sentries for the night, and that he, Balyuz, had given the first warning of the attack on the tent.

The people at Berbera had appeared to be very friendly to Captain Burton and his party; so much so that they had set aside a fresh-water well (now called Bio Feninghee) near the beach for the use of the Christians. All the Europeans were sleeping in a large *rowtee* (tent) close to the well, when suddenly a gang of murderous rascals cut the tent ropes and brought the canvas down upon the sleepers. The latter, taken by surprise, fled and were scattered before some of them could seize their arms. How anyone escaped alive is a marvel. Poor Stroyan of the Indian Navy was overtaken and killed, and the whole of the equipment of the expedition was plundered. By a piece of good luck, however, the last native craft of the season was actually under sail for Aden, and she was stopped by Captain Burton's orders. Captain Burton, the European and the native followers of the expedition, sought refuge thereon and passages to Aden. Before leaving the port Stroyan's body was recovered, and it was buried at sea.

Captain Burton and his staff reached Aden in safety, after a very rough voyage, and he reported that his expedition to explore in Central Africa had ceased to exist. A fine was then imposed on the inhabitants of Berbera, which had to be paid by persons in no way connected with the murderers, and not even hostile to the British. As a direct consequence of this, they petitioned for an occupation of the town and the protection of the British Government. Their prayer failed in 1854-5, but it succeeded in October 1884, when I became the first British Resident Administrator of the Coast from Dongarita to Wukderia, Berbera being



the only safe and commodious harbour between those two geographical points.

I met Captain Burton and his wife on several occasions in Egypt between 1876 and 1882, and discussed with him his Somaliland experiences, but these palavers took place before I had ever been to Berbera.

I next met Captain Burton with his wife at the Quarantine Camp at Moses' Well. There they were very uncomfortably lodged in a tent which afforded them inadequate protection from the fierce sun, while they were also very badly fed, and unprovided with bedding. Captain and Mrs. Burton were passengers from Bombay in an Austrian Lloyd steamer, and had been obliged to land at Suez, where they were simply bundled on to the beach of the desert, while their vessel proceeded through the Canal under the quarantine flag. As I also had to stop at Suez, on the way from Bombay in the P. & O. Company's steamer carrying the overland homeward mails, I and my staff were placed in a fully equipped cargo barge with an awning, which was anchored off the landing-stage at the Quarantine Camp. I remained on this comfortable barge, which I called my floating palace, instead of going on shore to the quarantine huts, while, having plenty of space on the barge, I invited Captain and Mrs. Burton on board.

I learned from Captain Burton a great deal of very useful information regarding Arabia, the religion of Islam, and the habits, customs, and ideas of the Moslem tribes of the Bur al Arab. As a first condition, Captain Burton laid down that it was absolutely essential to be able to read Arabic and talk that language fluently. He said: "Don't proclaim yourself as having had a particular connection with any Arabic-speaking land, which you will do if you talk in a dialect."

In order to understand Mohammedans, Moslem laws and customs, it is first necessary to have made a thorough study of the Koran. One must also understand the attitudes of the doctors of Islam towards all Christians and Jews. For instance, doctors of Islam detest idolatry in any shape or form, and regard the display of such things as a crucifix, biretta, cope, scarf, bands, crosier, or holy

water as idolatrous abominations. I have often noticed the hostility shown by Moslems in the streets of Egypt to the Roman Catholic processions with their wealth of rich vestments and trappings. And, indeed, I personally consider that the public display of these mischief-making emblems should be absolutely prohibited.

Colour is no obstacle to entering into Mecca, as there are many white pilgrims there from various parts of Eastern Europe. But the manners and habits of white visitors to the tomb of the Prophet may cause them to be suspected of being Christians, in which case they attract observation and attention. For a Christian successfully to pass himself off as a Mohammedan, he must be intimately conversant with numerous small customs—which fingers, for example, he should put into the common dish for the withdrawal of food; the correct way to wash the mouth after a meal, from the bowl brought round by an attendant; the removal of boots and shoes; the spreading of a prayer-carpet; the proper kneeling and prostrations when at worship at his own door and in public places; the correct recital of certain verses; and the acknowledgment of the favours and protection of the Almighty. And Captain Burton instanced to me his detection of a man who was posing as a Moslem owing to the other having washed his hands and allowed the water to trickle down his elbows on to the ground, a negligence which the most ignorant and careless Mohammedan would not have committed.

Captain Burton, as I have said, was learned in Koranic laws and Moslem customs, and I gained considerable knowledge from his very interesting conversation on these and allied subjects during his stay with me off the Quarantine Camp at Moses' Well, Suez. When eventually we were liberated from quarantine he and I put up at the Hôtel de l'Orient, while Mrs. Burton became the guest of her old friend, Mrs. Henry Levick, at the British Packet Office, Suez. A few days later Captain Burton and his wife left for Trieste, where he was stationed as H.B.M.'s Consul, while I returned to Bombay in charge of the outward-bound mails for India.

About a year later a Mr. G. Fleetwood Lawton, of the Eastern Telegraph Company, Suez, told me that he had received an urgent confidential message from Bombay, which he was asked to communicate to me without delay. The purport of the message was that His Highness the Khedive had appointed Captain Burton to proceed on a mission the object and destination of which had been kept absolutely secret. No mention, even, of Captain Burton's mission had appeared in the Egyptian Press either before or after his departure from Suez. The message to me concluded : "Tell Walsh to find out about Captain Burton's objective and movements."

I at once sent my servant, Mubarak, to the docks, and he returned to say that nothing was known there regarding Captain Burton. He reported, however, that two Egyptian Government steamers in the harbour at Port Ebrahim had embarked twenty sabres, twenty sappers, two machine-guns, and a strong company of infantry. Moreover, they were awaiting the arrival of a Pasha, who was going to Tor, a port on the Sinaian side of the Gulf of Suez.

Later I was seated at dinner in the creeper-clad harbour of the Hôtel de l'Orient, when I walked Captain Burton himself. He had just arrived by train from Cairo, and he joined me at my table. He made no direct allusion to the reason for his visit to Suez, but he asked Madame Isnard, proprietress of the hotel, if she could get him a cook. Madame Isnard regretted that she could not do so, but her son Marius, who was standing close to the table, offered his services in that capacity. Captain Burton at first hesitated to employ him, on account of his being a European and a Christian ; eventually, however, he decided to engage him, and remarked that he was starting that night, or early the next morning, for Midian. I thus, quite by chance, became aware of Captain Burton's destination.

Captain Burton's luggage had been brought to the door of the hotel, but he ordered the porters to place it on board the *Sinnar*, commanded by Captain Ali Bey Shukri, which was lying in Port Ebrahim harbour. I told Mubarak to accompany it, and to try to ascertain further



particulars regarding Captain Burton's movements. Shortly before midnight Captain Burton left the Hôtel de l'Orient in the company of a Mr. Charles Clarke, his secretary, and Marius Isnard, his prospective cook.

The next morning Mubarak arrived with my coffee and toast, and announced that a party of Egyptian Sappers in charge of a *shaoose* (sergeant), together with a Civil Mining Surveyor in the Egyptian Service and a senior Engineer Officer of the army of His Highness the Khedive, had joined the steamer. Mubarak knew the Arab *ruban* (pilot), and had inquired how it came to pass that he had been engaged for a simple voyage to Tor. Mubarak then suggested the pilot's presence on board indicated that the vessel was bound for the Gulf of Akaba. The *ruban* replied that there was on board an Arab, Haji Wali of Zagazig, who had for years talked about searching for gold in Midian, and alleged that he could locate several old and disused gold-shafts in the land of Jethro. It therefore seemed probable that this man was conducting Captain Burton to Midian for the purpose of showing him the whereabouts of these old gold-shafts in what was now an absolute desert.

Captain Burton wandered for about three weeks in Midian, but his mission failed in every respect, and he returned to Suez, where Mrs. Burton had stayed during his absence. Meantime I had not been able to obtain any exact information about the object of Captain Burton's expedition, and as Mr. Grattan Geary, editor of *The Times of India*, had telegraphed to me to write an article on the subject, I had to concoct some kind of a yarn. This was not at all an easy matter to do in the absence of oral information and any books of reference. I therefore referred to the Bible, to a chart of the Gulf of Akaba, and to the *Red Sea Pilot*. But I found that by no amount of ingenuity could these very limited resources be made to serve my purpose, and in the end, by way of a small joke, I sketched an imaginary account of an interesting flirtation between Miss Zipporah Jethro and Captain Moses Amram of King Pharaoh's Guards.

According to old legends, Moses was a General Officer

who had commanded the Egyptian Army during the war with Abyssinia, and also held the rank of Captain in King Pharaoh's *Garde du Corps*. He had, however, murdered and negligently buried an Israelite, and for that offence he was wanted by the Egyptian Police. Captain Moses fled to Midian, and arrived, travel-stained and tired, at a well. There he met three young ladies, who had failed to obtain water for their flocks, owing to the shepherds rudely driving them away. Captain Moses, as became a gentleman and a gallant soldier, went at once to the assistance of these maidens in distress. The eldest girl, by name Zipporah, introduced herself to him, explaining that she and her two sisters were the daughters of Jethro, a nomad chief, whose camp was quite close, and that she desired to present her brave champion to her father. The Captain thereupon accompanied Miss Zipporah, and was introduced as a Captain of Pharaoh's Guards to Jethro. The chief received him cordially, and, as the midday meal was approaching, he invited the stranger from Egypt to stay for tiffin. In due course this romantic acquaintance resulted, as was quite natural and proper, in an early marriage between Captain Moses Amram and Miss Zipporah Jethro.

I did not mention in my little sketch Captain Burton's search for gold. But I added to my remarks regarding Moses and Zipporah that Captain Burton was collecting local traditions with respect to those two Biblical characters, and that the collection of those tales, together with the translation of the inscriptions carved on the rocks in a certain district of Midian, were the principal objects of Captain Burton's expedition to the land once ruled over by the nomad chief, Jethro.

On the day of Captain Burton's return to Suez he saw my article relating to his travels in Midian, and he was greatly annoyed at what he considered my uncalled-for and stupid chaff. Indeed, he never really forgave me, notwithstanding my efforts to reconcile him. I gained, however, considerable credit, as well as an extra honorarium from Mr. Geary, for my effusion.

Charlie Moyle and I visited the tiny port of Tor, on the Sinaian coast of the Gulf of Suez, for the purpose of



reaching some of the summits of the mountains known to the Arabs as Jabal Tor. These mountains comprise Mount Horeb and Mount Catherine, Oom Shomar and Mount Sufsafah, and Mount Serbal. We also intended to inspect the Nabatœan inscriptions.

We had read up all the authoritative books regarding those places, but we found it impossible actually to identify different places of scriptural importance. We were quite unable, for example, to locate the seat of the Deity, or the encampments of the wandering Israelites during their forty years' sojourn in the pastoral land of Goshen (place of light and plenty). At many of the peaks named above there were monasteries at which we were hospitably entertained, but the monks were absolutely ignorant as to the real history of the surrounding summits. They could not determine at all for us which was the "Mountain of the Law", where the Commandments were inscribed on stone tablets. Some declared that it was Mount Horeb; others maintained that Mount Serbal was the place, because it was much higher than Mount Horeb. An abbot, who gave us a top-hole dinner and some excellent red wine, and who was, in fact, a very companionable *bon viveur*, asked Moyle how *he* proposed to identify the "Mountain of the Law". Moyle replied: "Reverend Father, I am not an expert, nor even an explorer; indeed, this is my first attempt to obtain reliable evidence which, if successful, will for ever settle this controversy. I am going to look for broken pieces of the original tablets, because the site upon which those fragments are now found will be an indication of the mountain from which they originally came. As far as I can learn, no proper search has ever been made for the tablets." The abbot exclaimed: "Machiavelli!" and laughed at Moyle, as if the latter had lately escaped from a mad-house.

Apropos of Moyle's answer to the Reverend Abbot, there hangs a little tale.

Doctor Charles Tilstone Beke was over seventy years of age when we met him at Suez, but he was a very hardy old man and a famous and learned explorer of unknown



countries. His dictatorial manners, however, and the contempt he openly exhibited towards any person who expressed an opinion regarding the wandering Jews in the lands of Sinai and Midian, gave many people great offence and rendered the doctor unpopular.

One day there appeared a telegram in *The Times*, or in some other leading newspaper, to the effect that Doctor Beke had identified Mount Horeb as the "Mountain of the Law", from which the Commandments were issued. Moyle and I were not personally acquainted with Doctor Beke, but we knew him by sight and reputation. Moyle, who had been out shooting, came in to lunch in his desert togs and selected a chair at the table in the club close to where Doctor Beke was seated; Moyle's Arab servant then placed a parcel in front of his master. Moyle called attention to the telegram in the paper and said: "I shall support Doctor Beke's assertion to have identified Mount Horeb. It is really an easy matter, if approached from the proper and common-sense direction." He thereupon opened the packet and examined the stones it contained.

He observed that they bore faint marks of a chisel, which indicated that an inscription had been engraved on them; and this again, he said, pointed to the suggestion that the pieces of stone picked up had been broken off the stone tablet which had borne the Commandments. On hearing these observations Doctor Beke was speechless with rage, and became very offensive when Moyle deferentially passed the stones for his inspection. Moyle showed no signs of resentment at Doctor Beke's insulting language, but simply packed up his broken pieces of the tablet and retired from the dining-room.

## CHAPTER XV

### UNAUTHORIZED ADVENTURES

ON arrival back at Bombay, where the mail officers have no duties to perform, during their ten or twelve days' stay some of them pay visits to friends up-country, and thus get a few days' shooting and have a pleasant time generally. The men desirous of entering a Government Shore Department engage a *monshi* (teacher of a vernacular), and if they obtain an examination certificate of having passed in a native language they are eligible for appointment to a variety of offices not exclusively reserved for members of the covenanted Civil Service. I myself let Hindustani alone, but took up for a time the study of Marath and Gujarati. I attained a sufficient knowledge of both of those tongues to be able to read the text-books, which proved useful to me during my career in the East.

I abandoned my linguistic efforts because my father insisted on my going home to pass for a commission in the Army, after which I was to obtain a transfer to the Indian Staff Corps, and from the latter position I could easily be appointed to the Political or any other Department. In my father's opinion the Marine Postal Service led nowhere, and by stopping in it I must eventually become a loafer. He also held that all uncovenanted posts in India carried with them many disadvantages, and seldom the headship of a department, that post, for some reason or other, being generally occupied by a junior covenanted Civilian, pitched into it over the heads of men who had served all their lifetime in the Department. In his views my father was perfectly correct, but for myself I did not know whether I should be able to pass the Competitive Army Examination in the first place. And I began to see that there were many lucrative openings in the East,

and that the Government Service was not the only "El Dorado" in that part of the world.

In these circumstances I did not follow my father's advice, but started on a line of my own. Since the advice given me in that respect by my initiator into the Marine Postal Service, Mr. Collier, I had made the acquaintance of several old sea dogs possessed of "notions"; and in order to carry these "notions" out it was necessary to form small syndicates to subscribe the capital. My first venture was in Onions, with the chief mate and various other petty speculators (mostly of P. & O. Company's servants) on the Bombay to China line. The promoter had ascertained that onions were fetching a large price at Hong Kong, and it seemed to him a considerable profit might be made if he could personally dispose of a consignment of that vegetable there. If, on the other hand, the onions were forwarded to Hong Kong for sale by an agent, the value realized would be smaller, while the commission, fees, and expenses would swallow up the profits of the deal. My shipmate had heard that onions could be purchased in quantities at Mandavi in Kathiawar, and he wished to buy them direct from a vendor at that port. The vendor would then deliver them in Bombay harbour alongside the vessel of which this old shellback was the first mate, and he himself would take the onions to Hong Kong "on the square" (i.e. by paying freight to the P. & O. Company). I did not know anyone at Mandavi; but I was acquainted with a Bombay merchant whose home was at, or near, that port, and through his instrumentality the required amount of onions was procured and sent to Bombay. This venture went through successfully, and I obtained £10 as my share in the profits of the transaction.

Another of my friends with a "notion" had observed that dried sharks' fins were shipped from Aden to the China markets, but he considered that to purchase those sun-preserved flippers from an Aden merchant would not be good business. He therefore wanted to buy them direct from the masters of shark-fishing dhows. I suggested that my man Mubarak should be sent to the African ports from which the Arab shark-fishing vessels emanated,



and there he easily bought several tons of these delicacies. A substantial profit was made, thanks to the bargains made by Mubarak. The latter then suggested the acquisition of oyster shells which had been opened by the negro divers for the extraction of pearls. After the completion of that process the largest of these shells were thrown in separate heaps to dry and bleach on the beach, and there was a small trade in shipping these crustaceans to Trieste as mother-of-pearl. Mubarak was therefore sent to the islands near Perim to purchase shells. This speculation, however, turned out badly, for the reason that the shells had to pass through so many hands that the proceeds barely paid expenses.

In my time as administrator at Zeila there were fourteen dhows engaged in catching sharks for their fins, porpoises for oil, and oysters for their pearls and shells. A vessel combining all these enterprises earned large profits, but the *nakodas* (masters) complained that their divers stole the best pearls instead of handing them in. On one occasion a diver was charged before me for theft, and though he was detained in custody, purged, and his person thoroughly examined, no pearls were found on, or could be traced to, him. I was about, therefore, to discharge this man, when an Aden police detective, who happened to be present in the court, suddenly seized the accused diver by the gills and, thrusting his fingers into the rascal's mouth, dragged out of it a valuable pearl. This the thief had secreted in a specially prepared cavity in a molar tooth. The police officer knew this diver's methods of concealment, and the rogue got six months' rigorous imprisonment, besides being expelled on the expiration of his sentence from British limits.

The greatest coup of my early speculations occurred while serving as a mail officer at Suez, and in consequence of the total wreck of the s.s. *Dholia* on the African shore of the Red Sea, about two hundred miles from Suez. The s.s. *Dholia* (or, as she was nicknamed, the "Do lie here") had been abandoned, and underwriters were thus compelled to sell by auction or by private treaty, at their sole risk, the cargo where it stood. Several of the British and

foreign residents of Suez desired to attend this auction, which was to be held on board, and bids made as each slingful of cargo was hoisted up through the hatchway to a little above the deck-level. The expense of hiring a dhow in order to get alongside the *Dholia* deterred many potential buyers, as did also the necessary sea voyage on the open deck of a native craft. A syndicate was therefore formed at the Hôtel de l'Orient, Suez, each member of which was to plank down an arranged sum of cash, and out of the total subscribed all expenses were to be paid as a first charge. The contributors to this fund would not trust one another to hold the coin, nor could they find a man of business experience who was also capable of sailing a lateen-rigged dhow to convey the purchased goods to Suez.

In these circumstances the syndicate was on the point of breaking up, when Monsieur Alphonse, the manager of the hotel, asked me to take command and conduct the expedition from start to finish, without any outside interference. He observed: "In your position, as a well-known mail agent, you will be acceptable to all parties, and can make advantageous terms with them." I agreed, and a few minutes later I met the "adventurers" in Monsieur Alphonse's parlour. I asked and received fifty pounds cash down, and a written authority to take all expenses I incurred out of the common stocking. I fully realized the difficult, if not dangerous, nature of this enterprise; but I thought that with due care and circumspection it could be successfully carried out.

First, then, I arranged an exchange of "sets" with one of my colleagues in the Mail Service. This enabled me to remain eleven extra days in Egypt, and that period, added to the week I had in hand, gave me ample time to carry out the project. My dear old friend and assistant, Charlie Moyle, volunteered to accompany me, even though he had no cash with which to make purchases, except a few pounds he obtained on the security of his gold watch and chain and a couple of rings. I appointed him as my paid secretary and book-keeper. Charlie Moyle was not only a courageous, but an intelligent man, very handy with his fists or with a sword, and a nailer with a six-shooter. Our party finally



comprised: Moyle and myself, the faithful Mubarak, my Goanese cook and a temporary Arab domestic in my service, and a stray unemployed Englishman whom Moyle had picked up and judged would fight at a pinch. There was no difficulty in hiring a dhow; although, as it turned out, the one we engaged was a *soori* from the Persian Gulf, the *nakoda* of which was a pirate, a shipper of slaves, and a smuggler of firearms—an all-round bad character, in fact.

With the wind in our favour and a calm sea, the dhow at low tide ran as near to the "high and dry" *Dholia* as the depth of water permitted at a spot where there was a good anchorage. I went on board the wreck, and found that a junior mate of the ship (a Mr. Mitchell, I think) had been retained by the underwriters as a caretaker of the vessel and her cargo. He was in the hold, supervising the coolies, who had to fill the nets with cargo to be hoisted up to the deck and sold. I noticed the haphazard way in which the cargo was placed in the slings, and that cases of beer, champagne, or other articles came mixed up together in the same load. I therefore asked the mate to arrange that a sling-load should be composed of cases of champagne or beer only, and gave the foreman coolie a tip to observe discrimination in filling the slings. The champagne was Geisler's best, which fetched in Bombay forty-two rupees per dozen, and I bought at a rate which made the price of a bottle rather less than one half-penny.

The coolies, the potential buyers at the auction, and all on board had become blind drunk on champagne. Mubarak was in the hold to keep the foreman coolie up to the mark, and by this arrangement only cases of champagne were offered for sale in separate slings. For each of these we bid, and when it was knocked down to me the contents were passed direct into the dhow alongside. With a hatchet I hacked open any case that had no outside indications as to its contents; and, among other things, I obtained a Berthen collapsible boat, a dozen white linen shirts, a pair of spur-boxed patent leather "jemimas", several books, and a quantity of soap and perfumes. I



also bought a large quantity of bottled ales, and, unknowingly, jams, pickles, hams, and cheese. The latter were specially packed for export to the tropics, and were protected against climatic exposure; but articles which were not likely to sell readily were pitched into the sea.

The Stationery Department of the Government of India import postal and revenue stamps. Several cases affording on the outside no information as to their contents, but simply addressed to the Stationery Department at Calcutta, were therefore supposed to contain ordinary stationery. A Mr. Murray (formerly a bathroom steward of a P. & O. vessel, but then in charge of the soiled-linen wash-house of the P. & O. Company at Suez) asked me not to bid against him for the sling-load then up for sale. Naturally I consented, and the other obtained for a few pence a sling which he imagined to hold simply writing-paper, envelopes, and suchlike. On arrival at Suez, however, Murray came to tell me that two or three of the cases of stationery which he had bought contained several thousand pounds' worth of revenue stamps. He then produced a bundle of postage stamps as a sample, and told me that he had already sold a quantity of the latter to an Indian merchant resident at Suez. He proposed that I should buy the balance in his hands, as in my position I could easily sell or introduce them into India. I refused, of course, to do any such thing. The Postmaster-General had already been advised of this legal sale by auction, and I communicated to him the offer made to me. I was instructed to obtain for a small sum the surrender of the stamps held by Mr. Murray, and to inform him that the importation into India of the stamps of the issue in question had been prohibited, consequently the value of those now in his possession was nil. Mr. Murray and I soon came to terms in the matter, and the affair was thus satisfactorily settled. The stamps had not been insured, but there was no intention on the part of the Stationery Department to injure the owners of the *Dholia*; stamps, in accordance with customs, were always shipped as ordinary stationery, and the freight paid thereon was at the usual rate for goods of that kind.

On our way back to Suez from the auction on board the *Dholia* the sea was rough and the wind not in our favour. This involved constant tacking, and little progress was made towards our destination. I was lying on the deck of the raised poop of the dhow beside Charlie Moyle, and he, I, and the "fighting Englishman" carried revolvers in the holsters attached to our belts. Now I comprehended a little Arabic, but I had always spoken to the *nakoda* of our dhow in Hindustani. I gathered, however, all at once, from the conversation between the *nakoda* and his two mates and the man at the helm, that they were all Persian Gulf Arabs, and that they were busy considering the best method of chucking the "big one" (my humble self!) into the sea. I rolled over to Moyle and put him upon his guard, and I suggested that our safest course would be to assail the rascals at once before they could rush upon us. It was therefore arranged that I should seize the helmsman, pitch him into the sea, and take the tiller myself; we should then be three to three, and Mubarak with a revolver in hand (which we knew he would never use) could overawe the negro crew and keep them from coming up on to the poop.

This plan having been decided upon, we all four sprang to our feet. I tossed the man at the helm over the taffrail and threw a buoy after him. Moyle and his "fighting Englishman" confronted the three Arabs with their revolvers and lashed them up to the poop rails. We then speedily obtained complete control of the vessel and the obedience of the negro crew. I had the *firman* (yard) lowered and the dhow veered round, so as to fetch the same course over which we had just sailed, and eventually we picked up and brought the helmsman on board. He had had all the bounce knocked out of him; so much so, indeed, that he was not tied up, but put on to steer and trim the sails as circumstances required.

The dhow made Port Ebrahim, the harbour at Suez, in safety, and the police took charge of the *nakoda* and his three mates. These rascals, however, once on shore, escaped from custody, and we saw them no more. The stipulated hire for the expedition was consequently not

paid to anyone. Our cargo we heaped on the wharf, each package being valued and divided *pro rata* among the members of the syndicate. In Bombay I sold my champagne to Nicol & Co., at much below its market value, because that firm alleged the cases of champagne showed traces of having been submerged in the sea. My contention, however, was that the outer disfigurement of a case did not affect the wine inside the bottles. I think that in this deal I realized in cash about five hundred pounds, after payment of all expenses, including freight and customs duty. It was therefore an exceptionally good piece of business for me; nevertheless, it was a very rare chance, as wrecks in the Red Sea are generally a long way from Suez and cannot be easily reached.

On another occasion Charlie Moyle and I chartered a dhow to take us to Shab Mahmud, a coral reef near the Port of Tor in the Gulf of Suez. There the s.s. *Dunraven* was piled up, with her bow high and dry and her stern partly immersed in the sea. On getting alongside of her, it seemed that she might at any moment slip off and go down stern first into deep water. As the cargo was chiefly wool, it was of no use to us. Still, in order to pay expenses we took down the standard binnacle, collected several sextants, telescopes, binoculars, and a set of new sails, and realized by sale at Suez a little more than was adequate to pay expenses.



## CHAPTER XVI

### I MEET GENERAL GORDON

IN my Rob Roy canoe I penetrated through every fresh-water channel of the Delta sufficiently deep to float my little craft. One day, having sent the canoe from Benha by train to Cairo, I stepped from the platform of that Nile-side station into a first-class Cairo-bound saloon, armed with a double-headed paddle, bearing a faint resemblance to Neptune's trident. A stranger to me was the only passenger in the compartment, and after bidding each other good day, we soon started a friendly chat about Egyptian affairs and the irrigational system of flooding cultivable land with Nile water. My fellow traveller turned out to be Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Gordon, R.E., then known to the world as "Chinese Gordon", the chief of the "Ever Victorious Army". We exchanged cards, and found we were both bound to put up at Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo. This was my first meeting with this determined, skilful, brave and recalcitrant soldier, later known as the famous Gordon Pasha, Governor-General of the Sudan and of Equatorial Africa.

I saw very little of Colonel Gordon in Cairo, as I had to return to Suez to take charge of the outward-bound mails for Bombay. Later on, however, when he became Gordon Pasha, I was thrown into contact with him a great deal, and in my capacity as Assistant Political Resident at Aden I often had a variety of questions to discuss with him, particularly during the period of his detention at that port.

Once, I remember, after I had severely injured my ribs by falling from the deck of a steamer at anchor in Suez roads on to the gunwale of a barge alongside, I again ran into Colonel Gordon quite by chance. After my accident I had been taken to the Suez Hotel for treatment, and one day I was reclining on the divan in the large

reception room on the first floor of the hotel, when Gordon and some members of his staff walked in and sat down. I apologized for not rising to receive him, and explained the nature of my recent mishap. Gordon at once recognized me, and remembered that we had stayed for some days together at the same hotel in Cairo. On his asking me if I was still contributing Egyptian news and gossip to the Bombay Press, I replied that I was endeavouring to do so, but, being confined strictly to my couch, I had found it impossible to collect "copy". I added that I regarded his advent as a godsend, as it would afford me sufficient tittle-tattle and material to fill several columns of the *Bombay Gazette* and *The Times of India*. Colonel Gordon then called his A.D.C., Lieutenant I. F. Brocklehurst, of the Royal Horse Guards (created in 1914 Baron Ranksborough), and introduced him to me. "Here," Colonel Gordon observed to Brocklehurst, "is a canoeist, an ink-slinger for the Indian Press, and a mail agent of the P. & O. Contract Mail Service. Just now this gentleman is in need of 'copy' for his pen; please give him all the assistance you can."

Brocklehurst was an exceedingly nice fellow, and we soon became friends. He speedily furnished me with a number of observations and hints regarding Colonel Gordon's present aims and the prospects in his future career. He explained that his chief had been offered, and would accept, the Governor-Generalship of the Sudan. As yet, however, no appointment had officially been made. At present the Colonel was about to pay a short visit to Suakin, to talk over with the Governor of that town and district the attitude towards Egypt of the tribes residing between the coast of the Red Sea and the Nile. After a personal investigation as to whether troops could be marched direct across that waterless desert route and provided with camel transport, Gordon would return to Cairo via Suez. An old Egyptian steam-frigate, the *Mahomed Ali*, had been placed at Colonel Gordon's disposal.

A few days later Colonel Gordon and Lieutenant Brocklehurst bade me adieu, and embarked in the early

morning on board the *Mahomed Ali* for passage to Suakin. The next afternoon the manager of the hotel asked me if I would lend Mr. Brocklehurst a pair of trousers and some other togs; the Egyptian warship had been blown up, and Mr. Brocklehurst, having by good luck been cast unhurt into the sea, had only his sleeping-suit to his back. I at once sent for my servant and supplied the garments asked for, but advised the taking in of a few reefs from some of them. A little later Brocklehurst himself entered the saloon and related his adventures since he and his chief had left the hotel. Colonel Gordon was not injured, and some of his baggage and papers were saved before the *Mahomed Ali* sank in deep water.

The next morning Colonel Gordon sat down at the long table in the saloon to read his voluminous correspondence, with only a single clerk (a Copt) in attendance. I was lying on the divan immediately behind the Colonel's chair, and, suddenly turning round to me, he said: "Walsh, I know you speak French fluently. Could you reply in that language to some of these letters, on which I've pencilled instructions?" I replied that I thought I could deal with any of the papers in question, and that it would afford me much pleasure to be of assistance to him. Colonel Gordon seemed to be satisfied with my secretarial efforts, as the next morning he gave me further work of a similar kind to do.

A few days later, before starting for Cairo, he thanked me warmly for my services, and I seized the opportunity of asking him for employment in the Sudan, if he should become Governor-General of the Upper Nile Provinces and the countries in Equatorial Africa. He promptly replied in the negative, and added: "In the first place, you would never want to go there. In your case the pay would be very inadequate; in fact, much less than you draw at present, with the advantages of half-pay on leave and pensionary prospects." He further explained that he did not consider any Englishman worth more than £300 per annum, and that his nephew, Captain L. A. Gordon of the Regular Bombay Cavalry, had also desired an appointment in the Sudan, on a salary of at least not less than he was drawing



at Aden. That "put the lid" on my prospects of going to the Sudan, but I decided if possible to consult Captain Gordon in the matter.

Mr. Tuck, Superintendent of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Suez, as a matter of kindness and courtesy, forwarded free of charge personal telegrams from all the mail officers, and during the slack hours permitted them to chat direct over the line with their friends at Aden and even in Bombay. I at once asked the superintendent of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Aden, if Captain Gordon was there, to get him at his end of the wire, at any hour he might fix, and advise me to the care of Mr. G. Fleetwood Lawton's office at Suez. However, I received no reply. I decided, therefore, to have nothing to do with the "Country of the Blacks", and later Captain Gordon himself made the same decision.

Gordon employed many Europeans as officials in the Sudan. I asked him once why he had preferentially selected them in lieu of Englishmen. The former, I observed, were frequently very hostile to the British; moreover, they seldom took any special steps to suppress the slave-hunters and dealers. Gordon replied: "You are probably correct; but they are satisfied with smaller salaries than Englishmen, besides being much more obedient to the Governor-General and taking no part in politics. Englishmen, on the other hand, are either Conservatives or Liberals, and correspond in their personal capacities with the British Foreign Office. I am often charged, and found fault with, on their secret evidence as to my measures to rule the Sudan in the interests of the blacks and to oust their Egyptian oppressors. The English official supports one or other of the two parties in Egypt, and in either case keeps the blacks in a subordinate position."

During the remaining days of Colonel Gordon's stay at the Suez Hotel I continued to draft and copy letters for him, and assisted his very inefficient staff with their clerical work. I noticed that Lieutenant Brocklehurst was not employed as an amanuensis, but sat in a corner of the, room registering the names, addresses, requirements and

credentials of petitioners desirous of making personal applications to Colonel Gordon for employment in the Military and Civil Services of the Sudan. There were many Americans in the Egyptian Army; a few of them were old West Point men, but the others were mostly ex-Confederate officers. Colonel Gordon engaged several of the latter to command and drill the Sudanese force which he was about to raise in the Upper Nile Provinces to replace a large portion of the useless and overbearing Fellaheen Egyptian officers and men, whom he intended to send back to Cairo.

In June 1880 Colonel Gordon accepted the appointment of Military Secretary to Lord Ripon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India. The whole world was astounded at the acceptance by Gordon Pasha of such a subordinate position, especially as he himself had been for several years a Governor-General. Moreover, Lord Ripon was a Liberal and a convert to Roman Catholicism, whereas Colonel Gordon was a Conservative and a very evangelical Protestant. Nobody expected that Lord Ripon and Colonel Gordon would get on together, and, as it happened, they fell out forty-eight hours after their arrival in Bombay.

I was, of course, glad to have at headquarters such a powerful friend as Colonel Gordon, and went off to make my salaams to him at Government House, Bombay. Early the next morning I sent in my card, and, while waiting to be called in, a gentleman in the waiting-room told me he had learned at the club late the night before that Colonel Gordon had resigned the Military Secretaryship. My informant had heard that the Parsee poet, Malabari, had presented one of his books to Lord Ripon, and his lordship had handed the book on to Colonel Gordon with an instruction to convey to the author the pleasure with which the Viceroy had read the work. Colonel Gordon took the volume, and, finding its pages had not been cut, he handed it back to Lord Ripon, saying he must decline to write such an atrocious lie as he had been ordered to indite. This plain talk led to an altercation, and Colonel Gordon at once resigned the Military Secretaryship.

I personally saw Colonel Gordon, however, and he

confirmed the news of his resignation, but he did not communicate to or discuss with me its immediate cause. On the other hand, he did not deny that Malabari's book of poetry had had some connection with the difference between him and Lord Ripon. Colonel Gordon then told me that he was off to China, having by telegram placed his sword at the disposal of Li Hung Chang, in case there was war between Russia and China. I suggested that the British Government would not approve of this action on the part of an officer on the Active List of the British Army. And to that he replied: "Probably not, but I shall resign my commission in the Army if I see any intention of interference with my plans."

Colonel Gordon went off to China, but for some reason unknown to me he abandoned his project after a comparatively short sojourn there. He took a passage to Marseilles by the Messageries Maritimes Compagnie de France, and on his way home placed his sword at the disposal of Queen Ranavalona II of Madagascar. Gordon's offer was to command the Queen's militia army against the Government of France, who had a force endeavouring to impose a French Protectorate over the whole island, and intended directing its affairs to suit French interests. Presumably the Government of the Republic addressed the British Government on this subject; at any rate, some authority in London telegraphed to the Political Resident at Aden to stop Colonel Gordon at that port.

I was Second Assistant at the time, and the Resident therefore sent for me in the matter. "If," the Resident said to me, "this instruction was sent to me in my political capacity, you, as my Civilian Assistant, must go on board and deliver a letter from me to Colonel Gordon. Offer him the hospitality of the Residency; and, if he refuses, suggest to him that as an officer of H.M.'s Royal Engineers he is a permanent member of the Artillery mess. Tell him that a room can be furnished for him close to the mess bungalow, where he can conveniently partake of his meals. If he declines, and since you are personally acquainted with him, invite him to put up at your quarters at the Point. If, on the other hand, the telegram is intended for me as



Commander of the Garrison at Aden, then Major Mein, the Brigade Major, must go in uniform and hand it to Colonel Gordon."

Rigged in plain clothes, I went on board the M.M. steamer and personally delivered the Resident's letter to Colonel Gordon. After reading it, Gordon asked me if I knew the contents of the communication, and I replied that to all intents and purposes I did. "Suppose," he then asked, "I refuse to land at Aden? What can your Resident do? French mail steamers have the status of ships of war in foreign territorial waters, and I can only be moved by being extradited from France on the demand of the British Foreign Office." I agreed that no doubt his view was the strictly legal and correct one, and added that if he intended to adopt it I would refer the matter to the Resident. Colonel Gordon said: "I will, however, not start complications of that kind. I will go ashore with you, but I shall go to the French hotel. I will not be the guest of any minion of the British Government."

The Colonel's luggage and kit was then collected and passed into my police launch, and we ran alongside the main landing-steps. Colonel Gordon went to the Hôtel de l'Univers, while I posted off to the Residency to make my report, and to ascertain at what hour it would be convenient for the Resident to receive Colonel Gordon. This being arranged, Colonel Gordon accepted my invitation to dine with me that evening at the Union Club, Point.

At the club that night Gordon told me that the Resident had been extremely polite, but had had no orders to give him, nor any information as to the cause and object of the telegram occasioning his detention at Aden. The Resident simply reported, therefore, that Colonel Gordon had landed and was staying in Aden pending receipt of instructions from the War Office. Colonel Gordon asked me to give him a table in a corner of my office, where he might write an account of his ideas and actions, and I readily consented to let him share my punka.

The Court of the Resident at the Tewahi (steamer point), Aden, over which I presided, opened at ten o'clock a.m. This building also contained the Resident's office, and was

situated close to the landing-stage. I was doing my magisterial work, when Colonel Gordon entered with a Chinese servant, carrying a despatch-box. I accommodated the Colonel with a Government chair, a Government table, some Government ink and a Government pen, a Government blotting-pad, and some Government foolscap and writing-paper. And, thus equipped, Colonel Gordon settled down to write some scathing remarks about the proceedings, actions, ideas, and policy of the Indian Political Officers stationed at Aden, in the Persian Gulf, and at Muscat and Zanzibar. He asserted that all of them supported the slave trade, and that the traffic in slaves would have ceased long ago if Indian Political Officers had not supported and protected the native-of-India merchants, who financed the Arab slave-catchers themselves. In this I myself was mentioned as one of the chief offenders, since I had actually served in Kathiawar, the province from which the Indian traders from the West Coast of India mostly emanated. I was consequently said to be influenced by the rulers of the small Kathiawar States and the heads of large business firms specially to protect and assist their agents residing on the East Coast of Africa and in Arabia.

The Colonel was so pleased with some of his paragraphs indicting my evil propensities that he read them aloud, in the presence of my clerks, interpreter, and the police inspector, Sergeant Sullivan (an ex-gunner), who was in attendance beside the chair from which justice was dispensed. I suggested lunch, and Colonel Gordon agreed to join me at the club opposite to the court-house. Before leaving my office, however, the Colonel handed me his pages of manuscript, and requested me to let my clerk make typed copies of those literary efforts. I laughingly agreed to assist him in the way he required, but said that if the Resident, or the First Assistant, heard of my having provided him with Government materials and clerical labour for such a purpose, they would necessarily consider I had "gone off my chump". Copies of the Colonel's papers as made by my clerks were signed and despatched by the Colonel to the following authorities : the Resident



at Aden, the Government of Bombay, H.B.M.'s Representative in Egypt, and the British Foreign Office in London.

Colonel Gordon stayed nearly a month in Aden, and then returned to England. He was never told why he had been stopped at Aden, nor was any action ever taken against him; he simply went back to duty unquestioned. There are no records of what I have here related on the files of the Aden Residency; while the India Office, London, in answer to my written request for information regarding this incident in Colonel Gordon's career, stated that their archives contained no reference to Colonel Gordon's stay at Aden.

When I held the position of H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul at Berbera, before I became the Administrator of that town and district, I was awakened very early one morning by my native domestic servants rushing fully armed into my bedroom. My orderly, a Cashmiri, handed me my repeating rifle and revolver, and told me that the Consulate was surrounded by Sudanese soldiers. I looked out of the window and saw about two hundred unarmed and peaceable-looking black troops. I therefore also went without arms on to the veranda, and asked the cause of this attendance at my private residence.

A *shaoose* (sergeant), his wife, and a boy aged about seven years of age stepped forward. The man saluted and addressed me as follows: "Oh, Saadatuk, Representative of the Glorious Queen, the great Gordun Pasha is our father. He raised the battalion to which we belong; he treated us as his children; he put us on a footing of equality with the Fellaheen privates of the Egyptian Army, and gave us the same rights of advancement as they enjoyed. Indeed, a black man can now hold military commissions. Our father and benefactor, moreover, gave this boy, then an infant in his mother's arms, a dollar piece, which the child has worn ever since around his neck." I was then asked to inspect the coin, and complimented the parents on the great honour of which they and their son were the recipients.

The sergeant went on to explain that "their father" was in dire distress at Khartoum, but he had so far successfully



held the town against the repeated attacks of the Dervish followers of the impostor calling himself the Mahdi. It appeared that eight companies of their battalion were fighting in defence of their beloved Gordon Pasha. I was asked to approach the Bey (Egyptian Governor of Berbera), and to request him at once to despatch to Khartoum the two Sudanese companies which formed part of the garrison of Berbera, or else to allow those two companies to make their own way there.

I fully sympathized with the anxiety of these gallant and grateful children for their benefactor "Gordùn", but I replied that I could not give the Bey orders to carry out the project in question. I nevertheless told the sergeant to see me again, and when he came I said I had invited Private Furug (then employed as a turnkey and gardener at the Dubar Waterworks) to stop on in that position, if I could obtain his discharge from his battalion. Furug was delighted at the prospect of remaining in Berbera with his Somali wife, but told me that he and some ten or twelve Sudanese desired to make their own way overland to Khartoum, and that if the Bey would not discharge them they would desert. Such a course was, however, very objectionable, as it would leave them without rifles and ammunition. Furug therefore hoped that, as a large number of Remington rifles had been handed over to me, I would lend him and his comrades as many rifles as might be required by the party going to join their father "Gordùn".

In the end the Egyptian troops embarked (Furug having at my request been discharged), but a dozen or more Sudanese could not be found, and the transports for Suez sailed without them. I equipped these practical deserters, and heard many months later that they had reached the Nile and were in communication with "Gordùn" Pasha.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A SURVIVOR'S TALE OF GORDON'S DEATH

AFTER the lapse of about a year, I was at dinner on the veranda of the Residency at Berbera, when the native officer of the guard announced "the return to duty" of Private Furug. Furug was at once shown in, and his appearance indicated that he was suffering from exposure and want of food.

Furug saluted and said: "Gordùn is dead. A Sudanese major of our corps was in charge of the main gate at Khartoum; he was either bribed to surrender it, or he did not take proper steps to defend that entrance. Our battalion is for ever disgraced, but thanks be to God no men of our *orta* [battalion] were on duty when the enemy got into the town."

In detail, Furug's story of the disaster was as follows: "The enemy, on entering, made direct for the Palace. Several of our men and myself moved to the Palace to defend it and Gordùn Pasha. There we found the Pasha, revolver in hand, on the outside garden steps. However, he and a dozen faithful riflemen were forced back up the staircase, which the Pasha defended with great bravery and vigour, as he did not wish to ascend it. The arrival of our party for a moment made a diversion in the Pasha's favour, but already most of the defenders of the Palace were killed, and with the survivors the Pasha was driven up on to the roof. A desperate stand was made at the top of the staircase. The Pasha had been wounded in two or three places, but he was shooting with great accuracy, and hit several of his assailants before he fell. He was, I think, killed on the spot. The Dervishes massacred on the roof all who were left, and I only escaped because I was thought to be dead. An hour or two later I managed to crawl into the Palace grounds, where the

gardener's mother sheltered me in her hut. Eventually I got out of the town, and reached a village where I was known. After resting there for some months, I crossed into Abyssinia and travelled to the coast by the old Tadjurah slave-caravan road. I then came on here in a dhow."

I told Furug that, though he had rejoined, he was not to do any work, and that he would be well fed and looked after. Later on Furug performed gallant and useful service when Sultan Nur and a Dulbauta chief raided the Berbera live stock on the plain adjoining Dubar. Furug was still serving at the latter place when I left the Somali Coast in 1893, and had become noted as a grower of vegetables.

Harar, Zeila, and Berbera are the chief towns of the eastern Mudirieh of the Sudan Government, and in his official capacity Gordon Pasha visited Harar to remove Raoff Pasha from the Governorship of that province. Raoff Pasha's offence was that he took bribes and assisted Abubuker in the despatching of slaves to the Gulf of Tadjurah for shipment to the Turkish ports of the Red Sea.

Gordon Pasha also gave Abubuker, the Governor of Zeila, a piece of his mind, which the latter not a little resented. Abubuker denied that he was now personally connected with the slave traffic, but admitted that his sons and many of his friends (who were under French protection) did bring boy and girl slaves from the interior for sale in the Turkish markets of Arabia. Gordon Pasha finally lost his temper with this calm and dignified Dunkali chief, and publicly pelted him with stones. Some of the missiles struck their mark, and the Pasha's method of showing his disapprobation caused general astonishment and considerable amusement.

I first went to Zeila, as a visitor, in 1884, then again in 1887. Abubuker Pasha had, therefore, been removed from his Governorship of Zeila before my time. Abubuker received on his deposal no pension or compensation from the British, and his son Boorhan, Deputy-Governor of Zeila, was similarly treated when deprived of his office. No doubt the efforts of the British to stop the slave trade



through Tadjurah made them unpopular, but I also consider Gordon's treatment of the Governor and notables of Zeila and its vicinity raised up against us many enemies, who later on opposed the British Administration of the Pashalic, and thereby created much friction between us and the French. If Colonel Gordon's régime and personal acts had been of a milder and more peaceful nature, we should have had less trouble at Zeila, and the French would not have had many allies against us. Demands for protection and redress, on account of real or imaginary rights and claims under the Capitulations, continually caused us serious complications and disputes with our Gallic neighbours.

I never saw Colonel Gordon again after his departure from Aden, and, as I have said, I failed to find any correspondence on the files of the Resident's office concerning the Colonel's stay at Aden. Indeed, the only reference to the latter which I know to have existed was a receipt for the cost of a personal telegram from Colonel Gordon to a friend in Bombay, stating that he was staying at Aden. That document, I presume, had been purposely removed from the records ; on the other hand, as it was not official, it should never have been placed there. The sender had probably retained it simply as a voucher for the money paid to him by Colonel Gordon for the cost of despatching the telegram in question.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ARMS AND MEN

AN Austrian Count and cavalry officer, splendidly turned out, and mounted on a well-trained pedigree horse, was witnessing some Sowars of a Bengal cavalry regiment practising tent-pegging, lance contests, and other displays performed by regular horsemen of the Indian Army. The Austrian officer thereupon asked if he might "break a lance" with a native Sirdar. The European officer present readily gave permission, and the Sowars with one accord shouted out the name of a particular Raisadar, who was the *beau sabreur* of his corps. The Raisadar was an old man of over thirty years' service, lithe and agile as a monkey; moreover, he was a well-to-do man, and owned several *assamis* in his regiment. For the encounter he selected his best horse, a perfectly drilled and amenable animal, but inferior to the European charger of the challenger. The Raisadar asked his commandant if he might unhorse the sahib (his opponent), and was told: "Certainly, if you can. But beware of him, since he is reputed to be the most skilled lancer in the Austrian Service."

The two horsemen galloped rapidly towards each other, the Austrian merely warding off the point of his assailant's lance. In the next attack the Raisadar, with his horse *ventre à terre* and well in hand, firmly gripped his lance a little below the centre of its shaft, feinted with its point and, as he passed his opponent, rammed the butt-end into the ribs of the Austrian officer, knocking him clean out of his saddle. The Austrian Count, who was a gentleman, took his defeat very well. He shook hands with the Raisadar, and said he was glad to have met such a skilled and redoubtable lancer.

This same Count was stopping at Shepherd's Hotel,

Cairo. One day, having placed his four-cornered uniform head-dress on the sideboard, he sat down to dine, with the other guests, at the long table in the dining-saloon. A young British officer (whose name and position I never learned, but who was supposed to belong to a British Guards Regiment) made a salad in this Austrian officer's head-covering, and passed it round the dinner-table. The Count fiercely resented the use made of his uniform hat, regarding the matter as a gross insult and not at all as a joke, and he at once challenged the offender to a duel.

The well-known Luigi was at that time manager at Shepherd's Hotel, and seemed to be personally acquainted with the nobility and notables of every country in Europe. The proprietor of the hotel, also, was an Austrian Jew, of the name of Zach, and a native of Vienna. At any rate, the Austrian cavalry officer had, it appeared, been committed specially to Luigi's care, and at the British officer's insult to his charge Luigi rushed at the offender with the intention of throwing him out of the hotel. The British subaltern, however, gave poor Luigi a severe thrashing, and the latter had to seek protection.

All the Englishmen present apologized to the Austrian officer, and expressed their disgust at the ungentlemanly treatment he had received. The Senior British Officer present told the Count, moreover, that he would report the whole affair to the General Officer Commanding in Cairo. The Count, nevertheless, begged that no such report be made, and said he intended dealing personally with the culprit by "calling him out". The Senior British Officer explained that, apart from the Military Regulations prohibiting duelling, it was not customary for Englishmen to fight duels, and that the proper punishment would be a personal chastisement of the delinquent. The offender was finally ordered to quit Cairo at once, while, on rejoining his battalion in London, his Commanding Officer suggested he should send in his papers and resign his commission. This course he was compelled to take, by reason of the opinion of the officers of his mess.

An Englishman on one occasion, in the smoking-room at Shepherd's, told the following story of an Englishman



at Davos who was challenged by a German officer to fight him. The Englishman at Davos refused absolutely to meet the German, and the latter's seconds then withdrew. The Englishman thereupon went direct to the German officer's quarters and publicly called him a coward. He accused the other of trying to obtain a cheap reputation by posing as a man of honour and challenging an Englishman whom he knew would not on principle fight a duel. The Englishman, indeed, viewed the challenge as an insult, and consequently severely chastised the German. The latter as a result again sent his seconds to the Englishman, who still declined to fight a duel.

But the general opinion of the English visitors in the hotel was that the German should then be met; since, having been personally chastised, he ought on that account to have been given the satisfaction he demanded. The Englishman therefore accepted the challenge when the other's seconds again called on him, and said to them: "I am not familiar with the laws or etiquette of duelling, but I understand that, as the challenged party, I have the right to select the weapons?" They assented. The Englishman replied: "Very well, gentlemen. I will send my two seconds to discuss and arrange for the duel, but with express instructions that I have chosen an unloaded rifle of any European Army, with a bayonet affixed thereto."

The Englishman's seconds informed the German officer's seconds that the challenger had frequently played bayonet at Olympia, and only lately had beaten both his opponents, a lancer and a swordsman. The next day the German officer's seconds stated that their friend would not fight under those conditions, and were told by the Englishman's seconds that they had exercised a wise discretion. The Englishman, after that, publicly slapped the German in the face, and called him a white-livered cur. The latter left Davos at once, and the incident ended. The officers of the corps to which this German duellist belonged, however, called upon him to relinquish his connection with their regiment.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CAMPAIGN OF 1882

IN 1882 an Arab, a full Colonel in command of the 4th Egyptian Infantry Regiment, named Ahmed Arabi, together with two other Arabs of similar rank in the Egyptian Army, revolted against His Highness the Khedive, Tewfik Pasha. The latter was a weakling, and failed to arrest these rebellious Arab officers. One of the objects of the Arab mutineers was to oust all officers of Turkish origin from the Egyptian Army. Arabi was very popular with the Fellaheens, who generally greeted him with the following words: "*Allah yansurak! ya Arabi!*"—"God give you victory, O Arabi!" Arabi seized Cairo and Alexandria and the Khedive was forced to fly to the Ras al Teen Palace, adjoining the sea at the latter city. Arabi then at once set about strengthening and increasing the forts commanding Alexandria harbour.

The British Fleet was called upon to protect British subjects and their property, and was compelled to bombard the fortifications at Alexandria. This drastic measure drove Arabi and his forces out of Alexandria to Kafr el Dawâr, and from there Arabi retired to the shelter of an entrenched camp, with gun parapets and bastions, at Tel-el-Kebir. Some years previously the Turks had threatened to land at Ismailia, to march on the banks of the freshwater canal, and to reoccupy Cairo and other chief towns of Egypt. General Stone, and several American military engineer officers, had therefore designed and constructed the never used Tel-el-Kebir lines, which Arabi now held in force to oppose any British advance through Ismailia.

Some days before the first disturbance at Cairo, I was staying in the Hôtel du Nile. This was a German establishment, and there I hoped to meet a Monsieur Ninet, an

anti-British Swiss and Arabi's chief European adviser. With Monsieur Ninet I desired to discuss matters, but he did not turn up. I did, however, meet Mr. Valentine Chirol, Foreign Correspondent of *The Times*, and also a Mr. Adern Beaman, a student interpreter attached to H.B.M.'s Consulate. We all agreed that a British Army would be sent to keep order in Egypt, and to support the Khedive Tewfik. I therefore telegraphed to my father for some field kit to be sent to me, care of the Egyptian Postmaster at Port Said, which place the British Fleet would always hold.

Early in July 1882 I started off, via Suez, to Bombay. I was in charge, I believe, of the last outward-bound mail which went across the desert to that port—the following mails passing through the Suez Canal. At Aden I called on my former chief, the Resident, General James Blair, V.C., who told me he had just heard unofficially that it had been decided to send an army to Egypt. I learned, also, that Sir Garnet Wolseley was likely to be in chief command; while a division of the Indian Army, with its war quota of Europeans, would be despatched from Bombay to Suez, although to date no officer had been selected to command it.

I requested Colonel Blair in due course to communicate officially to the Senior Officer in Command of the Indian Troops that I had been for about two years Second Assistant Political Resident, and in that capacity had charge of the Aden Settlement. I had been frequently employed on reconnaissance duty and to collect intelligence in the hinterland of Aden; also I spoke French and Arabic, being able to read and write the latter language, and therefore might be considered specially qualified for an appointment on the staff of the Indian Division in Egypt. General Blair very kindly consented to do all that I had suggested, and volunteered further to give me a letter to the Senior Indian Officer. "On your way back to Suez," he said, "call on me here and pick up this letter. By that time I shall know the name of the Indian Divisional General, and may have spoken to him about you."

I telegraphed to my uncle, and to the Postmaster-



General for three months' privilege leave, to be taken from Suez. I specially asked the Postmaster-General that Mr. C. C. D'Albedyhll should be attached to my "set", so that he might take charge of it if I suddenly vacated my office. These requests were all granted.

On arrival in Bombay I went to see Mr. Grattan Geary of *The Times of India*. I said to him: "You are an old and reliable friend of mine, and I am particularly anxious to give you as early as possible full particulars of my scheme and requirements, so as not to treat you badly in any way. I want you formally to appoint me as your "Special Correspondent" with the Indian Division in Egypt, so that I may use that document as a lever if I am not offered a staff or other military appointment in Egypt." Mr. Geary consented to do what I asked, and I continued: "I come of a soldier family, but as it happens each of us is at present either too old or too young for field service. I hope to go, therefore, as a Civil Officer, whose services have been officially placed at the disposal of the General Officer actually commanding in the field. I am not personally acquainted with Sir Herbert T. MacPherson, V.C., K.C.B., but General Blair will strongly recommend me to him to occupy an appointment on his personal staff. General Blair advised me as a civilian on no account to apply in India for any military appointment in Egypt. I should simply let the General find me there on the spot, possessing the necessary qualifications for the performance of certain expert duties, to which he could in an emergency appoint me without reference to superior authority."

I returned to Aden, and picked up the private letter which General Blair had addressed to Sir Herbert MacPherson. And there I heard that the latter was expected to reach Aden two days later. I proceeded on my journey to Suez, and met on board Colonel Wilhelm Luckhardt and Colonel C. Hayter. The former I had served with when he was Chief of the Commissariat Department at Aden. The latter officer was a stranger to me, but he had been appointed Chief of the Transport Department of the Indian Division in Egypt.

Having on board ship plenty of time at my disposal,

I drafted some reports for presentation to Sir Herbert MacPherson. I hoped he might consider them useful, and regard the author as a competent all-round officer with special knowledge of Egypt and the Red Sea littorals. My reports were under the following heads :

- I. Ports in the Red Sea where sheep could be purchased in large numbers.
- II. Ports in the Red Sea where camels for transport, grain-fed and hand-fed and browsing animals, could be purchased.
- III. Ports in the Red Sea where horned cattle could be purchased.
- IV. Policing towns which would fall into our possession on the advancement of the Army.
- V. Scouting and obtaining intelligence.
- VI. Native opinion, as published in the Arabic newspapers and as preached in the Musajid.
- VII. Remarks on tracks and caravan routes across the desert ; the navigation and traction of small boats on the freshwater canals connecting the chief towns of the Delta with each other and the Nile.

Colonel Luckhardt gave all my reports to Colonel C. Hayter to read, and the latter came to me with No. VII in his hands. Colonel Hayter told me he required the services of an assistant acquainted with the freshwater canals of Egypt, by which he contemplated conveying large quantities of stores of all kinds to the Army at the front. He suggested that if I applied to Colonel Herbert MacPherson for attachment to the Transport Department he would back up my application. He would propose my employment with the temporary rank and pay of a Major (Rs. 640 per month), together with a staff allowance (Rs. 300 per month). These two sums would amount to about the same rate of salary I had received as Second Assistant Resident at Aden, and were also practically equivalent

to my total emoluments as a mail agent. I replied that until Sir Herbert MacPherson had read General Blair's letter I had decided not to adopt any course; moreover, if Sir Herbert did not employ me, I was pledged to accept the position of a regular "War Correspondent" to *The Times of India*. I explained that pay was not my chief object, but that I desired to serve with the Army in some military capacity.

Although General Blair had not seen his intimate friend and distant relative, Sir Herbert MacPherson, he had written to him officially about me, and on Sir Herbert's arrival at Aden had promised he would further press my case on him. I reached Suez about two days before Sir Herbert's arrival there, and at once reported myself to Admiral Sir William Nathan Hewitt, V.C., the Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces on the East Indian Station, and in command at Suez pending the arrival of Sir Herbert MacPherson. I called on the Admiral on board his flagship, at anchor in the Suez roads, and was cordially greeted by this distinguished sailor, who had often put up with me at Aden. Sir Nathan Hewitt said: "You are just the man I wanted to see, and I have been making inquiries as to your whereabouts. I want you to organize and command an expedition to look for Professor Palmer, Lieutenant Charrington, and Lieutenant Gill, R.E., who are reported to have been murdered in the Sinaian range of mountains, or on those desert plains." The Admiral had barely uttered these words, when his quartermaster announced Captain Richard Burton.

The Admiral said to Captain Burton: "I have just ordered Mr. Walsh to go in search of Palmer, Charrington, and Gill, who took with them six thousand in gold, and a large sum in Maria Theresa dollars, to purchase camels in Sinai. A report from the Egyptian officer at Tor states that the three Englishmen in question have been killed and the money captured by Arabs."

Captain Burton at that flew into a storm of rage, declaring that the selection of a post-office wallah to carry out search operations in Sinai was ridiculous. The Admiral said: "No doubt Mr. Walsh has been a mail



agent. He has, however, also served for nearly three years in the Indian Political Service, while during the last two years of that period he has to my personal knowledge been the Assistant in command of the Aden Settlement Police, which included charge of a detachment of camel-mounted Desert Police." Captain Burton, nevertheless, did not believe any of these statements, as since our first meeting in Bombay he had never known of my having been away from the Marine Postal Service. Until this moment, though, I had never realized Captain Burton's ignorance regarding my career in India.

Captain Burton then, in my opinion, rather dictatorially desired the Admiral to cancel his directions to me. Nevertheless, I myself supported Captain Burton's request (which did not improve the latter's temper), explaining to the Admiral that I expected to be employed for special duty on Sir Herbert MacPherson's personal staff, and if absent on his arrival at Suez I might lose my opportunity. Captain Burton thereupon again urged the Admiral to remove me *instantly*, and to send me back to the Postal Service. He furthermore asked the Admiral to say, when he reported the matter, that in his (Captain Burton's) opinion Mr. Walsh was unfit to do the duties of the position with which the Admiral had entrusted him.

The Admiral absolutely declined to make any such suggestion regarding my qualifications, which he considered were useful assets at this juncture. Captain Burton then produced a bundle of telegrams and papers, and remarked that the Admiral's decision was of no consequence. The latter officer had now nothing to do with the matter, he said, since H.B.M.'s Foreign Office had instructed him by telegraph to proceed himself to Suez and organize a search-party for Professor Palmer and his party.

I again pressed the Admiral, therefore, to release me and allow Captain Burton to carry out whatever orders he had received from the British Foreign Office. The Admiral, much to the annoyance of Captain Burton, finally said: "Since Mr. Walsh does not wish to go to Sinai, I need not await direct orders to permit you to go there. But if Mr. Walsh requests me not to cancel his employment,

I shall await definite instructions." This remark brought home to Captain Burton that, but for my request and attitude, he would not have been able to get immediately into the saddle. I admitted then to Captain Burton my obligations to him for helping me out of my difficulty, but he did not appreciate my thanks for his services.

Captain Burton and I both left the flagship together, and I never saw him again.

## CHAPTER XX

### ISMAILIA

My harsh and unjustifiable removal for the second time by the Government of Bombay from the Political Service took place on the 21st March, 1882. The despatch of the Secretary of State for India, cancelling in my particular case the prohibition to my appointment to the Indian Political Service, is dated the 13th September, 1883. I reoccupied my old post at Aden on the 29th May, 1884.

In the foregoing circumstances I was not legally entitled to wear the uniform of the Political Service when calling upon Sir Herbert MacPherson at Suez on or about the 23rd August, 1882. However, whether I joined Sir Herbert's staff or became a "War Correspondent" attached to his division, I should have to be attired in some kind of distinctive rig—one which did not positively proclaim me to be a Political Officer, or, on the other hand, a soldier. I therefore made up some dress regulations to suit my individual requirements. My "original" uniform was as follows :

**HELMET.** The ordinary pattern, as worn by civilians and soldiers in India, but without any ornamentations or metal badges or furniture. Alternatively, a peaked Royal Bombay Yacht Club cap.

**PUGGAREE.** Plain blue : same as worn (by custom and not under any regulations) by Officers of the Marine Postal Service ; with the Royal Bombay Yacht Club buttons, blazer, tie, and colours.

**COAT.** A khaki and white jean tunic, with no military shoulder-straps, or peaked cuffs on



## UNDER THE FLAG

sleeves ; fitted beneath collarband and cuff lining with studs to affix a collar and cuffs to the tunic, and thus give the wearer the apparent credit of being the proud possessor of a starched linen shirt.

In the tunic a deep inside pocket to carry, unfolded, a brief-envelope ; two inside breast-pockets, and two outside ones with a small ticket- or penny-pocket.

The coat lapels to be made to close round the neck like the band of a tunic, to which a collar could be attached.

**TROUSERS.** Not of the military pantaloon pattern, and unlike the baggy foot-extremities affected by the British sailor. No buttons, but the usual number of buttonholes into which metal studs for braces could be inserted. Not too much cloth in the legs, so as to admit of the trousers being neatly rolled up, or round the calves of the legs and covered by a gaiter. Watch- and money-pockets in band of trousers ; also two ordinary-sized pockets and one hip revolver-pocket, and over each a buttonhole to take a ring for keys.

Major-General Sir Herbert T. MacPherson, V.C., K.C.B., took command of the Indian Division at Suez on, I think, the 23rd August, 1882. During the early morning of the 20th August I had gone in my canoe towards Shaluf, where a small detachment of Egyptian regulars and a large number of totally untrained Arab reservists and recruits were receiving instruction. This camp was situated close to the freshwater and maritime canals, and was attacked on the land side by three companies of the Seaforth Highlanders, and from the Suez Canal side by H.B.M.'s ships *Sea Gull* and *Mosquito*. The Arabs were soon dispersed ; and, after firing a few rounds at the fugitive stragglers myself, I regained and paddled my canoe back to the freshwater lock-gate at Suez.

Rigged in a clean suit of my "home-made" uniform, I marched into the passage outside the large room on the first floor of the Suez Hotel—a room full of memories for me of my attendance there on Gordon Pasha, both before and after the explosion on board the old steam-frigate *Mahomed Ali*. I handed to the A.D.C. in waiting (Sir Herbert MacPherson's son) my card :

L. PRENDERGAST WALSH

Marine Postal Service

G.P.O. BOMBAY

Formerly 2nd Assistant Resident at Aden

*Conservative Club,*

*St. James's St., S.W.*

*Royal Bombay Yacht Club.*

I had with me the letter from General Blair, V.C., together with my seven reports which on the journey to Suez had so impressed Colonel Hayter. A few minutes later I was admitted to Sir Herbert's presence.

Sir Herbert greeted me with : "I have just received a letter from my sister, who lives at Ealing and is a friend of your people there. She asks me to help you, and I shall be very pleased to do so ; the more especially since General Blair has also written to me officially and has told me of your qualifications for employment in Egypt." I there-upon handed over General Blair's personal letter, and rather nervously tendered my reports.

Sir Herbert tossed my report No. 1 to Colonel Luckhardt and No. 7 to Colonel Hayter. Both gentlemen then got up and, after stating they had already had an opportunity of seeing those particular efforts, they each asked to have Mr. Prendergast Walsh placed on their respective staffs. Sir Herbert smiled and said : "Well, Mr. Walsh, your services are evidently in request. But I don't quite see how I can relieve you of your postal duties without the previous sanction of the Government of India. If, on the other hand, you take the leave which your papers show that the Postmaster-General will grant, you would then be an unemployed officer ; and as such I both can and will attach you at once to my personal staff."

I told Sir Herbert I would much prefer having the sanction of the Government as regards the use of my humble services in Egypt, and observed that Colonel Luckhardt had already forwarded an application through the Commissary-General, Bombay, to have me appointed to that Department. Sir Herbert thereupon turned to his Assistant-Adjutant, General Lt.-Colonel A. B. Morgan, and gave orders for an application by telegram to have my services placed at the disposal of the General Officer commanding the Indian Division in Egypt.

Sir Herbert said that in my case this course was the correct one; it was now a mere matter of form, and the request would certainly be granted without delay. He then added that he would decide in what capacity he could utilise my services when he received the reply to his telegram. In the meantime I was to attend his office and instruct his son (a Sandhurst cadet who had only just been posted on his father's staff) how to draft routine replies for signature and in clerical matters generally. A day or two later my services were officially placed by telegram at Sir Herbert's disposal. He thereupon attached me as an Assistant Arabic Interpreter and Intelligence Officer to the staff of Colonel Moore, who was Chief Interpreter to the Commander-in-Chief in India.

Colonel Hayter one day came to me regarding some trouble with the naval officer commanding at the first dam on the freshwater canal. Colonel Hayter asked me to relate my experience with this officer, and how I had managed to push my boats past his post.

I replied: "I arrived at the dam, but was held up by the Marine sentry, who called the naval subaltern on duty. This officer, however, said he could not rouse up such an important personage as his chief. I remonstrated, but could not make him see that his detention of me would cause serious inconvenience to the Royal Artillery batteries marching by land to Cassasine. A bluejacket with a bull's-eye lamp inspected my buttons, and reported to his officer that they bore the device of a crown and anchor. The officer then examined the buttons himself, and, having never before seen such a combination, he was quite



convinced it was his duty to arrest anyone apparently impersonating a naval officer in the service of the Crown. I thereupon presented my card :

L. PRENDERGAST WALSH

On special duty on the Staff of the  
General Officer Commanding the  
Indian Division.

*Conservative Club,  
St. James's Street,  
London, S.W.*

"I insisted on having my card taken to the subaltern's chief, and with that demand he reluctantly complied. The Senior Naval Officer appeared, and started off by asserting it was absolutely necessary for me to hold a permit from the Admiral to pass through his dam. This gentleman also inspected my Royal Bombay Yacht Club buttons, and wanted to know what uniform I was wearing. He nearly had a fit on being told it was one I had designed for myself. I was able, however, to show him some official letters, and these satisfied him that, though I had no commission or authorized uniform, I was nevertheless on important military duty. He then became more cordial, and, after drinking whisky and dirty fresh canal water together, we parted as friends.

"Now, Colonel Hayter," I said, "my advice to you is not to bother with the Admiral, although no doubt he is officially in command of the freshwater canal. Carry a properly worded letter, signed by the General Officer commanding the Indian Division, and you will find that there will be no interference with your movements on the freshwater canals. You can render me a service, and I think that at the same time I can be of some use to you. I am sending my man Mubarak (who knows all the freshwater canals of Egypt as well as I do) to Ismailia with my Rob Roy canoe. Please arrange to carry my little craft on one of your pontoons and let my man go with your party. Mubarak will be able to assist and advise your natives from India, as he speaks Hindustani and Arabic fluently, and knows the route."

Colonel Hayter readily complied with this request. I sent for Mubarak and ordered him to equip and provision the canoe, and then to report himself to Colonel Hayter. On reaching Ismailia he was to place the canoe as near as possible to the Indian Divisional Headquarters and to ask Major A. T. S. A. Rind, the Executive Commissariat Officer, to stow the canoe out of the sun. He was not to take her on to Lake Timsah.

I went into the quadrangle of the Suez Hotel, where I found Sir Herbert MacPherson and all the members of the Divisional Staff having a drink at the bar, toasting success to the campaign. I learned that the Division was to leave at daybreak for embarkation on transports in Suez roads, for conveyance through the maritime canal to Ismailia. Boats from H.M.'s warships would lie off the hotel landing-steps to take the General and his staff to the respective vessels, where arrangements had been made to receive them.

I fell in with Colonel Moore, and we reached Ismailia. I took up my quarters on the softest plank I could find in a corner of the Headquarters Office. My Goanese butler was unfortunately away on leave, but he had provided me with a good *budleo* named Caitan, also from Portuguese India, who was a willing and handy lad.

Sir Herbert had attached me to Colonel Moore. Colonel Moore called the next morning on Sir Garnet Wolseley at the Khedive's ch  let, and introduced himself as the Chief Intelligence Officer and Interpreter of the Indian Division. He mentioned my name as a member of his Staff, and as former Assistant Political Resident at Aden. He added that I could speak French and Arabic fluently, could write and read both languages, and also possessed a good colloquial knowledge of Hindustani. Sir Garnet replied to Colonel Moore that there was only one Intelligence Branch for the Army in Egypt, the one formed in London; Colonel Moore's services, therefore, would not be required. We retired, at that, with our tails between our legs. I pitied Colonel Moore, who was terribly hurt, crestfallen and disappointed. In those days the officers of the British Army were called "Queen's men", and Colonel Moore



could only exclaim helplessly : "How they hate the Native Army! I am not considered of any use, and should be on the Pension List."

Now, in accordance with the orders of Government, the Indian Division was an independent command, except with respect to its disposal in the field. For the Indian Division full transport facilities had been arranged, so that each unit could be marched off direct on disembarkation. Sir Garnet, however, entirely upset that expensive arrangement by taking away the greater number of the regimental transport ships to accelerate the despatch of the British Divisions to the front. The Indian Division, therefore, with the exception of its cavalry, was compelled to remain at the base and on the lines of communication with the front, to the great incensement of Sir Herbert MacPherson and the officers of his Division. Sir Herbert remonstrated at being left in such a position in the rear, but Sir Garnet Wolseley paid no attention to his complaint.

Sir Herbert discussed this treatment and its consequent situation with his senior officers, and it was finally decided to telegraph the Government of India on the matter. A large sheet of foolscap paper was produced, and on it a tentative telegram was drafted. This document was passed round and eventually reached Sir Herbert's hands. After amending it slightly, Sir Herbert turned to me and directed it to be copied *au clair*. I at once wrote out a telegram embracing all the points agreed upon, but suggested *sotto voce* to Sir Herbert an additional sentence. My amendment was to the effect that, apart from the unfairness of keeping the Indian soldier at base and out of the fighting-line, the fact that he was not placed in the field alongside his British white comrade might create very pernicious opinions on the Continent of Europe ; in India and in the East generally it was certain to do this, if it was supposed that the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army placed such little reliance on the Army of India as to retain it in the rear. Sir Herbert caught the idea immediately, strengthened the wording of this extra sentence accordingly, adding a specific request that his division should be at once ordered to the front. He then read it



out to the assembled officers, who unanimously adopted the amendment in its entirety. Sir Herbert said: "Excellent, Walsh. Write out a clear draft for my approval and signature, and then have the message telegraphed to India as soon as possible."

I handed the papers to Sir Herbert's son, telling him to make a fair copy of the telegram as it then stood, and to get the signature on it of each officer present. The wire was then despatched, and we awaited the reply of the Government of India. I fancy there must have been serious discussion and correspondence by wire over this matter between Headquarters in India and the War Office. Sir Herbert received no reply from the Commander-in-Chief in India, but on the morning of the third day after the despatch of his telegram Sir Garnet Wolseley ordered the Indian Division to be moved to the front with all possible despatch.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE AMMUNITION CASES AND TEL-EL-KEBIR

I HAD no work of any kind to do at Ismailia, and simply hung about the Divisional Office. On one occasion Major Rind reported that he had five hundred sheep suffering from maggot in the ear, and his clerk asked if he might telegraph for a veterinary surgeon from the front to look at the animals. Sir Herbert, however, would not agree to such a proposal. After Major Rind's man had departed, therefore, I suggested that there was probably at base a farrier-major of one of the Indian Cavalry Regiments of our division, and if he happened to be a *salutari* he would know how to get rid of the maggot. To this Sir Herbert said: "All right, Walsh. See what you can do in this matter."

I found a combined *salutari* and farrier, and took him to inspect the sheep. He obtained from Paris's Hotel a piece of wire from a soda-water bottle, and twisted it so that he could hook the maggot and drag it out without breaking the grub. He then told me, if the worm was not completely removed, to drop some turpentine or iodine into the hole where it had been buried. Having learned how to extract maggots, I reported my new accomplishment to Sir Herbert and pointed out that I needed assistance to carry it out. He directed me, therefore, to instruct a small fatigue party from the Manchester Regiment in the matter.

I was engaged one day on that highly intelligent duty, when Sir William Baker Creed Russel landed close to the site of my operations and asked me what I was doing. I explained with a laugh that my present occupation was catching maggots and feeding fish with them. Sir William thereupon exclaimed: "Gracious God! How comes it that an ex-Assistant Political Resident is employed on that

brainy work?" I replied: "Well, sir, Sir Garnet Wolseley has refused to allow Colonel Moore to perform the duties of Intelligence Officer of the Indian Division, and as I was attached to assist the latter officer I also am at a loose end. I would like a job at the front, if it is possible for me as a civilian to obtain one; but as I owe so much to Sir Herbert MacPherson for placing me on his staff, I don't want to apply for any post which would necessitate my leaving him." Sir Baker then asked me if I had a horse, and I told him that I had one of a kind. In point of fact, only a few days before I had met a couple of rogues who appeared to be deserters from Arabi Pasha's army, and from them I purchased a steed. At the time I had had a suspicion that they had stolen the animal, which was not up to my weight and could hardly carry me over the soft loose sand of the desert.

Sir Baker Russel lunched that day with Sir Herbert MacPherson. I was seated at the far end of the mess, with the "small fry", when Sir Herbert called me up to the head of the table. He observed that Sir Baker wanted me to serve as Arabic Interpreter to the British Cavalry Brigade he was commanding at the front, but that Sir Baker understood I hesitated to accept any post which might involve the loss of my position on the staff of the Indian Division. Sir Herbert said: "I quite understand, appreciate, and thank you for your gratitude to me, Walsh. But nothing would induce me to stand in the way of your acceptance of the post which Sir Baker offers you on his staff. If, therefore, you would like to go to the front with Sir Baker, accompany him by all means. Because in that case you will still be on my staff, and merely temporarily absent from it." In these circumstances I jumped at this very satisfactory arrangement, and started off by train that night with Sir Baker Russel.

Before leaving Ismailia Sir Baker saw the steed I had bought, and deemed that the animal had better be left behind. Horses were in great demand at base, and I realized for this sorry nag five pounds more than I had given for the beast. I took with me, however, my English-made saddlery, as I intended to buy at the earliest



opportunity a suitable first-class riding-horse. Sir Baker Russel in the meantime placed a troop horse at my disposal, and, thus mounted, I attended his parade, falling in with the band, medical staff, and "dholie wallahs".

Sir Garnet Wolseley came to inspect the brigade, and on seeing me asked Sir Baker what I was doing there. Sir Baker replied that my name was Prendergast Walsh, that I belonged to the Indian Division, but that my services to act as an Arabic Interpreter had been placed at his disposal by Sir Herbert MacPherson. Sir Garnet, thereupon, without speaking to me, directed Sir Baker to send me back to my Division. I was, of course, compelled to go. As, however, I did not wish to take one of Sir Baker's horses to base, I volunteered to foot it across the desert, via Cassasine Lock on the freshwater canal, distance slightly over twenty miles. This decision of mine resulted in my obtaining a very flattering reward for my humble services in Egypt.

Starting a little after five o'clock in the morning, I marched part of the way over the desert, intending to go straight to Cassasine Lock. Deviating, however, from my direct course, I accidentally came across a number of limber boxes containing ammunition for nine-pounder guns.

Major Crosthwaite, R.A., Commanding H.I. Royal Artillery, it afterwards appeared, had stripped his limbers because the team of horses belonging to the gun-carriages of his battery could not draw them over the soft sand. Major Crosthwaite's one object was to get his guns up to the front at any cost, and to borrow there ammunition from the British batteries at Cassasine. Major Crosthwaite, however, had neglected to consider the calibre of the British guns at the front, and on arrival there he found that there were no nine-pounders, the British field guns being two batteries of thirteen-pounders and four batteries of sixteen-pounders. The guns of H.I. Battery were therefore useless, and could not be taken into action.

Fortunately for Major Crosthwaite, a Captain Franks (commanding a B.I.S.N. Company's s.s. *Culna*, then a transport) helped me to carry out a scheme which I

planned. In effect, we managed by tremendous exertions to tow up two small empty boats (such as are suspended from the davits of a steamer) to within about half a mile of the site upon which the limber boxes had been abandoned. The boxes were too heavy to carry, and to trundle each box to the edge of the canal bank involved great trouble and loss of time. Captain Franks then lessened the difficulty by cutting the two painters of the boats and making them into slings, through which a couple of oars were passed and the boxes suspended from the latter. By this means sixteen limber boxes were carried to the canal, and were slid on a bridge of oars into the centre of the boats. Captain Franks, at that, was obliged to return to his vessel, and fortunately caught a conveyance to Ismailia.

His departure left me alone (except for my butler and his assistant) to tow the two laden boats up to Cassasine freshwater lock-gates, which were about eight miles distant. It was terribly exhausting work in the fierce sun; but, with a liberal supply of "Scotch", I managed to get them there in the nick of time. The advance on Tel-el-Kebir was, I found, to take place that very night. I at once went to the Camp of H.I.R.A., and there learned that, since his battery had no ammunition for its guns, Major Crosthwaite had been ordered to remain at Cassasine. He had therefore made no preparation to march. The members of the battery became wild with excitement on hearing I had brought them up sixteen limber boxes and fuse-cases. I was, in fact, seized and carried on their shoulders round the camp, the officers shaking me warmly by the hand and thanking me for the great service I had rendered them. The Adjutant then sent a party to bring up from my two boats the sixteen cases, and immediately started striking camp and making arrangements for an immediate advance.

Colonel T. Van Strubenree, commanding the Artillery of the Indian Division, presently appeared on the scene, and inquired how I, a civilian officer on Sir Herbert Mac-Pherson's staff, became connected with the ammunition in question. After I had related to him the whole story, he not only personally thanked me, but said he would officially



bring my great services to the notice of my chief. I requested him not to mention the boats, as I had "lifted" them from the Admiral, and the latter might endeavour to "run me in" for making off with them. Colonel Strubenree then wrote in his own hand a despatch, and directed the Adjutant to have it written in duplicate, one copy to be given to me to show the Admiral, in case he should be annoyed with my action.

I suggested to Colonel Strubenree that, as the boats were at the lock and still available, they should be used to get up some more ammunition ; and I said I would instruct my servant to show the officer how to handle and tow a boat in a narrow and shallow canal. By this means all the ammunition was got up in time to accompany the battery into the action of Tel-el-Kebir.

Mubarak unpacked from the canoe my Service rifle and bayonet, filled up my water-bottle and two flasks of whisky, and himself carried a good supply of biscuits and his own food. We then followed the advance, until we found ourselves in the immediate rear of the Highland Brigade, commanded by Sir A. Alison. We conformed to their general movements, and lay down for about half an hour.

At about 4.50 a.m., on the 13th September, 1882, bayonets were silently fixed and the bugles rang out a charge on the lines. The lines were, I estimate, about 200 yards distant from us, but in the confusion we lost our direction and could not get on. The Guards were in support about a mile in our rear, and as the enemy fired high they suffered many casualties. The Highlanders then, receiving their direction, rushed into the formidable ditch or shelter trench in front of the Tel-el-Kebir fortified lines ; either helping one another to scale the wall, or else throwing one another over it. Along the internal banquette we were fiercely and gallantly resisted by the Nubian and Sudanese battalions, who were defending that section of the lines. Their total casualties were immense, whereas ours amounted to about 470. The entire action was over within forty minutes of the firing of the first shot.

My Mubarak was an agile and very powerful negro,



I climbed on his back, and from there on to his shoulders, and was thus enabled to get within the grip of the edge of the parapet. Mubarak then gave me an upward push, and followed me over the top. He had his Somali *budd* (knobkerrie) in his hand, a direct blow from which would smash the skull of any opponent. Mubarak rendered me plucky and useful assistance, shielding me to no small extent. As a boy he had learned on board an Indian ship of war to play quarterstaff; he was consequently quite at home with a knobbed stick, which is the natural weapon of an African negro of the East Coast.

Once on the inside of the Tel-el-Kebir lines we used our revolvers at close quarters with great effect, and after a short but severe struggle became masters of the position. I never saw a single Fellaheen soldier—the one regiment of that race running away so soon as they perceived we had got inside the lines. A non-commissioned officer of one of the Highland regiments was mortally wounded, and I propped him up against a wall and gave him a stiff dose of whisky. He revived for a moment and eagerly asked me: “Are we in, sir?” I replied: “Yes”; and, on hearing my answer, this gallant Scotsman passed away with a smile on his face.

None of my personal friends in the Brigade was hurt. A young officer, who was a perfect stranger to me, died in my arms, asking me with his last breath to tell his people that he had fallen at the head of his company, as a gentleman of his race should do. Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. Richardson, of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry, was severely wounded by a shot through the mouth. Mubarak, who happened to be on the spot when this officer fell, got him safely into a *dhobie*.

The fighting by that time was all over, except that an Indian cavalry regiment was cutting down fugitives, and had exterminated the Fellaheen regiment which bolted without fighting. Our casualties, as I have said, were about 470 killed and wounded of all ranks. There were several riderless horses belonging to the Egyptians, and I captured a grand charger and a strong troop-horse. Mubarak also collected a couple of sound mules from some teams

belonging to light field-gun carriages. I picked up a Remington rifle at the place where I had climbed into the lines, and it is hanging to-day on the wall of my billiard-room at "Plas Idwal", Ealing. Mubarak, after possessing himself of several other relics of the battle, marched back with two mules and one horse fully loaded to the lock at Cassasine, to await my orders.

I rode off to the village of Tel-el-Kebir, where Sir Herbert MacPherson and all the general officers had assembled. I reported myself to my chief, and briefly explained the cause of my absence from his staff. Sir Herbert said : "You are well mounted, and if you rode direct to Ismailia you could catch the mail steamer before she passes through the lake. I have some important papers ; please post them on board. Return at once to Zagazig, as I intend to place you in command of the Police at that town."

## CHAPTER XXII

COLONEL VALENTINE BAKER

WITH the defeat and flight of Arabi to Cairo, all the dams were cleared out of the freshwater canal and the locks placed in working order ; by these means there was plenty of water available for the immediate resumption of boat traffic. I reached Cassasine safely, and cancelled my instructions for the abandonment of my two wrongfully-gotten boats. I handed the boats over to the Chief Medical Officer for the conveyance of wounded to the hospitals at Suez and Ismailia. One of the most seriously wounded was a naval officer named Rawson ; I think he had guided the army across the desert for the attack on the Tel-el-Kebir lines. One of my boats was fitted with an awning and prepared for Rawson's sole accommodation ; he was made as comfortable as possible, and his boat was towed to Ismailia by a steam pinnace. He was shipped off to Malta, where I believe he died a few weeks later. I was thanked in orders for my aid to the wounded ; but in a few days boats of all kinds were plentiful. Still, it was a satisfaction to know that my two boats were the first ones utilized for the conveyance of wounded to base.

I ordered Mubarak to "paddle my canoe" to a convenient spot near Zagazig, and my other two attendants to pack all my kit on the mules and to ride to the railway station, where I would meet them.

My horse meanwhile had had a little well-earned rest, and, getting away as soon as possible, I reached Paris's Hotel nearly a couple of hours before the outward mail steamer could pass through the lake. I passed the time, while waiting for the boat, in drawing a rough sketch of the field of battle, and in writing an account of the engagement. This report my uncle gave to the editor of *The Times of India*, Bombay, and it was the first



written news of the battle published by any newspaper in India.

I did not want to tire my horse by the long ride from Ismailia to Zagazig; moreover, I should get to my destination sooner if I could travel by rail. I had a word, therefore, with Colonel M. A. Rowlandson, M.S.C., Controller of Military Accounts, and he said: "I can put you in charge of a chest of gold sovereigns to take to the front, which would ensure your obtaining a railway pass from Sir Owen Lanyon, the Governor of Ismailia. Sir Owen, however, certainly will not issue one for your horse. His A.D.C., Lieutenant Wortley, is a good chap, but not particularly a lover of the 'Indian Servant', Civil or Military. It is not advisable, consequently, to seek his aid in applying for a rail pass for anything on four legs; furthermore, even if he has the power he would not exercise it, in the present congested condition of the goods traffic."

In these circumstances I had to dodge a way through on my own; so, taking my horse to the railway station yard, and being able to speak Arabic fluently, I administered some *hali* (buckshish) to the Arab who had something to do with the making up of a train before it came alongside the platform. My horse was put in an empty truck, and I then took Rowlandson's chest of bullion and stowed it alongside my steed. After arranging for the truck which conveyed my nag to be attached to the train three wagons ahead of the guard's brake, I got in myself for a little rest and sleep, and before daylight I found the train in motion towards Zagazig. No one questioned me, and I had no kind of difficulty in getting to the front by this comfortable and speedy method.

Before I left Ismailia, Colonel Rowlandson had presented me with a pair of flannel trousers, as my riding-breeches were in rags. On my asking Colonel Rowlandson to whom I was to deliver the gold, he replied that he did not know, but supposed that Colonel Luckhardt, Chief Commissariat Officer, required it. In any case, I was to offer the chest to Colonel Luckhardt, and if he would not take delivery I was to catch any three officers of the Indian Army who

were on the platform, form them into a committee, and have the chest opened in their presence and its contents counted. If possible, one of the three officers should be the Commandant at the railway station. As it happened, Colonel Luckhardt did refuse to take charge of the chest, which he did not need and knew nothing about ; I had, therefore, to adopt the alternative scheme. Finally, however, I had a proper receipt, and the Commandant of the station had locked the chest up in his quarter guard until someone should claim it.

After getting rid of my chest of gold I reported myself to Sir Herbert MacPherson, who at once presented me with two bottles of red wine. I was perplexed by his handsome gift, and he observed : "You deserve my small present, as I have just received half a dozen cases of wine, each of which bears on the outside your endorsement. It seems that you found them in the desert, and personally lifted each case on to a truck going to Zagazig." I replied : "Why, yes, I remember now the incident you allude to. It happened outside Cassasine, on the occasion of my first effort to become an Artillerist. I helped Lieutenant Purvis to engage one of Arabi's ironclad trains with two Krupp guns, which had been captured from a derailed wagon of Arabi's train. Unfortunately the two guns on the train wrecked our Krupps, and Mr. Purvis was badly wounded in the foot. Your cases of wine were lying close to the site on which we had planted our guns."

Sir Herbert then went on to say that there should be a battalion of 825 Mustaffazeens (an armed police force) in Zagazig, but he had heard that the Arab Governor of the Mudirieh (province) had misappropriated the pay for the members of that force by the simple method of not enrolling 600 men. Sir Herbert told me that he had purposely placed me in command of the Police arrangements in that district, as he anticipated that the Egyptian Police were to be organized into a gendarmerie. In that case, if I was already the head of the Police of this particular province I should, as a matter of course, remain in that position, which entailed a salary of £1,000 rising to £1,200 per annum. I was therefore instructed to call on the

defaulting Arab Mudir and hear what he had to say, at the same time keeping my eyes very much open.

Attended by Mubarak, I had an interview with His Excellency the Mudir at his palace. As we were about to enter the hall of audience, Mubarak said to me in Hindustani: "See, Sahib, only one chair"; and, what was more, the Governor was seated on it. His object in this was to insult me before his entourage, by keeping me standing in his presence while he remained in dignity on his throne. I therefore walked straight up to the Governor and saluted him in the customary form due to an Arab notable of his position. As, however, he was about to resume his seat, I suddenly turned him round and deposited myself in his chair. I then called out to the attendants: "You dogs! The Governor stands!" His Excellency, of course, could do nothing, and another chair was provided for him; but it was evident to all present who ruled in Zagazig. I spoke in Arabic all the time, so as to be understood by the people.

My instructions were to arrest criminals, protect property, and maintain the peace. I therefore sent for the second-in-command of the Police battalion, a Danish officer, and ordered him to fall in the regiment for my inspection. He replied: "But, sir, I have only two hundred privates. The Mudir draws the pay for six hundred men, and I have told him that no British officer would permit a continuance of that practice." The same evening the Governor's *naib* brought me in a small bag £200 in gold. He requested me not to interfere with the time-honoured custom, since thereby I should seriously reduce the Governor's emoluments. As this was a barefaced bribe, I apprehended the Mudir and his *naib* and sent them as prisoners to Cairo. His Highness the Khedive pardoned these rogues; and both of them, I heard, eventually returned to their former positions without any notice having been taken of their conduct.

The Indian Division was ordered to the Abbasieh Palace, and thus my connection with the Egyptian Police ceased automatically. Sir Herbert MacPherson, however, personally related my services to Sir Edward Malet, the British Representative in Egypt, and asked him to retain



me in Egypt in some capacity. Sir Edward replied that he would do what he could on my behalf, and would speak to Colonel Valentine Baker, who was coming from Constantinople to organize an Egyptian Gendarmerie. As I spoke French and Arabic, and had been the Assistant Resident in Aden, in command of the Aden Police, Sir Edward said he thought that Baker Pasha would gladly employ me in the new force.

In connection with the treatment of a British officer in supreme Police charge of a province, the following instances may be of interest to my readers.

Major F. M. Hunter (afterwards my chief in Somaliland) had been appointed by the Khedive to the head of the Police at Tanta. Now since, by the manner of his appointment, he was under the direct and sole control of the Egyptian Ministers, Major Hunter was compelled to wear a tarboosh. This headgear he considered undignified for a British officer, and he tried to compromise the matter by retaining the Khedive's uniform and wearing with it a British regulation helmet. The Egyptian Ministers, however, would not agree to that arrangement, and Major Hunter resigned his post at Tanta and struck his name off the list of candidates for the new Gendarmerie.

The majority of the Arab officials in Egypt speak French, many of them having been educated in France. I have noticed that they prefer the Continental foreigner, who treats them to drinks and talks with them in terms of equality. The European of the Indian Government Service is disliked because he treats Egyptians as pure Orientals, and in the way customary between Easterns of rank and position. The Egyptian positively detests the Arabic-speaking white officers who have served in Arabic-speaking lands (i.e. Arabia, Persia, and the Gulf of Zanzibar).

The head of the Police at Benha was an ex-Irish Constabulary officer, with no experience of the East and knowledge of how to treat Orientals of any rank or how to obtain from them the proper respect due to him as a European. The Mudir of Benha publicly slighted and insulted this gentleman, to such an extent as to render him unable to do his ordinary Police duties. And for this he

could obtain no redress, being unable to obtain the intervention of H.M.'s Consul-General, since he had not been appointed with the previous sanction of H.B.M.'s Government.

At the instance of Lord Portland, Mr. Robert Oliver, a mail agent, had been appointed direct by H.H. the Khedive to be the Chief Police Officer of a district in Lower Egypt, without the previous sanction of H.B.M.'s Government. From that position Mr. Oliver was arbitrarily removed, without notice or compensation. Fortunately he had retained a lien on his office in the British Service, and was able to rejoin his mail agency—otherwise he would have been ruined. In consequence of my personal experience of the results of direct appointment to the Egyptian Service, I have declined on three or four occasions direct employment under the Khedive and his ministers.

A circular had been sent to the Indian Divisional Headquarters, asking officers of the Indian Army to attach their names, addresses, and qualifications thereto, if desirous of appointment to the Egyptian Gendarmerie. Sir Herbert MacPherson wrote my name on that application, and recorded his testimony in my favour. A day or two later Sir Herbert took me to H.B.M.'s Consulate for the express purpose of personally introducing me to Sir Edward Malet, and of testifying to my fitness for appointment to the Gendarmerie. I was suffering at the time from a slight attack of dysentery, and Sir Edward, wishing to give me some rest and the attention of his surgeon, invited me to stop at the Consulate. He also said that he specially wanted me there in order to meet Colonel Valentine Baker. Although he was almost a complete stranger, I gratefully accepted Sir Edward's kind hospitality.

For my stay at the Consulate I had only two suits of my self-designed uniform, one on and the other at the wash, together with Colonel Rowlandson's flannels as my "Sunday best". I was consequently very glad to see Mubarak when he came to report that the canoe, my butler and his assistant, one horse, and two mules were safely encamped near the lock of the freshwater canal at Shubrah, about two miles from the Abbasieh Palace. Mubarak had kept the butler's

assistant out of view, as he feared that the latter might be pressed into service by the Transport Department, whereby we should lose the services of a very useful hand. As I had a plentiful supply of clothing in the canoe, I sent Mubarak to bring the extra garments I needed.

Soon after Mubarak's departure, Sir Edward Malet came to me with a pamphlet in his hand. This pamphlet was one written by Colonel T. Prendergast Walsh, of the Indian Army Retired List. On seeing it, I at once said to Sir Edward: "I now understand why Your Excellency desires my presence here to meet Colonel Valentine Baker. You obviously attributed the authorship of that brochure to me, whereas actually it was my father who wrote it. I may say, though, that I consider my father's scheme both an excellent and a feasible one, except that he does not provide sufficient pay and allowance for officer or man. My father's scale of remuneration is based on an Indian standard; but in Egypt, as the cost of living is so much greater than in India, my father's rate of salaries, even if doubled, would be none too generous to attract and retain good men. I should increase them. Colonel Valentine Baker, however, will not appreciate a 'small fry' like my humble self discussing Police arrangements with him as an equal in experience or age. I shall therefore only tell him that I am the son of the Colonel Prendergast Walsh, the author of the scheme for the formation of a Police Force for Egypt, of which he has a copy. I propose to call Colonel Valentine Baker's attention to my experiences in command of the Aden Settlement Police, and to ask him to appoint me to the Police charge of a Mudirieh in lower Egypt." Sir Edward then told me he would support my application, and as Colonel Valentine Baker was coming up after breakfast that day, he would accompany him and personally press my claim.

I had a long talk with Colonel Valentine Baker, and he admitted that I possessed all the qualifications and experience for a Kahim Makanship (lieutenant-colonelcy) in the new Gendarmerie. At the same time he regretted that he could not offer me employment in that corps, as I was not a professional soldier. On hearing that, Sir Edward



Malet said: "Come, come, Baker, surely you can overcome such a small obstacle?" Colonel Valentine Baker, however, firmly held to his views, and I failed to become an Egyptian policeman.

I never met Colonel Valentine Baker again, but I corresponded with him when he took a small and ill-trained detachment of mounted men, and about half a battalion of newly raised infantry, to fight the Dervishes near Suakin. On that occasion I wrote to tell him of my experience in N.-E. Africa of attacking spearmen with cavalry. The spearmen always fell flat on the ground, as if killed or wounded by the rifle fire of our infantry, and when charged by cavalry they sat up and drove their spears into the horses' bellies. After bringing animal and rider to earth they then attacked the dismounted trooper with their *bihawa* (short waist-carried sword). In this way a British officer once lost sixty men killed and wounded, having simply ignored the advice given to him by Lieutenant-Colonel Stevens, commanding the Aden Troop.

Notwithstanding Colonel Valentine Baker's inability to help me with regard to my entering the new Egyptian Police, Sir Edward Malet very kindly said: "I will consult Sir Auckland Colvin [the Financial Adviser to the Khedive at Cairo] about you, as I want to keep you in Egypt." Sir Edward also wrote to my father, with whom he had no personal acquaintance, to that effect. Sir Edward's influence and support were on my side when I solicited the Foreign Office to recommend my reappointment as Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden. In that capacity my services would be utilized by the Foreign Office for employment in Somaliland, then under the political supervision of H.B.M.'s Representative in Egypt.

I returned, therefore, from the Consulate to the Abbassieh Palace to perform any odd jobs Sir Herbert MacPherson might have for me to do. One morning he said: "The Commissariat Officer complains that, though the rations are loaded ready for despatch in the train at the Cairo railway station, yet that particular train is being detained under the standing orders of Colonel George Wolseley. Please see what you can do to expedite the

early delivery of our rations." I suggested that the little branch line from the terminus to Abbasieh should be placed in charge of an Assistant Traffic Manager ; while if I was at once appointed to that office I might be able to deal with Colonel George Wolseley on equal terms. Sir Herbert at once made the appointment.

I ascertained, then, from the officer commanding at the Cairo terminus that Colonel Wolseley (Sir Garnet's brother) would not allow an engine to be moved without his specially signed permit or pass. I therefore called on Colonel George Wolseley at Shepheard's Hotel, taking with me a dozen written permits to move an engine on the Abbasieh branchline whenever needed by the Assistant Traffic Manager. I apologized for personally troubling Colonel Wolseley on so small a matter, and he signed all the permits I had prepared. Incidentally, Lieutenant C. Crutchley, of the Scots Guards, had the same difficulty on the Kasrel Nil branch line ; but, on his endeavouring to get some signed permits, Colonel Wolseley would not sign any more.

In 1893 Colonel George Wolseley had been knighted, and was commanding the Belgaum Division. In that year I was the Political Agent in subordinate charge of the Southern Maratha Jaghirs, with Belgaum as my headquarters station. Colonel Wolseley and I became very intimate, owing to my wife being the sister of his great friend, Sir C. M. MacGregor, second M.G. of the Army in India.

To return, however, to the present. I happened to be riding on the horse captured at Tel-el-Kebir over the bridge near the terminus in Cairo, when I met Sir Garnet Wolseley and his staff. I saluted and drew up to let them pass. A minute or two later an A.D.C. rode up to me and said : "Mr. Walsh, I believe, of Sir Herbert MacPherson's staff?" I replied : "That is my name." He said : "Sir Garnet Wolseley orders you to report yourself to-morrow morning to Lieutenant Colonel Swain, his military secretary."

On my return to Abbasieh I reported the matter to Sir Herbert. He said : "Very wrong of Sir Garnet to have given an officer on my staff a direct order. He should have applied to me to send you to Colonel Swain.

I shall take official notice of this military irregularity." I begged Sir Herbert, however, not to start a "war" on my account. As I pointed out, this was the third occasion that for some reason Sir Garnet had shown hostility towards me. I said I imagined it was that Sir Garnet resented a civilian being appointed in any military capacity in Egypt. Already, for instance, he had "run in" and sent to the rear Sir Havelock Allen (a retired soldier, but to all intents and purposes now a civilian); and there were others besides who had somehow or other managed to get up to the front.

After seeing Sir Herbert, therefore, I started off to see Sir Baker Russel. And to Sir Baker I said: "I want a line from you for me to hand to Colonel Swain, Sir Garnet's military secretary. Colonel Swain, of course, knows all about my official records, but I wish him to be acquainted with my social status." Sir Baker thereupon wrote a note in the following strain :

*My dear Swain,*

*Allow me to introduce to you my old whist friend, L. Prendergast Walsh. Formerly a Mail Agent, and lately Second Assistant Political Resident, Aden, he is at present on the personal staff of Sir Herbert MacPherson. Walsh has suddenly developed the desire to know "big wigs", so I present him to you, as the biggest one I know, with the request that you will introduce him to the swells now residing in Cairo.*

I handed my card and Sir Baker's epistle to an orderly outside Colonel Swain's office, and was shown in at once. I explained the cause of my visit, and was asked to sit down. I made a point of dropping to the Colonel that Sir Herbert considered the request for my attendance should have been sent to, or through, himself. Colonel Swain, at that, asked me to remain there while he went to see Sir Garnet. On returning to me he told me that I was not wanted. I fancy Sir Garnet was advised by Colonel Swain that, if I was blamed in any way, the matter must be forwarded in the first instance to Sir Herbert MacPherson. I afterwards saw a good deal of Colonel Swain in Cairo society, while later still I dined with him at his mess in



Belfast. I also met him at Mount Vernon, the residence of Alderman Lowther, Chairman of the Belfast Harbour Board, Belfast. Years after, too, I met Lord Wolseley himself at dinner at Colonel Bashford's house at Brighton. On that occasion, however, neither of us alluded to the campaign of 1882 in Egypt!

Sir Herbert told me that the Indian Division would be broken up on a certain date, but that some of the regiment would leave Cairo for Suez before that date. My services under Sir Herbert would, therefore, terminate with the embarkation for Bombay of the last unit of his Division. A passage in a transport, however, would be provided for me, and Colonel Martelli would forward Colonel Struben-zee's letter, together with his (Sir Herbert's) two despatches recording his appreciation of my "gallant and useful" services to the Government of India. The same would also be sent direct to the Under-Secretary of State at the India Office, London. Sir Herbert told me I might rely upon him and his testimony in my favour. He had further suggested that my name should be recommended for appointment to a direct commission in the Indian Army; but later he ascertained that I was too old to join the Indian Staff Corps, and also that no direct appointments were made to the Indian Army, all candidates having to pass through British Service under the existing regulations. Sir Herbert then spoke to Colonel Martin Dillon, Military Secretary at the War Office, about getting me a commission in the British Service. Since I had no private means, I could not reside with a British regiment; but if I held a commission, a transfer to the Indian Army would be feasible under the rules.

As may be imagined, I warmly thanked Sir Herbert MacPherson for his many great kindnesses to me.

I asked Sir Herbert MacPherson to grant me military leave up to the date on which the Division was broken up, and on his assenting to do so I telegraphed to the Postmaster-General for privilege leave from the date on which the Indian Division actually left Egypt. This was granted, and it enabled me to reach London nearly ten days before my civil leave commenced.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LONDON—INDIA OFFICE AND WAR OFFICE

I ARRIVED in London on my return from Egypt after the campaign of 1882 armed with all my papers and copies of official certificates, and endeavoured to induce the Secretary of State for India to restore me to my former post of Second Assistant Political Officer at Aden. When I had been unceremoniously ousted from that office by the Government of Bombay, they had declared they were acting in obedience to the orders of the Secretary of State. The fact was, the general standing order of the Secretary of State prohibited the appointment of an uncovenanted official to the Political Service, and the Bombay Government, wishing to get rid of me, applied that order to me.

I failed, however, at the hands of the Secretary of State to obtain any redress for the unfair treatment which had been meted out to me.

Later, under the terms of the Secretary of State's despatch, dated 13th September, 1883, Sir James Fergusson reappointed me on the 29th May, 1884, to my former position of Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden. I had thus been kept out of the Political Service for two years and two months. A grave scandal, this, which had occasioned me the loss of pay and allowance as a Political Officer during that long period.

Previous to my reinstatement in the Political Service, Sir Richard Temple said that he was of opinion that the Secretary of State might be influenced in my favour if the War Office inquired what steps had been taken to recognize my services in Egypt. He proposed, therefore, to place my name before Her Majesty for the gift of a commission in the Army. It was pointed out that there had been no suggestion of limiting my appointment to the Indian Army, as the original proposal was to give me a commission in the

Army. My failure to get appointed direct to the Indian Army arose because I was too old, and unless I belonged to some British unit or corps I could not under the regulations be transferred to the Indian Staff Corps.

Colonel Martin Dillon was then military secretary to H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief. Some time previously Colonel Dillon had written to my paternal grandmother regarding a photograph of her husband, who had commanded the Green Jacket Battalion at Waterloo. This photograph was to be placed in the Rifle Brigade album of former officers of that distinguished corps. I accordingly put this letter in my pocket, and called on Colonel Dillon at the War Office. He was exceedingly cordial to me, and said : "As a boy I knew your grandfather. On retirement from the Army he took Holy Orders, but continued to be known by his Green Jacket appellation of 'Timber Leg'."

I explained to Colonel Dillon that, as an uncovenanted officer, I was ineligible for appointment to the Indian Political Service ; but that as a reward for useful services rendered to the Political Department, and on account of my intimate knowledge of the affairs on the littorals of the Red Sea, Sir Richard Temple had specially appointed me to the Political Service. After being removed from that office by the Secretary of State, at the instance of a group of competition-covenanted Civil Servants, I was unable to get any redress for that ill-treatment. I suggested that, in addition to the general objection of employing an uncovenanted officer, the military authorities in India did not wish to have any inquiry regarding the abandonment of the limber boxes of H. I. Royal Artillery in the desert ; and this would be necessary, if my case were taken up.

I requested Colonel Dillon, therefore, not to write officially to the Secretary of State, since the latter was entirely in the hands of his covenanted staff, and they would at once move to quash my case and claims. Instead, I prayed Colonel Dillon to write privately and personally to the Secretary of State, thereby probably inducing him to act in my case on his sole initiative. I wished to compose this letter myself, so as to render the statements



therein irrefutable, and Colonel Dillon very kindly said: "Very well, let me see what you want me to write." I then drafted a brief epistle of facts, which Colonel Dillon said that he had no objection to signing. He called his clerk, and was about to give him my draft to copy, when I asked him to dictate it to the latter. After he had done so, with his permission I destroyed my draft, and Colonel Dillon observed that it was the prudent and correct course to take.

I pointed out to Colonel Dillon that if by any chance a commission was offered to me, I could not afford to accept it on 5s. 3d. per diem. Moreover, as it would be to a British regiment, I was too old for a transfer to the Indian Staff Corps, and it would be useless to me; while, yet again, if I had not obtained a majority in less than fourteen years, I should be under British rules compulsorily retired under the "age clause" limit. Colonel Dillon replied: "I quite understand what you say and your position. I won't, therefore, put you in the flattering dilemma of having to refuse a commission, but will do all in my power to assist you to obtain Her Majesty's sanction for your permanent employment by the India Office. I may tell you that Sir Herbert MacPherson has urged me to have the attention of the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief in India drawn to his despatch, in which he has recorded his appreciation of your 'useful and gallant services' in Egypt."

No doubt Colonel Dillon's personal letter to the Secretary of State did a great deal towards effecting the compromise under which I rejoined the Indian Political Service. In any case, I thanked Colonel Dillon very warmly for his great kindness and powerful aid. I never, however, saw him again.





PART II  
SOMALI COAST STORIES





## CHAPTER I

### THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MY EMPLOYMENT IN SOMALILAND

I MADE the acquaintance at Aden of Captain Frederick Mercer Hunter, Second Assistant Political Resident. Now Captain Hunter, Lieutenant-Colonel Prideau, the First Assistant Resident, the Resident, and the officers of the Indian Navy had long advocated the annexation of Somaliland, as they all feared a foreign power would some day seize that part of North-east Africa, and thus command the country from which Aden was supplied with meat.

Late in 1874, or early in 1875, when I was at Suez, I learned that two Egyptian war vessels, and two or three steamers of the Khedival line, had taken on board troops and stores for transport to Berbera, which was the chief town, and the only good harbour on the African littoral of the Gulf of Aden. Through the courtesy of Mr. Tuck, the agent of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Suez, I unofficially telegraphed this information to Captain Hunter. The latter was greatly relieved that the occupation was not being made by a European power, and immediately proceeded to Berbera. He reached that port a few days before the arrival of the Khedival squadron, and thus was on the spot to protest against the Egyptian occupation of Somaliland.

Captain Hunter, however, recognized that the Egyptian Government would establish law and order at the Somali Coast ports, and in that way would increase and encourage trade with Aden. In order, therefore, to preserve British rights and interests, he drew up a protocol. Under the terms of this, sheep, cattle, and ponies for the Aden markets were not to be taxed, British trade generally was to be facilitated, and our merchants, as well as Europeans and natives of India and Aden, were to be protected and allowed



to reside at the coast ports. The officer commanding the Egyptian forces at Berbera accepted these conditions, and to them the Khedive also offered no objection.

The Turkish Government, on the other hand, refused to recognize or to agree to the terms of Captain Hunter's protocol. Nevertheless, beyond claiming Turkish suzerainty as far east as Bunder Alula and Guardafui, they took no further action in the matter. Turkey, in fact, never occupied any port or displayed the crescent to the eastward of the limits of the Pashalic of Zeila; and the Khedive of Egypt seized Berbera without any authority from the Sultan.

In 1880 I was Acting Second Assistant Resident at Aden, and Captain Hunter then held the post of Acting First Assistant there. We both kept our eyes on Somaliland, and specially trained forty men of the Aden Police as expert rifles and in the handling of an old-fashioned three-pound field-gun. This little force was kept in readiness for shipment to the Somali Coast at a moment's notice. As I was the Assistant Resident, I was in command of a large force called the Aden Settlement Police. I was known as the Superintendent of Police in Aden, and had under me the Town Camel and Foot (rifle-armed) Police for the desert, and the Water Police for harbour and coast work. From the first it was predicted that, without British support, the Egyptians would be forced to abandon their occupation of Somaliland from Dongarita (nine miles from Zeila) to Guardafui.

In March 1882, the Government of Bombay having removed me summarily from the Political Department, I was compelled to revert to my substantive appointment as mail agent in the Marine Postal Service. This was a terrible blow to the scheme and arrangements that Hunter and myself had made for a British lordship over Somaliland. Hunter had had some correspondence with Major Baring, the British Representative in Cairo, regarding the evacuation of Egyptian garrisons from the Eastern Mudirieh of the Sudan. In this connection Hunter had undertaken to carry out the retirement of the Egyptian Forces from Harar, Berbera, and Zeila, provided that



he was permitted to select and appoint his own staff. He therefore desired Major Baring to have me made an unpaid Vice-Consul for the Somali coast, in addition to my appointment under the Government of Bombay as Second Resident, Aden. Unless, however, I was restored to my Indian pay and position at Aden, I should receive no Indian or British pay during my residence on the Somali coast as an officer in the employment of the British Foreign Office. Major Hunter consequently would not undertake carrying out the evacuation, unless he was definitely assured of having the assistance of the only officer with local knowledge and experience of Somali coast affairs—myself.

The resident at Aden and Captain Hunter urged the Government of Bombay to send me back to my former post at Aden, but they failed to get me reinstated. Hunter wrote to me in February 1884, to the effect that he particularly wanted my presence at Aden towards the end of May 1884, in order to have me available at a moment's notice for service on the Somali Coast. He told me that, apart from my local knowledge, one of his reasons for selecting me to deal and negotiate with the Somali akils and tribes was that he had heard me assert that a good Political Agent always deprecated the use of force, aiming at conducting operations by skill rather than by fighting. With this view Hunter entirely agreed; and he knew that if he entrusted to me any dealings with the Somalis, I would avoid to the best of my ability all warlike acts. At the same time, if driven into a corner and compelled to fight, Hunter was equally aware that I would fight rather than make a disgraceful retreat. Hunter also remarked in his letter to me that nearly all politicals were professional soldiers; as a result, even when holding purely civil offices, they particularly coveted "mentions" in despatches for services which had no connection with their political duties.

I wrote, promising to place myself personally at Hunter's disposal without fail in May 1884, even if I had not by that date induced the Government of Bombay to reinstate me at Aden. I asked Hunter, nevertheless, to continue his own

efforts to procure my re-establishment in the post of Second Assistant Resident. I pointed out that I could take furlough from the Postal Department, or get transferred to Aden as postmaster ; while in the latter capacity I should be on the spot and available for despatch to the Somali Coast, as a homeward- or outward-bound mail officer could always be stopped to take charge of the Aden post office. If, however, all these plans fell through, I offered to resign from the Marine Postal Service and thus obtain entire freedom from Governmental control. But I pointed out that I did not desire to leave the service of the Government of India ; since, by retaining the lien given me on my post as a mail agent, my time spent on duty in any department counted under the regulations as service for Indian leave and pension.

About the middle of May 1884 I called on the private secretary to H. E. the Governor of Bombay, and on the Hon. James B. Peile, C.S.I., Member of Council, Bombay. The other member, the Hon. Maxwell Melvill, was very hostile to me, and was opposed to the employment of an uncovenanted servant in the Political Service. Mr. Peile sympathized with me and said : "I shall see the Governor at Government House, and will suggest that you should call upon His Excellency to-morrow, so as to meet me there. I will ask Sir James to listen to your complaint of your treatment at the hands of the heads of various departments at the Bombay Secretariat, notwithstanding the Secretary of State's despatch [No. 99, dated 18th September, 1883] removing the bar to your appointment to the Political Service." I told Mr. Peile that both Sir Richard Temple and Sir Henry Rawlinson of the India Council had brought my claim to the notice of Sir James Fergusson, who desired to reinstate me. The latter, however, was really powerless against the well-organized opposition of the trade union composed of members of the covenanted Civil Service. I then called upon the private secretary and told him that I prayed for an interview with the Governor in the presence of Mr. Peile. This request was at once granted.

Sir James Fergusson was always very friendly to me since our first meeting at the whist table on the P. & O.

steamer by which he travelled out to Bombay. Sir James on the present occasion said, "I agree with Mr. Peile, and I have decided to appoint you myself to your former post of Second Assistant Resident, Aden." I thanked him very warmly for his kindness and sympathy with me, and observed that, though it was very unusual to send an officer to fill a post at Aden for the short period of three months, yet I trusted to be despatched to fill that particular vacancy, which had been caused by the Resident taking short or privilege leave. Sir James Fergusson replied: "You shall be sent to Aden at once, and I think your early arrival there will suit Major Hunter's plans for your employment on the Somali Coast." A day or two later I was gazetted to act as Second Assistant Resident, Aden, and I joined that office on the 29th May, 1884.

Hunter was overjoyed at seeing me, and forgot all about quarantine regulations and restrictions. He attempted to land on Quarantine Island, and held out his hand for me to shake. Havildar Khoda Buxsh, however, seized me by the shoulder and saved me in the nick of time from returning Hunter's grip. The Havildar excused his seeming rudeness by saying: "The French Consul is at the tripod of his telescope, which is trained full on the island. He would be delighted to witness such a breach of the quarantine regulations as would have occurred if Captain Hunter had shaken hands with you."

As soon, therefore, as I was liberated from quarantine, Hunter and I discussed hoisting the British flag at several places on the Somali Coast. Hunter explained to me, however, that he had no intention of lowering the Egyptian flag. It could remain flying under my charge, and would be a protection to us, since I had been appointed the representative of His Highness the Khedive. A similar course had been adopted at Zeila, where a British officer had taken charge of that Pashalic.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FRENCH SCORE THE FIRST TRICK

ZEILA is a small Turkish Pashalic under the Governor of Hodeida, who terms or leases the town for a fixed annual sum. In 1854 Captain Richard Burton, the traveller, visited Zeila as the guest of El Haj Shermarki bin Ali Salil, a Somali of the Habr Gerhajis tribe, and the farmer of Zeila at the time of Burton's visit. Shermarki was a friend and supporter of the British, and, owing to his advice, aid, and influence, Burton, accompanied by two well-known Aden policemen in plain clothes, was able to reach Harar easily and in safety (see *First Footsteps in East Africa*, by Richard Burton).

In 1884 Abubuker Pasha, a chief of the Dunkali tribe and a French-protected subject, was the Khedive's Governor of Zeila, which was then leased from the Turkish Pasha of Hodeida by the Egyptian Government for £18,000 per annum. Abubuker and five of his sons were slave-dealers, and *protégés français*, and shipped their "ebony and ivory" from the "City of the Slave-merchant"—Tajurah, in the Gulf of Ghubbet Kharab (Bay of Foulness). On the western shore of that gulf the Egyptians had a small fort at Sagallo. Abubuker Pasha ordered the garrison of Sagallo to haul down the Egyptian flag, abandon that port, and retire to Zeila. The French then established an *ohokh* a few miles to the westward, at once occupied Sagallo, and no protest by Major Hunter succeeded in making them "quit it". They therefore continued in possession, and Hunter was greatly annoyed at having thus been "done" by Abubuker and his son Boorhan, Deputy Governor of Zeila.

It was patent to all that the French had scored the first trick, and Hunter thereupon sent a detachment of British and native troops to garrison Zeila for the safeguarding

of British and Egyptian interests against further encroachments. Hunter then decided to place me at Berbera as H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul, with as my personal guard the forty specially trained police that we had organized and kept ready at Aden for service in Somaliland.

On the 4th August, 1884, Hunter took me and my escort to Berbera in a Royal Indian Marine vessel. We called on the Governor, Ebrahim Bey Sabet, who had been sent *en mission* from Egypt to assist Captain Hunter. The Bey complained that the Deputy-Governor, Boorhan Effendi (an Egyptian), was intriguing with a European power to occupy Berbera before that port was handed to the charge of a British officer. Since it was obviously essential to oust this rascal as soon as possible, Hunter and I then and there concocted a letter in Arabic, instructing the Bey to send Boorhan Effendi to Egypt by the next Khedival steamer. Hunter, however, had no Arab clerk or seal of office with him, and he foresaw that the Bey would not act on a letter which simply bore his signature and no seal of office. I suggested, therefore, he should forward this letter to me, and direct me by an endorsement thereon to hand it to the Bey. This I would do under my seal of office as H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul.

Hunter left for Aden the same evening. The next morning, in uniform, I attended the Bey's divan, and presented Hunter's letter ordering the expulsion of Boorhan, the Deputy-Governor, from Berbera. The latter, however, refused to vacate his post. Fortunately Admiral Radwan Pasha arrived during the afternoon in the Khedival liner, hoping to meet Captain Hunter, and I showed the Admiral the instructions given to the Bey. Radwan Pasha said that he could take Boorhan with him at noon the next day, and in this way he did ship him back to Egypt. This prompt action, in my opinion, rendered Hunter and myself a great service; we learned later that Boorhan was in communication with some German prospectors.

With Radwan Pasha I had a long conversation, and he pointed out that, as H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul, and with my position as Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden,



I held the relative rank of Major. Moreover, since I was now the Khedive's representative at Berbera, His Highness had given me a commission as Kahim Makan (Lieutenant-Colonel) in the Egyptian Army. Captain Hunter, as H.B.M.'s Consul and First Assistant Resident, Aden, represented the Khedive in Somaliland, and had been granted a commission as Mir Ali (Full Colonel). Radwan Pasha then produced two signed commissions, and asked to be given the correct spelling of our respective Christian and surnames. I thanked Radwan Pasha warmly for his efforts on behalf of my chief and myself, but declined to accept the commission without the distinct permission of H.B.M.'s Government. I felt certain, however, that Captain Hunter would not approach the British Foreign Office in the matter.

Radwan Pasha left Berbera, hoping to catch Captain Hunter either at Zeila or at Aden. He said that he hoped to revisit me before returning to Egypt; but he never did so, nor did he meet Hunter. Three or four days later Hunter suddenly arrived at Berbera in an Indian Marine vessel. He appeared greatly perturbed, and said that the Resident had received information that two German ships of war were in the Red Sea *en route* for Zanzibar, under orders to visit the Somali Coast ports from the 49th east latitude to Ras Hafun.

The Aden police then reported that a Mijjertheyn Somal (with whom the Somals at Aden were unacquainted) had been noticed hanging about the office of a German merchant, who was also the German Consular Agent. Our detective became on very friendly terms with this stranger, and ascertained that he had formerly been employed in a German commercial firm at Zanzibar and spoke German fluently. It appeared he had been sent to Aden to join an outward-bound German warship as interpreter, but since the warship had not touched at Aden, he was about to take passage in a dhow to Bunder Luada, where he had been told that he would find the vessel in question. Our intelligent "*mouchard*" cursed the British, calling them grabbers of Somaliland and of the earth generally; and we thereby gathered that the German naval authorities



hoped to make trade agreements with several petty sultans of the Somali Coast ports.

The Resident and Hunter thought that, though a trade agreement might be innocent enough, yet it might be eventually converted or construed into a treaty, whereby these sultans would become German-protected rulers. Hunter said to me: "I have told you all that the Resident and I know, and we may, of course, be wrong. Nevertheless, I think we are not much out in our estimate of the object of a German cruiser visiting the Somali Coast eastern ports. The Resident, in any case, told me to see you, and said he knew you'd be able to find some way of frustrating the German naval officer in the matter of attempting to obtain any agreement from a Coast sultan."

I answered that I appreciated the Resident's complimentary remarks, and his confidence in my ability to uphold British interests. Hunter, however, observed: "Yes; that's all very well. But what exactly do you propose to do? What, indeed, *can* you do?" I replied that I hoped to be able to bowl out Mein Herr by simply telling the sultans of the coast ports that we did not object to their accepting dollars from, and signing an agreement with, the Germans, provided that the agreement contained a clause to the effect that in the event of any dispute with the Germans the British Resident at Aden should be sole arbitrator, and the latter's decision be final and binding on both parties. "My dear Hunter," I added, "let me play the game my way, the details of which I have still to think out and plan. I promise you we shall not lose the second trick. Moreover, in seizing Sagallo the French had the assistance of Abubuker Pasha; our German cousins, on the contrary, have no local allies, and are totally inexperienced in dealing with Somalis. Against the Somalis force is useless, as they can retire inland to their flocks and herds, and cock snooks at a ship of war!"

I then asked Hunter to hasten his return to Aden, and to send back by his steamer the Aden police-constables, together with others that I named as men likely to be of use to me for the mission in hand. "Please thank the Resident," I concluded, "and tell him that I do not intend

to leave Berbera myself. I shall remain here to direct operations. Ask him to stop British ships of war and Indian Marine vessels from visiting the coast, but if a steamer has to be sent to this coast east of Berbera, she should be Cowasji Dinshaw's trading-steamer."

Immediately after Hunter had left the residency I summoned Mahomed Dosa, a Mijjertheyn employed as assistant to the Egyptian harbour-master; Mahomed Shermarki, an *akil* of the Haber Gerhajis Musa Arah; Baigsee Abseya, *ugash* of the Biladieh Riflemen, formerly an Aden policeman and orderly to the Gazee at Aden, and now the Somali in charge of the oil lamps at the lighthouse. I purposely refrained from telling my plans to my interpreters or to any of the trained riflemen I had as my Consular Guard, and made no disclosures to the Egyptian Governor or to members of his staff.

My orderly reported that Mahomed Dosa was actually in the guard-room, and desirous of being admitted to "The Presence". I therefore invited Mahomed to seat himself on the floor, gave him a cheroot, and inquired if a *sambuk* could be hired to go to the eastern ports. Mahomed replied: "Your Honour knows that I own two dhows, one of which is hired permanently to the local harbour-master, while the other carries cargoes to and from Hodeida to the ports on the Arabian and Somali coasts. My *nakoda*, who has just arrived empty from Sokotra, reports that he was hired there to convey three German civilians to several ports between Ras Hafun and our frontier near Lasghoria, and that he had left them at the latter place. My *nakoda* says that these Germans were botanists and collectors of insects; they asked the positions and distances of wells, but beyond such inquiries did not appear to take any interest in the country, its politics, game, trade, and products. A couple of days out from Lasghoria he had sighted a German war vessel going to the eastward, and thought that she was the German gunboat at Aden."

The foregoing report, though it gave me no help, definitely showed that there was a German ship of war and Germans on the coast, and obviously there for some definite purpose. I therefore came to the same conclusion



as the Resident and Hunter had done, and felt it was my duty to take early steps to try to frustrate a German occupation, or the making of any agreement regarding the establishment of a trading settlement at any port. I explained to Mahomed Dosa that the German Kaiser was a son-in-law of our great and gracious Queen Victoria, and that when his vessels touched at Aden they received every possible assistance from Her Majesty's servants in obtaining coal, provisions, water, and meat. I also pointed out that without such supplies to hand the German naval authorities would find it difficult to reach or to remain on the Somali Coast. The Germans were thus described by me as trusted cousins, and I made it clear that I wanted the attention of the Coast sultans drawn to those facts. But I also carefully brought home the fact that, although the British did not object to the making of trade agreements between the sultans and the Germans, yet as a matter of ordinary prudence each agreement should contain a clause for the amicable settlement of any disputes which might in the future arise. Thus, since the sultans and the Germans were both friends of the British, and as the latter allowed and facilitated Somali dhows and German steamers to trade with Aden, it was to the interest of both parties to agree to the appointment of the British Resident at Aden as the final judge in all disputes. This arrangement was to be pressed as an essential point with the sultans, who without free access to Aden could not dispose of the goods and wreckage cast on their coasts, which was their chief source of revenue. Moreover, although we subsidized each one of them to protect our wrecked subjects and property, we did not otherwise interfere.

Mahomed Dosa was delighted with my ideas, which I then also communicated to my previously named advisers. After discussion we selected emissaries (not necessarily British servants or subjects) who were to visit without delay the Coast sultans. The emissaries were to press on the sultans views similar to those I had expounded, but were not to tell them that I had specially sent them to preach this gospel of prudence. With the advice of Mahomed Hindi, the former British Agent at Berbera, we



picked out some Arab, Somali, and Indian traders; and the latter, seeing their own interests were involved, very willingly went to interview the sultans, with whom they each had business relations. Mahomed Dosa was personally acquainted with every sultan on the Coast, and, being himself a Mijjertheyn and a very well-to-do trader, he had great influence. I therefore sent him to direct operations from Lasghoria and to visit each port, if he deemed it desirable to do so.

In due course three German war vessels arrived at Lasghoria, and the Officer in Command visited the sultan of Bunder Luada and other places, and laid before each of these chiefs an agreement of trade, amity, and friendship. The Somali rulers stated their willingness to sign such agreements, and each received a gratuity for consenting to do so. When, however, it came to the actual signing of the documents, each sultan insisted on adding a clause to the effect that in the event of any disputes the latter were to be submitted to the British Resident at Aden. The Senior German Naval Officer naturally declined to assent to such terms, and, notwithstanding the large expenditure made by him, was compelled to leave the Somali Coast without having obtained the acceptance of a single agreement of any kind.

We really owed the success of our scheme to the skill and loyalty of Mahomed Dosa, and to the clever and intelligent natives he had under his orders. The Germans never returned to the Somali Coast, although at one time they claimed to have annexed the Somali Coast between Lasghoria and Ras Hafun. Incidentally, the Senior German Officer, whose venture I managed to foil, informed an Austrian acquaintance of mine that on the Somali Coast the British had not left a decent mangrove swamp worth seizing. In reply he was told: "Well, the British have been in those seas for over two hundred years, and the charts of the whole coasts were made by their vessels, so what else could you, as a late arrival, expect?"

I thanked Mahomed Dosa for his services, promising to hire his dhow and make him the harbour-master at Berbera on the departure of the Egyptian garrison from

that port. The Resident and Captain Hunter also gave him a considerable sum in cash, and he was presented with a sword and belt, a *poshak* (dress of honour), and a shawl. For myself, I gave Mahomed Dosa a silver watch, inscribed with my personal appreciation of the good services he had rendered me as the Agent of the British Crown. He was delighted, and entirely satisfied with the treatment he had received from us.

Major Hunter was pressed by the British Resident at Aden, by the Government of Bombay, and by the Admiral on the East India Station, to employ military and naval forces (or a combination of both) for the occupation of Berbera and Bulhar. Some officious person then wrote to my father urging him to protest at the India Office in London against exposing me to the certainty of being attacked, and probably killed, if not protected by a sufficient force of regulars. My father at once assured the Secretary of State that his son was perfectly aware of the dangerous nature of the duty on which he was employed. Of late, my father admitted, the danger had increased, since Somaliland was on the brink of adherence to the cause of the Mahdi. However, Major Hunter and I had fully considered the probability of this obstacle to a peaceful penetration, and were both still of the opinion that with a guard of forty well-trained riflemen Berbera could be safely held. We had, moreover, the aid of the Habr Awal tribes and friendlies on the coast, the latter represented by their akils; while the notables and Arab traders and all classes at the ports would also in their own interests support us, and had indeed promised to do so. Lastly, the mere presence of soldiers would provide the Mahdi with another reason for our expulsion, as a military occupation would be very unpopular.

Much to the disgust of Major Hunter and myself, however, a British ship of war was stationed at Berbera. I was ordered to sleep on board, instead of in my Consulate, although I resided at the Consulate all day, having there my meals and conducting my business. I was very cordially received by the Somalis generally and by the merchants, who were aware that on the evacuation of Berbera



by the Egyptians I was to succeed as the Wali (Governor) of that port and district (i.e. from Dongarita to Lasghoria). All classes, in fact, called on me and volunteered their aid.

The Senousi sent emissaries to Berbera; and we afterwards ascertained from documentary evidence found on the body of a dead Mugarubi (a Western Arab) that a number of these rascals had been specially sent to create riots and disorder at Berbera. Their object was to promulgate hatred against all Christians, to preach the doctrine of "Africa for the Africans" and the total exclusion of the white man. Now the Somali is at heart a trader; yet many of them, in order to show sympathy with the Mahdi and his cause, agreed not to supply camels or sheep, or to allow the recruitment of drivers and coolies for the British Army then fighting Osman Digna and the Dervishes at Suakin. Owing, however, to their deep-rooted commercial instincts, they were unable to bring themselves in practice to cut off trade relations with us, or to exclude the British from Somaliland. These views and actions brought about many serious fights in Berbera and inland between the Senousi and the Mahdists, at which I greatly rejoiced, since these differences of opinion and policy rendered my position very much easier. I was better able to maintain the balance of power and the consequent peace, which kept our custom-houses open for the collection of duties, upon which receipts we were absolutely dependent in order to pay expenses. The British or Indian Exchequer made no grant whatever to meet our expenditure, simply placing the services of a number of Arabic-speaking Indian Political Officers at the disposal of H.B.M.'s Foreign Office to conduct the Administration in all its branches.

The Bey of Berbera had handed over to me, for my residence and Vice-Consulate, a very comfortable and well-furnished bungalow called the Darf Khana (guest-house). It had an immense stone bath and a fountain in the quadrangle. In these quarters I installed my kit and personal servants, and I also fitted up an office, with a room adjoining for my Arabic clerk. My clerk, however, unfortunately could not read or write English, and I was compelled to obtain a boy who could copy English from



the Roman Catholic Mission School at Aden. I had practically no Consular duties to perform beyond registering the names and occupations of every British subject permanently residing at Berbera. From each of those the Foreign Office had authorized me to levy a fee of five shillings, as the British Government gave me no salary. Hunter and I, however, deemed it *infra dig.* to demand such a fee, and I never collected or took it. In consequence I received no remuneration at all from the British Government, and my salary was derived from the Somali Coast revenue receipts.

As I have already mentioned, I was instructed to sleep each night on board H.M.S. *Dragon* (Captain Pipon, R.N.). This most inconvenient arrangement lasted for about three weeks. On the 27th August, 1884, I was at last permitted to reside entirely on *terra firma*, in H.B.M.'s Consulate and under the Union Jack. On the latter date the Egyptian garrison was ready to embark, and was awaiting transport to Suez. I might therefore at any moment be called upon to take over and administer the town.

I had not been idle, having enrolled fifty extra local policemen. My recruits were a somewhat mixed lot, including Arabs, Beloochis, Pathans, a Bokharise (a very remarkable man, named Shere Ali), and some deserters from the Turkish Army in Yemen, who described themselves as firemen discharged from steamers at various Red Sea ports. The remainder were chiefly Habr Awal Somals, selected from the Ayal Ahmed, Ayal Yunis, Makail, Jibril Abuker, and Baghoba clans. The total strength of the regular police was thus brought up to 100 men of all ranks. Many of the Somali recruits had never used a rifle, and had to be trained at once, but many of the others had been accustomed to handling various types of fire-arms, and consequently were available for duty in a few days.

I purchased several thousand empty rice-sacks (known as *gunni* bags), and these I stacked at convenient places, to be filled when needed with sand and used for defence purposes. I also hired Mahomed Dosa's trading-dhow,

and got the carpenter's mate of H.M.S. *Dragon* to strengthen the poop and the covered-in forecastle, so to carry two three-pounder man-harnessed field-guns which I had decided to take over from the Egyptians. This dhow was kept at anchor off the pier-head, with her stern made fast to the shore. Mahomed Dosa was instructed to keep his eyes on all the harbour-master's boats and stores. This was a very necessary precaution, as I feared the stores might be secretly sold.

I had obtained the services of two men from the 4th Bombay Rifles to train and drill the Somali recruits enrolled for service in the Berbera district. This body of men was officially designated the Somali Coast Police. One member of the S.C.P., Jemedar Khoda Buxsh, was an expert rifleman; he had fitted up a rifle range on the beach to the westward of the Shaab, and was indefatigable in his efforts to teach musketry. He soon made several of our recruits sufficiently efficient to serve under cover, thus freeing an equal number of men for service in the field.

Captain Pipon, R.N., placed at my disposal the services of the Chief Engineer of H.M.S. *Dragon*. This officer accompanied me to the Dubar waterworks, where several reservoirs had been constructed to receive the hot saline water that oozed out of numerous fissures at the base of the Dubar Mountain. These reservoirs were connected with the Shaab by a six-inch iron pipe laid by the Egyptian Government, and which provided Berbera with potable drinking-water. A native of India farmed the water supply, and charged the water-carriers half an anna for a large skinful of water. The receipts from this source yielded a large annual revenue.

I realized that if the Dubar waterworks were destroyed or were held by hostile Somalis, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain sufficient drinking-water for the population of Berbera, though a few small wells existed near the seashore. I therefore suggested that the main pipe should be secretly tapped at about fifty or one hundred feet on the Berbera side of the last Dubar reservoir, and fed direct with the water which trickled out of several

of the smaller clefts at the base of the Dubar Mountain. All the materials needed to carry out this scheme were actually on the spot, the necessary labour only was wanting. I proposed to obtain the latter, however, by detaining four or five Sudanese privates at Dubar when the Egyptian garrison handed the works over to me.

As it was prudent to attract as little attention as possible to the execution of this work, I did not acquaint the Greek engineer in charge of the water establishment, or any of his Somali staff, of my project. I took into my confidence only Furug, the head turnkey, formerly a Sudanese private in a Khartoum infantry regiment; Hassub Alla, a fellaheen turnkey from Egypt; and a Somali linesman. These three men I had determined to keep in their places, and to discharge all the others employed at Dubar. The linesman's duty was to patrol the ground underneath which the main pipe was laid, and to see if the joints of the latter leaked. Under ordinary circumstances these were sound and watertight enough, as the Egyptian garrison controlled the route absolutely; after their departure, however, mounted Somalis used to scrape away the sand, light a fire below a joint and thereby melt out the lead, which was a very valuable metal in Somaliland.

As the foot police were quite unable to catch these mischievous rascals, Elahi Bakhr, the armourer of the Berbera Police, who had to keep these pipes in proper order, determined unknown to me to teach them a lesson. He procured two donkeys, and loaded the panniers which they carried with dates, rice, sugar, Surat tobacco, and other delicacies specially appreciated by the Somalis. Amid these dainties he introduced a soda-water bottle containing dynamite, arranged to explode if the contents of the panniers were interfered with. The mokes were then driven by a small boy, who was told to run away or hide himself in the thick bush if he saw any Somalis on the pipe-line. This lad carefully carried out his instructions, and the Somalis he had seen in the distance captured the donkeys and grabbed at the enticing contents of the panniers. In a moment the dynamite cartridge went off, and blew three Somalis and the donkeys into smithereens.



This drastic method of dealing with mounted robbers effectually saved the joints of the iron pipe from being tampered with.

Elahi Bakhr was a Mohammedan, and came originally from Northern India. He was much too old for enrolment in the Berbera Police, and I therefore employed him on the Temporary Civil Staff. As a youth he had been a worker in metal, but joined a Punjab cavalry regiment as a *maistrie*; from that corps he was transferred to a mountain battery, and later to a company of Bengal Sappers stationed on the Afghan Frontier. He was true to his salt during the Great Mutiny, and altogether bore an excellent character. As a sapper he had frequently laid mines, blowing up gates and walls of hill forts for infantry to attack them. I saw several letters and orders from many distinguished Royal Engineers officers, testifying to his loyalty, courage, and skill. In the end he had received a money grant from the East India Company's Government, which induced him to leave the Army and to start in business. In this, however, he failed, as he had no mercantile knowledge or, indeed, real inclinations. At the outbreak of the Abyssinian War he turned up at Bombay, and, having served during the Mutiny under Sir Robert Napier, Commander-in-Chief, Bombay, the latter appointed him as a jemadar in charge of a party of gun lascars. Gun lascars are not regulars, but are kept to clean guns and take care of them in unoccupied forts.

After the war in Abyssinia Elahi Bakhr settled at Aden, where he did odd jobs for the Port Trust and the Municipality, both of which bodies were under my management. When, therefore, I was equipping my police party for the occupation of Berbera, as I required an armourer and a handy all-round man, I offered Elahi Bakhr a salary of sixty rupees per month, on condition that he would do any work which I might desire him to perform. He accepted my offer, and asked me to take on also his son as a *kurani*. He observed that, though the lad could neither ride nor shoot, and was not able to read or write English, he was on the other hand honest, loyal to the Sirkar, and obedient. I gave this youth a post in the Berbera Custom House, and

later entrusted him with one of the two keys of the *kajana* (safe). He was thus made an Assistant-Treasurer of the Customs Receipts, until this cash was deposited in the Treasury at the Residency.

The Bey allowed me to take charge of Dubar about a week before his departure from Berbera. He also placed five Sudanese privates under my orders, stipulating that they were to be sent into Berbera in time to embark with their company. With the aid of these men the entire scheme of altering the water system was successfully carried out. The Egyptian garrison of Dubar resided in a barrack at the foot of the mountain, but a portion was quartered in a temporary shanty at a spot on the mountain-side which commanded the reservoirs. I had the path to this building scarped, so as to make the approach difficult and defensible by a few resolute riflemen. There were quarters in this building for the accommodation of a police guard of several men, together with three turnkeys. Arrangements were also made therein for the storage of water, provisions, and ammunition. A mast with some flag signals, a spirit balloon with a line to secure it to the earth, were placed in charge of the head turnkey, Furug. Dubar, however, was never attacked, and the police guard was withdrawn within a couple of years of it being stationed there. Huts were then constructed on the level for the wives and families of the staff.

On one occasion Furug and his turnkeys rendered great assistance by firing from the peaks of this (the Golis) range of mountains at a band of raiders who were driving off the camels grazing near Little Dubar. Many animals were dispersed by Furug's tactics, which caused the marauders to lose control over this captured live stock. Before I left Berbera, Furug had an extensive piece of ground under cultivation at Dubar, in which he raised vegetables and fruit in large quantities. These crops were very acceptable to the residents of the Shaab, where the foregoing green produce was not purchasable, and had previously to be imported from Aden.

As soon as the old armourer-warrior, Elahi Bakhr, was in a position to manage the waterworks at Dubar,



I notified the Bey that the services of the Greek engineer would not be required. I kept him, however, employed up to the last moment in connecting the main pipe from a point near the Musjid, at the south-west corner of the Shaab, with several stone houses and the spacious Commissariat storehouse, which I utilized as a police barrack. This extension of water piping allowed the drawing of water at the residency without it having passed through the Shaab reservoirs. A saving of £600 per annum was effected by sending the Greek engineer back to Egypt with the garrison.

I had ordered from the Post Office two oil-lamps similar to those displayed from the lightship in Aden Harbour, and as soon as these lamps reached me I asked the Bey to send the three European lighthouse-keepers back to Egypt. Each of these men received a monthly salary of £50, £40, and £35, a free house and water, and a donkey to convey them to and from their work. The Bey readily acceded to this request, but would not remove the original light or the iron tower on which it was erected, or take over the materials in stock. His ground was that this property belonged to the Egyptian Lighthouse Service, who owned and managed all the lights in the Red Sea, with the exception of the British one on Perim Island. I provisioned the iron tower, and instructed my lamp-keepers to retire into it with their families in case of danger. If ever necessary, they were to hoist a signal of distress, and I would relieve or reinforce them by land, or send a dhow to carry them off by sea.

Shortly after the Egyptians had evacuated Berbera, a Monsieur Roux, of the Egyptian Lighthouse Service, came to Berbera and pressed me to buy the lighthouse and its contents. I declined to comply with his request, on the grounds that I had not the money to make the purchase, and, moreover, should have no use for it. I observed that we were entirely dependent on the revenue raised locally to pay ordinary expenses at Berbera. Monsieur Roux then offered me everything at one penny per pound, observing that the structure alone was worth more than that price. On my declining, however, to



purchase at any cost, Monsieur Roux said: "I cannot understand you English. You require and acquire colonies, yet your *métropole* will not contribute one *son* towards the maintenance of those annexations!" I replied: "You have correctly stated our policy and custom. And the reason is that, except for military reasons (Gibraltar, for instance), we never take over any country unless its local revenue is sufficient to pay its way, or is at any rate likely to be so. I think Berbera in the near future will provide means for all modest and legitimate requirements, but at present we are in need of funds to meet our necessary expenditure."

Mr. Roux returned to Egypt, and, notwithstanding our continued requests to remove the abandoned light-house, it remained. We never used, however, either the structure or its lamps. I obtained instead from Aden a tall mast, and two oil lamps of the kind used on board the lightship in Aden Harbour. These were hoisted and placed in charge of two lamp-trimmers in the Aden Port Trust Service. The lamp-trimmers' names were Obseyah Mahomed and Ali Odai, and both were of the Habr Gerhajis tribe. This inexpensive and effective arrangement of mine is still in force.

## CHAPTER III

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOMALI COAST, 1883-1885

ABOUT the 1st October, 1884, I took over at Berbera the following articles and stores :

- 300 Remington rifles and bayonets, with pouches, haversacks, water-bottles, and bandoliers, all in good condition.
- 12 Modern revolvers, .455 bore, taking the British Service cartridge.
- 20 old-fashioned revolvers.
- 50 carbines (really revolvers), each fitted with an iron shoulder-frame.
- 4 rifled, single-barrelled C.F. swivels, aimed and fired from the shoulder.
- 4 three-pounder (man-harnessed) field-guns, with 100 rounds.
- 1 complete set of entrenching instruments ; also carpenters' and blacksmiths' tools.
- 1 well-boring apparatus.
- 1 small condenser.
- An immense quantity of ammunition, half of it marked as unserviceable, but useful for practice.
- Portable water-tanks, kegs, and skins.
- Camel, mule, and donkey saddles.

The above firearms were in excellent condition, and were arranged in racks in several rooms of the residency. In this respect I was, therefore, very well equipped ; but my force of riflemen was extremely small, while thirty of them were still inefficient recruits. On the other hand, I had quite sixty really expert "shots".

The services of two Drill Instructors had been obtained from the 4th Bombay Rifles at Aden, and my object

was not to train the Protectorate Police for parade purposes, but solely as riflemen. The words of command were given in English, and consisted of the following vocabulary:

Fall in; Advance; Retire; Double; Mass; Scatter; Take cover. The men were also instructed to fire independently, and always at an enemy object; never to volley-fire, except to stampede cattle, camels, or under specific orders; to pick off mounted and foot leaders of an attacking or defending force.

The Bandmaster of the 4th Rifles composed bugle sounds for the various orders, the purport of which an Egyptian bugler very speedily taught to our men.

Admiral Sir William Nathan Hewitt, V.C., K.C.B., commanding the East India Station, landed at Berbera a few days before the departure of the Egyptian garrison. I had mounted a police guard at the pier-head to salute His Excellency. Sir William looked at them, then turned to me and said: "I don't like the look of your men, and think it folly to have sent you to occupy Berbera with such a small, weak, and ill-trained force. I may tell you that General Hogg, the Resident at Aden, thinks so too, and considers Hunter is mad not to have employed instead two or three companies of Indian regular troops." I replied that I did not share those views, as I knew that Hunter had great influence in Somaliland. At this season of the year, moreover, there was a cordon of friendly clans encamped on the Maritime Plain close to Berbera who would defend the town from attacks by tribes from the interior. I reminded the Admiral of Lord Salisbury's advice to Sir Edward Malet, H.B.M.'s Consul-General in Egypt: "Remember that you will never have anything to back you but moral force."

It may be here remarked that Major Baring, when he undertook the occupation of the Somali Coast, stipulated Major Hunter was not to use force in conducting the evacuation of the north-eastern Mudirieh of the Sudan (i.e. Harar, Berbera, Zeila). The evacuation was to be effected without the aid of the military, and no extraneous force of any kind was to be entertained, unless absolutely



necessary for the protection of life. Even then Major Hunter was practically restricted to the employment of locally raised armed forces. The object was to avoid all appearance of a British annexation, and to make the presence of the white man as little visible and irksome as possible. The Egyptian flag was to remain flying, and the British officer was to be recognized and spoken of as the Khedive's Representative at Berbera.

I observed, therefore, to Admiral Hewitt that Major Hunter was pledged to the adoption of peaceful and conciliatory methods, while I myself had accepted service on the coast with a full acquaintance of the conditions, difficulties, and risks which had to be encountered and dealt with. I went on to say that my experience of the Somali convinced me that any opposition could be overcome, especially with the promised aid of the coast clans. Their good will would enable us to administer the port and district by peaceful, moderate, and popular measures, in complete harmony with the policy of H.B.M.'s Government.

I took the Admiral round the town, and showed him the preparations which had been made to take it over. On the way up to the Vice-Consulate I ordered my Senior Jemedar to start at once target practice with our efficient constables, so that when the Admiral returned to his flagship he would pass the range and see the men. The Admiral stopped to look at the shooting, and spontaneously remarked to me: "Your chaps can certainly use their rifles. It must have taken a long time to have attained such a high standard of accuracy of fire." I replied: "Yes, indeed, sir; but I am fully recompensed by the success. In my opinion no picked team from the flagship or the Aden garrison could successfully compete against these specially trained Somali Coast Police marksmen. I trust, from what you have just seen, you will have altered your opinion of their value as fighting men, and assure the Resident at Aden that I have a very formidable force under my command. Such a force will stiffen the Friendlies and Biladihs to a degree which will render Berbera impregnable."

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I had divided my policemen into six detachments. These detachments were apportioned as follows :

Residency and Reserve .. ..	35
Orderlies .. ..	5
Town .. ..	20
Custom House .. ..	8
Bulhar .. ..	25
Dubar .. ..	7
	<hr/>
	100

The Bulhar party, however, was not to go to Suez until after November 7th, 1884.

On Saturday, October 4th, 1884, the Egyptian troops and Civil Establishments embarked with their wives and families on three transports bound for Suez. By noon, therefore, on that date I was left in sole charge of Berbera, Bulhar, Samawanak, Karam, and several other small ports comprising the district known as the Berbera Hookumderieh. Not having sufficient men, I abandoned the forts situated about half-way between Dubar and the Shaab, but I retained the fort at the south-east corner of the town, and used it as a barrack for police, a depot for nautical stores, and a boathouse. The lofty flagstaff was removed from its position there, and was re-erected in the garden quadrangle of the Residency. From another mast the Egyptian colours were flown, and its yards were utilized for bending on them signal flags. The Union Jack also appeared on the roof of the Residency.

Mahomed Dosa's dhow was moored with its stern made fast to the shore of the eastern side of the iron pier, from which position one of the two three-pounder field-guns carried on the poop commanded the Residency and the custom-house. The police armourer had made up a supply of canister and grape ammunition for these small guns, which were very effective up to a range of 300 yards. This lateen-rigged native vessel was provisioned and kept always in readiness to put to sea, to receive the inmates of the Residency in case of the abandonment of the latter

headquarters. The Bey had left his oared State barge (a very good sea boat ; schooner-rigged, if required), the gunwales of which had been fitted in several places to take a twelve-bore breech-loading swivel gun, aimed and fired from the shoulder. Mahomed Dosa rigged a lateen sail on this boat in order to render it manageable by any native soldier.

One of the transports with the retiring Egyptian personnel belonged to the Khedival Red Sea Line, and had been ordered to call at Aden on her return voyage to Suez. By her I sent a note to Hunter to say all was well, and that I did not anticipate any opposition or rioting in or near the town. I added that I was, nevertheless, keeping the Senousi Akwan and several of the Mahdi's emissaries under surveillance, but that it seemed to me that these two groups of rascals were more likely to fight each other than to molest me. I asked Hunter to come and talk matters over, and to let me know the latest information regarding the policy and action of H.B.M.'s Government with respect to Somaliland, Harar, and the provinces of the Sudan adjoining Abyssinia. I also solicited orders and instructions in case any action was taken to stop the traffic of slaves by land, and from the "Port of the Slave Merchant" in the Gulf of Ghubbet Kharab.

Hunter did not turn up at Berbera until after I had been installed there for nearly three weeks. I had, moreover, written to him by steam or sail on every available opportunity, and had repeatedly drawn his attention to the already large increase of trade. I told him I expected numerous *soori* dhows with dates from the Persian Gulf, and the early arrival of *pattinabs* with Buniah traders and piece goods from the Kathiawar ports. I urged that a couple more good clerks were needed to cope with the work, and one of them should be a European, so that I could place him in charge at Bulhar. The native Christian and the Parsee clerks I had sent to Bulhar were capable enough as regards the clerical labour, but the police had no respect for them, and resented being placed under orders of a mere Warrant Grade "ink-slinging civilian". I further called Hunter's attention to an application originally forwarded



to me, and now on his files, for a clerkship on the coast, received from a European residing in Bombay. I suggested that the Secretariat should be asked by wire to make inquiries regarding this man's character and qualifications. Hunter agreed, and said that he would at once attend to this matter; but he thought Major Baring would object to a European official of a Warrant Grade being employed in an executive capacity at any of the coast ports, quite apart from the expense of such an increase of the staff.

I eventually got a note by dhow from Hunter, telling me that in reply to his telegram a Mr. O. A. A. Muggredge had been temporarily appointed to a clerkship in the Protectorate Service. This clerkship was to carry a total emolument of Rs. 175 per mensem, and I was to scrape together that amount by applying Rs. 100 from the already-sanctioned salary for a head native clerk, and by debiting Rs. 50 to the Temporary Establishment and Rs. 25 monthly as a camel allowance from my office contingencies. Hunter regretted that neither he nor I had seen Mr. Muggredge, but said he gathered from the correspondence that the latter had served as a *franc-tireur* in the Franco-German War of 1870-71. Hunter therefore considered that he was just the man to station at Bulhar, and had accordingly paid his fare from Bombay to Aden. In the event, however, of his being discharged within six months, the cost of a return second-class passage would be paid to him.

Mr. Muggredge had already left Bombay when I received Hunter's note, and I understood that on his arrival at Aden he would be sent over at once to Berbera in an Indian Marine steamer. Hunter said he would make it clear to Mr. Muggredge beforehand that he was engaged to turn his hand to any job or duty I might desire him to perform; that he was entirely under the orders of the officer in charge of Berbera, and moreover had been appointed by the latter as the Head of the Berbera Administration. If Mr. Muggredge, for any reason, should turn out unsuitable, I was directed to send him back to Aden, where Hunter would settle up with him. Hunter added that the man was reported to be in perfect health, but he did not know if he could ride or not.

Imagine my horror, therefore, on seeing that Mr. Muggredge had brought his wife. It was obviously impossible for her to reside at Bulhar, where there was absolutely no accommodation for a European lady. It appeared that Muggredge had not told Hunter he was taking his wife to the Somali Coast. I considered Mr. Muggredge to be a capable all-round man; he had a gentlemanly appearance and manners, and in those respects was an acceptable addition to my staff, while Mrs. Muggredge also possessed a pleasing and friendly disposition.

I had to explain to Mr. Muggredge that his services were urgently needed at Bulhar, but that, accompanied by his wife, I could not station him there. He took umbrage, however, at my remarks, and said he had not undertaken to do military or police duties. He then requested that I should place him in charge of the Berbera custom-house, but admitted that the correspondence gave him no claim to that particular office, as he had been appointed for service on the Somali Coast. "If you leave Mrs. Muggredge in Berbera," I offered, "I will provide her with furnished quarters on the Shaab, and do all in my power to make her comfortable." But Mr. Muggredge would not accept this proposal of mine, and demanded his discharge. I pointed out that legally he was bound to give a month's notice, but I said I would let him go by the first steamer, as otherwise he might have to cross over to Aden in a native dhow. It so happened that, though the Khedival line of steamers had ceased to touch regularly at Berbera, yet I expected one of them to call in a few days for some stores which had been left by the late garrison.

I did not quarrel with Mr. Muggredge, but offered him the hospitality of the Residency. On his saying that he had served with an irregular body during the Franco-Prussian War, I told him that I had been with the 5th and 2nd French Army Corps in July and August 1870. I said that I had frequently met two separate corps of *franc-tireurs*, one of which was called *Les Mocquards*, and comprised men from all parts of France, of a superior station in life to the *franc-tireurs* raised in Paris. Mr. Muggredge



seemed to be surprised by my knowledge in this respect, but he did not tell me to which section of these Irregulars he had belonged.

Mr. Muggredge finally left by the Khedival liner and returned to Bombay. There he wrote in the local newspapers several articles and news-letters denouncing the incapacity of the Administration of the Somali Coast, and the particular incompetence of Mr. L. Prendergast Walsh, the officer in charge at Berbera. I did not see these effusions, but Major Hunter perused them. He told me they were utterly ridiculous, and exhibited such complete ignorance of the subject that neither the Political Department in Bombay, nor H.B.M.'s Representative in Cairo, took any notice of them.

I managed, with great difficulty, to scrape along during 1883-5 without a European clerk. All went well at Berbera, Dubar, and Bulhar, but in order to cope with the heavy custom-house work I had to sit personally "at the receipt of customs", to make out the bills for "duties" and receive the money. Hunter did all in his power to assist me, and lent me one of his clerks for a time. I obtained, moreover, for a few weeks the aid of the agent of the Blue Diamond Line of steamers (Mr. Hay, proprietor of s.s. *Irking*), trading between Berbera, Aden, and the Arabian ports. A brilliant idea then struck me, which would greatly reduce the clerical labour at Berbera. Why not erect a wooden shed on the piers at Aden, and collect the Somali Coast custom duties at that port, from which bifurcates three-quarters of the trade with the Somali Coast? I started this scheme most successfully, but at the end of ten days all the foreign Consuls at Aden protested against the collection of any Protectorate duties at the Free Port of Aden. I was therefore compelled, by the orders of those in authority, to abandon my economical method of collecting duties, and had again to levy Somali Coast duties at the custom-houses of the local ports.

In this manner I managed to carry on with great difficulty during 1883. Late in 1884 an Indian Marine steamer visited Berbera, and one of the officers of that



vessel called on me to introduce a friend and former shipmate to whom he had given a passage from Aden. This friend, a Mr. Morrison, was the son of a Glasgow bookseller, and, having no desire to sit on a stool in an office on shore, had taken to the sea. He had served as an able seaman, a quartermaster, and a helmsman in the British Mercantile Marine, but had never passed the examination or qualified for mate. After some years sea service on deck he had joined the Overseas Department, and until quite recently had been a clerk on board a British India Steam Navigation Company's vessel. Mr. Morrison asked me to appoint him to a clerkship in the Berbera Customs, or to any billet in the Protectorate Service. He remarked that pay was of no object at a start in a new country, as no doubt when he had got to know the ropes, and had proved himself a useful hand, he would obtain a rise of salary. I told Mr. Morrison I had only Rs. 100 per month available for an Arab clerk, but said I hoped before long to be in a position to give a European a larger and living wage. I could, however, make no promise. Mr. Morrison, nevertheless, accepted the post.

We strolled, after that, round the town, and arrived at the rifle range, where a party of police recruits was being practised at targets. Mr. Morrison announced that he had been a sergeant in a Scotch rifle brigade, and suggested he should be told off to teach the recruits drill and musketry. He took up a rifle and astonished Jemedar Khoda Buxsh with the number of consecutive bull's-eyes he made on the target. We then entered the custom-house, where Mr. Morrison was shown the account books, ledgers, and registers which had to be kept, and how to draw up a bill for customs duties. I saw at once that he was quite capable of performing these clerical labours, and congratulated myself upon having found such a treasure. We returned to lunch at the residency, and drank to Mr. Morrison's health and prosperity. My Somali butler had given him a room, and I told off a police orderly to look after the latest member of the Berbera staff.

During 1885 we had several skirmishes with "Mur-

rassehs" of the Habr Gerhajis, Bulbanta, and other tribes of the interior, but could never get to close quarters with them. These bands were merely mounted robbers, and did not act under the orders of a tribal chief, but often without the latter's knowledge or consent. In these circumstances the chiefs invariably repudiated all responsibility for the robberies of caravans and raids on grazing cattle, and the marauders consequently "lifted" their plunder with impunity. The British officer, however, considered it unfair to prohibit a whole tribe from trading with the coast ports because of the misdoings of a few renegade members of that tribe.

Baigsee Abseya was originally the Gazee of Aden's Police Orderly. He was chosen to join the newly raised Berbera Police Force, and was now entrusted with the selection of men who could safely be lent Government rifles and employed as escorts to caravans proceeding to Oogandain and the Leopard River (Wibbi Shebeyli). These escort riflemen were called Biladiehs. They wore no uniform, and were paid by the merchants and others who travelled with a caravan and desired special protection from robbers. Baigsee was given the designation "Ugas of Biladiehs", and he formed the latter into a very formidable body of expert marksmen. Since October 1884 Baigsee had made two very successful journeys to Oogandain. Before starting on his last homeward trip, he heard of two German wild-game catchers who had reached the northern bank of the "Wibbi" after wandering there apparently from Harar and the Galla country. The two hunters sent for Baigsee and asked him to take them and their skins, ivory, and boxes of preserved insects to the coast. I saw these men at Berbera, and they were not at all communicative; they appeared to have been aided by the Egyptians and Abyssinians. However, they made no stay at Berbera, and, as there happened to be a Khedival liner in port, they at once embarked on board for Egypt.

Baigsee frequently took parties of officers from the Aden garrison and elsewhere to shoot in Somaliland. But he never went too far inland, and generally he went in a south-easterly direction from Berbera. Morrison



inspected Baigsee's men, and reported to me that they were very efficient marksmen and also skilled trackers of game. As an instance of the latter quality, Morrison told me how a Biladieh had led his camel up to a thorn bush with dense undergrowth, and instructed him to remain in the saddle ready to fire at a hare which would run out of cover into the open. Two or three stones were then thrown into the bush from the rear, and surely enough a hare did scamper out, to be easily shot by Morrison. This Biladieh had followed the hare's tracks on the soft sand, but Morrison could not see any tracks until they were pointed out to him.

The Egyptian Government discouraged direct trade between Berbera and Harar, and forced it through Gildesa to Zeila. For several years before the departure of the Egyptians from Berbera the regular large caravans to Harar had ceased to travel via Hargeisa; which course, it may be observed, though longer than the road from Zeila, was a much safer one. The sanctity of Abbans was respected by the tribes on the Hargeisa route, whereas the Zeila road had to be protected by military and police posts against the Dunkali, Black Aysa, White Aysa, and Gadabursi tribes, since the chief slave-markets were Mocha, Hodeida, and the Red Sea ports of Arabia. Moreover, after it had been stopped by the Egyptians at Zeila, the traffic in slaves soon passed by this western desert route, or on one adjoining it, to Ghubbet Kharab. Slaves had not been shipped from Berbera, or from ports to the eastward, for many years; and even in Burton's time, 1854, that traffic concentrated on Zeila and ports to the westward.

I had stationed Morrison at Bulhar, where he did excellent work. With hired labour he erected a defensive wall, loopholed for musketry, around the enclosure in which stood the office, his residence, and the quarters for the police. Later on these temporary constructions were pulled down, and substantial lines for the accommodation of the sub-agency staff were built close to the sea by a small party of sappers belonging to the Indian Army. In the open roadstead at Bulhar the landing was bad,



if not dangerous, at all seasons of the year, and had to be effected in surf-boats. Throughout the *karif* it was impossible to land at Bulhar, which was abandoned during those hot-weather months. At that season the wells were dry, and no water was procurable near the town. The town was left, therefore, in the charge of a couple of constables and an old woman with a donkey. The old donkey-woman used to bring the constables skins of water from the foot of the Maritime Plain Mountains, a distance of at least twelve miles from the sea-shore.

The Egyptians established a small post on the beach at Samawanak, eight miles to the westward of Bulhar, where there was a landing-place for boats of very light draught. This landing-place, however, could only be approached by narrow passages through the reefs which lay off the little creek. Samawanak was a very unhealthy and fever-stricken spot; the Egyptians maintained twenty-five sabres there on horses imported from Egypt, and every one of the animals died. While the Somali Coast ponies do not actually die, they do not thrive at Samawanak, notwithstanding the pasture and plentiful supply of fresh water. The Egyptians finally abandoned the post early in the "eighties", and the wooden and mat structures soon rotted away. I did not reopen this post when I took charge of Berbera in 1884, but I hoisted the British flag and kept it flying for some years in charge of one man, until the Zeila question was definitely settled.

A sapper havildar had been specially cautioned not to pitch his tents in the dry bed of a water-course. The reason for the caution was that without any warning his camp might be swept away in a few minutes by an irresistible torrent which accumulates in the distant mountains of Abyssinia and elsewhere, and then makes a sudden passage over the desert to the sea. These freshets are not infrequent, and carry off to the sea many inhabitants, together with their live stock and the contents of their homes. There is no possible protection against this terrible danger to life and vast destruction of property. Nevertheless, while these circumstances are well known to all, Somalis

and travellers obstinately continue to pitch their camps, tether their animals, and keep their merchandise and baggage in dry water-courses. In the case of the sappers mentioned above, they lost the whole of their arms and equipment.



## CHAPTER IV

### BERBERA

I WAS glad to have Mr. Morrison with me at Berbera. From my notes and correspondence with Major Hunter and others he soon compiled and worked off drafts, reports, and statements for the Berbera Residency records. Morrison also collected, from my voluminous papers, letters from General Blair, V.C. (Resident at Aden); General A. G. F. Hogg (Resident at Aden); Major Evelyn Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer), H.B.M.'s Representative in Egypt; Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson (formerly of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers), member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London; and Mr. Warner, of the Bombay Civil Service and Political Secretary. To many of these documents Morrison attached a paper slip of explanation. It is sad to know that when the Somali Coast Administration was handed over to the Colonial Office these records and those in H.B.M.'s Consulate at Aden were destroyed. There are practically no records now existing of the period 1884 to 1892; and one of my chief objects in writing my reminiscences is to replace in some small degree the particulars of the principal events which occurred in my time in Somaliland (i.e. up to December 1892, when I was in ordinary course transferred to a Political Agency in India).

The Political Residents of Aden had been greatly troubled by the interference of interpreters not on the Aden Residency permanent establishment, and I cannot speak too highly of the loyal, devoted and intelligent services of my two senior interpreters (Deria Magan, a Dulbanta; and Hassan Ahmed, a Baghoba, Habr Awal). I add to them the names of the men who served me in the same capacity at Berbera and Zeila (Shermarki Adan Esaj, and Rey Mahomed of the Habr Gerhajis, and Said Moorjan, who



called himself an Abyssinian, but was really a Mohammedan, being the son of an Arab by a Somali mother). Said Moorjan remained with his mother in Somaliland for many years, looking after his father's herds ; so that practically, by upbringing, he was a Somali. On the other hand, for his position in life, he was highly educated; he could read and write Arabic, and speak Hindustani, but did not know English.

Each of H.M.'s ships on the East India Station carried an interpreter, generally Somalis who had served on ships of war as firemen or as officer's servants. These sea-going interpreters created a great deal of mischief by posing before the sultans of the small ports as important personages possessing great influence with the Admiral commanding the East India squadron, and with Aden officials. Many captains of the Royal Navy stationed in the Gulf of Aden considered themselves qualified to make reports to the Admiral and to the Admiralty regarding Somali Coast affairs ; and they laid great stress on the general weakness of the Protectorate Administration, which was conducted by Indian Political Officers solely supported by indigenous and locally raised irregular police forces. These reports were based on the views expressed to the naval officer by the interpreter on his ship. In many cases the opinions, deductions, and information thus obtained were entirely ridiculous ; but not infrequently the Admiralty communicated these effusions to the Foreign and Indian Offices, and occasionally both Hunter and I were called upon to inquire into these rumours.

Besides the interpreters alluded to in the foregoing remarks, there were several others who prepared shooting expeditions for sportsmen, prospecting parties, and pioneers visiting Somaliland. The best known and most capable organizer of such private enterprises was Duali Idris, of the Habr Gerhajis tribe. Duali Idris, was H. M. Stanley's head-man on his search for Livingstone ; he also successfully conducted the James party to the Leopard River, and later the Hungarian magnate, Graf Samuel Teleke, and Lieutenant Von Honel to Harar, via Zeila. Mahomed Shermarki (the chief Akil of the Habr Gerhajis

tribe, and formerly Governor of Berbera for his father, the farmer of Zeila, in 1854) reported to Major Hunter several instances of Duali Idris' intrigues with the Dulbanta and Sultan Nur; and Hunter in a note to me attributed the opposition and difficulties which we had with those chiefs to the machinations of Duali Idris. I dare say there was a substantial foundation of truth in those accusations, but, personally, I had no direct or positive evidence of them.

I was, however, aware that the Ayal Ahmed, Habr Awal, the legally authorized and recognized Abbans of Berbera, were greatly incensed at Duali Idris engaging camels for the James party without their intervention. Mahomed Shermarki was certainly not a friend of Ayal Ahmed, who had assisted in depriving him of his Governorship of Berbera; nevertheless, in the general interest of peace and trade, Mahomed urged that this tactless interference with the Abban rights and privileges of the Ayal Ahmed should be publicly prohibited, and predicted that although the James party would not be stopped or molested inland, yet there would be a feud between the Ayal Ahmed and the clans to which the hirers of the camels belonged. This proved to be true, and the result operated greatly to our detriment. We were charged with having broken the agreement and promises we had made to maintain the time-honoured Abbanship fees and customs of the Ayal Ahmed and Ayal Yunis clans. Nor could this breach of our solemn covenant be denied. The British Officer at Berbera did not interfere with Duali Idris, and this neutrality on that officer's part, amounting to complete failure to enforce the "hereditary rights", was the breach of faith complained of. No doubt the payment of Abban fees was unpopular with traders from the interior; but, as Berbera was practically the only market, and had the only safe and commodious harbour on the coast, traders were compelled to use that port.

Hunter and I both desired to get rid of the Berbera Abbans, and so had the Egyptians. We were, however, debarred from depriving these bloodsuckers of their rightful fees, as we could not have occupied Berbera if all the Habr Awal tribes had combined against us. By securing



the good will and services of the "fighting men" of the Ayal Ahmed, the Ayal Yunis and their Aysa Musa (care-takers of grazing caravan camels), as well as of the Makail clans, we had been able in the first place to seize Berbera, and then to hold it without the expense of military aid. Moreover, we were assisted by the same spears in protecting the town and the caravans verging on it from the attacks by tribes of the interior. Hunter used to say that the Army and Navy did not know, or perhaps did not realize, that the Berbera Administration received no monetary contribution from the British or Indian exchequers.

Great pressure was brought to bear on Major Hunter and myself to form a regulation establishment of Military Police and other District Officers. We always stated, however, that such a course was impossible, as the Berbera revenue could not afford to pay the expenses of such a scheme unless the taxation was increased, and such a method of raising extra funds involved the expensive employment of more bayonets to collect it. The conduct of Hunter and myself, indeed, in this respect was severely criticized, and we were called "Funk-sticks", useless as the pioneers and administrators of a new country.

I once had occasion in an after-dinner speech to reply to a very unfair attack on Major Hunter. Twenty-six Englishmen sat then round the table, listening to and apparently believing the grossly libellous and inaccurate statements made against my chief and his régime. Hunter was charged with having discredibly retired the flag from a position at which he had ordered it to be hoisted. As a matter of fact, he had returned to the coast, and left me in charge of this advanced post. His written instructions to me were to retire rather than to run any risk of collision with the Abyssinians, who, having seized Harar, were about to plant their flag to the northward on the lands cultivated by the Gallas, adjoining the direct road to Berbera and Bulhar. Hunter remarked that prudential consideration must always guide our forward policy ; but, as a matter of honour and prestige, he would keep the flag flying in any place at which it had been placed, unless he had an insufficient force to guard it. He held that the flag should



never be advanced merely as an act of defiance or bluff, and he regarded the retirement of the Union Jack as an encouragement, if not an invitation, to attack it. I therefore told my hearers around that dinner-table that I personally agreed with the instructions given to me by my chief, and assured them that British interests could not be better or more honourably safeguarded than by Major Hunter. Incidentally, the retreat for which Hunter was blamed took place when the Abyssinians were still nearly one hundred miles from the frontier of Somaliland.

Police methods at Berbera were very crude, but nevertheless they worked well. We did not issue summonses or warrants for the presence of a Somali at the Court or the Residency office. I had caused a broad arrow to be sculptured on some stones with a flat surface, and a constable was ordered to take one of these stones to the residence of the person whose attendance was required, with a direction that the latter should deliver it at the Court.

The pearl divers were incorrigible thieves, and secreted about their persons the pearls they found, instead of delivering them up to the Rais of the pearl vessels. On one occasion Jemedar Farah Shermarki had arrested three or four of these expert divers, and, after placing them in a boat with a lanyard attached round their ankles, he made them dive for white coral, which was burned for conversion into lime for our building operations. Nearly all these divers were "seedee boys", descendants of the pirates settled at Zanzibar and Muscat, and they were usually employed on slave and pearl trading vessels. One day I was standing on the pier when a woolly-headed negro bobbed up above the surface. He shouted "Farag Kalbal Bahro!" which I understood to mean that he had just freed a shark of its guts. This daring negro held in his hand a long, pointed, double-edged knife; and, as these divers attract sharks, they at once attack the man-eating fish, and nearly always succeed in killing that monster. I perceived that the sea was tinged with blood, and asked the diver where the shark was. He replied: "His belly is filled with water, and he was drowned. His carcass is now lying at the bottom of the harbour." The water police then brought a rope,

and the diver fastened it round the body of the dead fish, which proved to be a shark twelve feet long.

There was very little serious crime in Berbera. Every Somali in the town, however, being armed with two spears, a short sword made fast round the waist, and a shield, fights were of daily occurrence, and these the police often could not stop. The Somali is very vain, and can be frequently controlled by ridicule and derision. As an experiment, therefore, I directed the arrest of any two Somalis found fighting in the town. Two such men, with their arms, were then taken outside the town by an armed escort of police and made to dig a grave. When it was ready for the reception of the corpse, each of the two Somalis was given his spears and other weapons and desired to fight it out with his late adversary. The survivor of the contest was to bury his opponent in the prepared grave. We never could induce two Somalis to fight under these circumstances, and as a result it was made to appear that they had no use for their arms. These were, therefore, taken from them, and the reason for such confiscation was made known in the bazaars by the town crier.

I allowed Somalis voluntarily to deposit their arms for safe custody in the Police Station, and each man was given, free of charge, a receipt for his weapons. Gradually the people took to the habit of not wearing their arms in the bazaars of the town. Hunter and I had from the first discussed how we could disarm Somalis entering the town, new arrivals always refusing to part with their weapons, even on deposit. On several occasions, in consequence, serious riots and disturbances were only avoided by the tactful and lenient action of the police, who, I may record, were always supported by the Stipendiary Akil. The majority of the akils desired the disarmament in the town of the members of their respective tribes and clans, and on my leaving Somaliland in 1893 I heard that the ancient custom of going armed in the bazaars had been practically abandoned by the inhabitants and visitors from the interior.

The Camel Police once arrested and brought before me a very well-to-do Somali, who was charged with having

cut two deep slits on his wife's left cheek. The lady herself was also brought into my office, and I saw that not only had she been most cruelly hurt, but that her wounds had festered. The hospital assistant was sent for and ordered to attend to the woman's injuries. I told the husband that the British Government did not allow the mutilation of women, no matter how much they might be to blame, and that under our laws he was liable to imprisonment with hard labour, as well as to a fine, for having ill-treated his wife. The prisoner replied, speaking in Arabic: "Oh, Wali of Berbera, this woman has not been unfaithful, but she is a virago. She abuses me, pulls my beard, and has often hit me with a stick before my household servants and neighbours, who regard me as a degenerate and impotent man. I could not bear the derision of my friends. If you punish me, I pray you will also do likewise with her. I pray you to make her an object of ridicule in the pillory, and have her conduct proclaimed by the town crier." "I will fully consider what you say," I replied; "but as the lady is at present too ill to relate her story I will call you both up in a few days."

This Somali lady, however, nearly killed the hospital assistant, and made hay in the ward in which she had been placed. On being sent, then, to be locked up in the Police Station cell, she seized one of the fire-buckets, filled with dirty water, and threw it over the police sergeant. The next day the Jemedar ordered her to sweep up the open space in front of the custom-house, and she was engaged on that job when I happened to appear. She had already collected a basketful of road-sweepings, and these she straightway hurled at me! I had obviously to punish and control this woman, so I had her seated on a donkey facing the animal's tail and her legs tied under the moke's belly. She was taken for a ride in that style round the town, but did not seem to care or feel the indignity of her position. As this lady's manners did not improve, I had her hair cut off, and she was again placed in the donkey's saddle, with the animal's tail in her hands. This brought her to reason, and, much to the joy of her husband, a reconciliation was brought about between them. Before leaving Berbera



the husband came to bid me adieu, and, in thanking me for my action, he observed: "Your Honour's control over women is even greater and more efficacious than the punishment inflicted on evil-doers, and the peace and justice established by your Lordship's 'Mighty Sword'."

The women in Berbera complained that they lost their marriage lines, the only evidence of their legal marriage, because there was no Register of Marriages, even if they were solemnized by and in the Gazee's office. It was, moreover, complained that the original certificate was written on flimsy paper which rapidly decayed and fell to pieces.

I therefore sent for Baigsee, and said to him: "You served for many years under the Gazee of Aden. Do you happen to know another Arab of his stamp, learning, and character? I want a Gazee for Berbera, and should prefer that he knows no English, and has had no Western education. He should be well versed in the Koran, and capable of teaching the precepts of the 'Book' in the ordinary meaning of the Arabic words of its text. I do not want a controversialist, however clever he may be, or one who meddles in politics. He must also be tolerant; in fact, the same type of a good-natured man as is the present Gazee of Aden, your former master. Can you find me such a candidate for the Gazeeship of Berber?"

I went on to say: "I have resided and travelled in many Moslem lands, and in each I noticed differences with respect to the application of Koranic laws and practices. In Aden, on the other hand, rules and tenets of the Koran, without the introduction of any extraneous views or interpretations of any particular school, are binding on all the Moslems residing within the limits of the fortress. This arrangement works well, and I desire to establish a similar one at Berbera. No one should be aware, however, that either in my personal or official capacity I have had any hand or voice in the selection and appointment of Berbera's Chief Gazee, as his power and influence as a doctor of Islam would be greatly lessened if it could be said that he was the nominee and puppet of the Administrator. The Gazee's stipend (which will include his residence, the expenses of

his establishment and office) will, of course, be paid by the Administration, and he may be permitted to receive certain small fixed fees. As regards lay affairs, I propose to place the Gazees under the jurisdiction of a committee composed of the Akil, notables, and leading traders; and to make over to that body the handsome stone Musjid erected on the shaab from public subscriptions by the Egyptians, together with the dome-roofed tomb. The former is a Government edifice, and entered as such on the list of public buildings taken over by the Administrator."

In pursuance of this policy, therefore, I allowed the Musjid to remain in charge of the Peish Imaun (him with one eye) and the priests found there. These men had petitioned me to continue to them the same rate of pay as they had received from the Egyptians; also to recognize their rights to levy and retain fees for their own benefit, and not, as formerly, to have them solely applied towards the cost of maintenance of the Musjid. I had frequently given presents to the Peish Imaun and his colleagues, and I felt sure that they would support my views if assured of fixed and sufficient salaries for themselves.

There were two self-appointed Gazees in Berbera. Both were ignorant Arabs (one of them a supporter of the Mahdi); and they were extremely hostile to the British. In consequence I was seeking a way of getting rid of these undesirable aliens. I cautioned Baigsee, therefore, not to divulge that I had spoken to him on these subjects, or, indeed, that I took any interest in them. He was to treat what I had said in confidence, and solely as between him and me.

A certain Greek Christian of adult age one day turned Mohammedan, much to the chagrin of his relatives and fellow-countrymen. The members of the man's old faith then endeavoured to prevent this new convert from being conducted by a noisy crowd from his shop to the Musjid. I, of course, did not comply with the request of these Christians, who were the only ones in Berbera.

On another occasion, outside the Residency itself, a disturbance suddenly arose between two sets of Mohammedans. The guard quelled the riot, and on inquiring



into its cause I learned that a fanatical *widad* (Mohammedan priest) had denounced the Peish Imaun as unfit for, and disqualified by Koranic law from, holding his position. It was contended that a Peish Imaun must be a man possessed of bodily perfection to be the leader of the public prayers. Since, however, the present Peish Imaun had only one eye, he was deformed and imperfect as a man, and should be at once discharged. I did not interfere, and Khoda Buxsh got rid of the *widad* by obtaining him a free passage to Jeddah, so that a man of his learning and importance could go to Mecca and become a teacher of Moslems.



## CHAPTER V

### ENCOUNTERS WITH NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

As the Shaab was entirely open to attack on its desert side, I pulled down the quarters of the Egyptian Civil Staff, and with the materials thus obtained erected a defensible and loopholed curtain-wall. The timber window-frames and doors were removed from all the forts and houses which we had not occupied, the nails straightened and prepared for re-use, but in addition a larger quantity of stone was needed for building requirements. There was no money to buy anything, or even to pay for coolie labour. In the end the difficulty was got over by providing the drivers of camels with a rope sling, with a slip-knot at each end, and directing them to pick up from alongside the track over the plain two boulders, one of which was lashed to each end of the sling, which, thus weighted, was slung across the backs of the camels. By this means stone was conveyed into the town free of cost and deposited at convenient places.

As the Somalis residing in or near Berbera had been made by the Egyptians to perform heavy *corvée* work, they did not regard as irksome the carriage on their camels for a short distance of a couple of easily procurable boulders. Indeed, no objections at all were raised against this scheme, which worked admirably. In the course of a few years, therefore, the Administration was provided with all the stone that was required for local purposes (i.e. custom-houses, police stations, etc.), and, moreover, at the same time cleared off stone obstacles from six or seven miles of camel track across the plain, which of itself was a useful improvement to the approach to the town.

But the great building feat was the erection, free of cost, of a billiard room (60 feet by 20 feet) adjoining the Residency. We discovered buried in the sand, close

below the level of the surface of the plain, the aqueduct by which at some time unrecorded in history water had been brought from Dubar by the race then ruling at Berbera. The site of Berbera in those days appears to have been situated to the east of the present position. This perfect aqueduct was constructed with four stone slabs : one for the floor, two for the sides, and one for the top ; and the cement used had become very hard, so that it needed a great deal of labour to free and remove them without breakage. The slabs, however, were successfully collected, and utilized for the erection of the pillars and bed of the floor of the billiard room, and for other rooms at the Residency. Then, one morning, looking to seaward from the Residency window, I perceived something floating at the mouth of the harbour, but even with the aid of an up-to-date telescope I could not make out what the object was. I called the signalman, but he, too, was unable to identify the mysterious article. I therefore sent him off in a police boat to settle the problem, and a couple of hours later he reported having found two long baulks of Burmese teak, which he had towed ashore and hauled on to the beach above the high-water mark to dry in the sun. To my joy, I found that the sea had presented me with two sound and stout beams, each of over 65 feet in length, and in every way suitable to support any rooms and roof I might desire to erect over the projected billiard room ! That work was then put in hand at once, and successfully carried out.

At some little distance from Berbera there was a small grazing oasis, having three good wells, seven or eight miles distant from each other. Several temporary kraals belonging to various tribes and clans had been pitched at this favoured spot, for the purpose of obtaining without difficulty an abundant supply of water and good feeding for the camels, herds, and flocks collected in their neighbourhood. A caravan route passed on the border of this pasturage, and for some months the Somalis residing in the above located kraals had stopped caravans and travellers and demanded them to pay tribute.

No chiefs would admit responsibility for the actions of the kraal owners in question. I therefore ordered the

Duffadar in charge of the Camel Police to assemble the occupants of each kraal, inform them of the illegality of their conduct, and warn them that they would be severely punished if they repeated these offences. The Duffadar, after carrying out my instructions, came in to Berbera to report that it would be very difficult to deal with these offenders unless a large force was sent against them. The Duffadar went on to say that the men were at present watering their live stock at a particular well which he indicated on his sketch map, and, if we advanced on them there they would not fight, but would simply drive off their live stock to the next most convenient well. Moreover, they would adopt the same tactics if we followed their camels and herds, continuing to vacate each well as we approached. The Duffadar concluded, however, by remarking that, although we had not a sufficient force to attack or hold all three wells simultaneously, he felt sure these Somalis would give in if we could deprive their live stock of water for even a short period, as those animals would then die off in hundreds.

I dismissed the Duffadar, and then explained the position to Morrison. Morrison said: "I think I can circumvent these Somalis and prevent them from giving further trouble. There is a ruse I have long had in mind, but have never had an opportunity to try. I propose that you and I both ride off this evening and inspect the ground so far as we can do so without being observed. I will leave you in command of the Camel Police detachment; which, of course, I will strengthen if we have to adopt active measures in the field. We ought not both to be away from Berbera at the same time, but, as some risk has to be taken, we will in this instance go together. However, by having a fresh riding-camel to meet me for the return journey, I could be back at the Residency after an absence of about thirty hours; though no doubt the long ride and journey will be very fatiguing." Morrison thereupon rigged himself up for the "war path", and we set out. We both carried Winchester repeating rifles, as well as our revolvers, and had provided ourselves with food, water, and a couple of good and extra-powerful field-glasses.



We overtook the Duffadar, and reached our destination safely. After a good meal, rest and sleep, Morrison and I reconnoitred the first well on foot, and observed that round it there were hundreds of thorn bushes. We then mounted our steeds and, on getting near the second well, approached it in a similar fashion. In the vicinity of both the second and third wells we also found a number of thorn bushes growing. After that, we walked some two or three miles to where we had left our camels in charge of the Duffadar. Morrison and I both needed rest and sleep, and we slumbered peacefully for a couple of hours. On awakening greatly refreshed, I confided, over some Scotch and water, my ideas and plan for bringing our quarry to heel.

I observed: "It is useless to blow in a well with a dynamite cartridge, or fill it up with sand, stones, and trunks of trees, which is the usual course of the Royal Engineer officers. The Somalis have ample means and labour to clear out such an obstruction in a few hours. If, however, a well was choked with selected thorns, each of the latter would have to be removed by hand, for which job suitable implements would be lacking; moreover, even if the Somali could by any means eject the thorns, it would be a long time before they could do so and make the well yield water again in the considerable quantity required for their live stock. I therefore direct you to collect sufficient thorns to fill the well now in use. It adjoins the Camel Sowar port, and you should endeavour to obtain hired labour for this work. I will send you three or four dozen pairs of wire-nippers to cut the thorns, which you should heap on sheets or blankets ready for easy carriage. But don't do this too near the well, so that anyone may suspect what you are about. Do not communicate this scheme to the Duffadar, or to the Camel Sowars. Simply keep your own counsel, and advise me daily by runner as to how you get on."

In about ten days I heard from Morrison that by the time I could reinforce him and reach his post he would be ready to throw his heaps of thorns into the well and, with all his water-skins filled, to advance. I thereupon

at once rejoined him. We effectually stopped the drawing of water from the first well, and started off with as little delay as possible for the second one. Before we could get there, however, the Somalis had retired all their live stock to the third well. On arrival we found the second well deserted, and set about collecting thorns with which to fill it up. It took several days to complete this operation, but when we had done it we advanced in full strength on the third well, where a detachment of Foot Police joined us. The Somalis, with their live stock, then made back again to the first well; but apparently they were unaware of the nature of the materials with which it had been put out of action. Eventually, after holding a debate, they went on to examine the second well. They then realized that to get water for their animals they must at once clear out one or both of the thorn-choked wells, while probably they might have to perform that tedious task under rifle and machine-gun fire.

Animals in Somaliland are never watered daily, and three or four days had elapsed since the greater portion of our opponents' live stock had been supplied with water. I had prepared to defend our camp, as I thought it possible that in their extremity the Somalis might be compelled to attack us. The Duffadar's opinion, however, was quite correct, and showed a sound knowledge of the Somalis' way of thinking. The Somalis reasoned: if they fought the Sirkar, their live stock would be left unprotected and most likely be looted by their neighbours, especially by those with whom they had feuds.

This was probably the chief reason why no attempt was made to stop or drive us back to the coast. During the Jibril Abuker Expedition in 1888 that tribe suffered immense losses in live stock, of which far more were captured by their neighbours than by our force. On the present occasion a *widad* in our secret service reported that the cattle and sheep were dying of thirst, adding that if we had any doubts in the matter we had only to take the evidence of our own noses by sniffing the air in the proximity of the cattle zareeba appertaining to any kraal! Two days later, therefore, Morrison and I rode with our

mounted men in the direction of one of the groups of kraals, and we experienced the most sickening stench thrown off from the carcasses of numerous dead animals. We then learned that the latter were dying in hundreds; and even allowing for the usual exaggeration of the Somali, the loss suffered by these pillagers and blackmailers of caravans and travellers was undoubtedly very heavy.

That same evening a party of akils and leaders arrived at our camp, praying for peace and free access to the wells. I accepted their submission and fixed the amount of a monetary fine. This fine was to be paid by instalments, on the terms set forth in a written document, which was to be signed by each representative member who was authorized by the tribesmen to petition for peace and forgiveness. The akils stated that they had been unable to clear the thorns out of the wells, and requested assistance for that work. I therefore promised to send a party of Arab labourers, under a competent Sapper Havildar, to restore the wells to their former condition; while, since water was immediately needed, the well alongside our camp was at once made over to them. Morrison and I then set off for Berbera, leaving the Camel Sowar Duffadar in sole charge of his former post.

One very hot day Morrison and I were seated under a punka on the veranda. At that time the Ramadan Fast had lasted for forty days, and on its termination all Moslems take a very square meal. As a result, many of the Berbera Mohammedan police constables had eaten to repletion, and were lying on the ground with swollen and distended bellies. They were, indeed, reduced to such a state as to be physically and mentally incapable not only of going on duty, but even of defending themselves if attacked. Suddenly an Aysa Musa dashed up, threw himself off his horse and burst in upon Morrison and myself. I did not at first fully understand what this man said, but I gathered he had been sent to tell me that a large *Kaum* (tribal force) of Habr Gerhajis and Dulbanta horsemen had seized the camels and other animals grazing under the charge of the Aysa Musa clan at Bio Ghora (Little Dubar), and along the base of the Golis range of mountains up to the waterworks at Dubar.



I could only collect ten policemen, all Hindoos from Western India, the Mohammedan constables, by reason of their gluttony, being absolutely *hors de combat*. Morrison and I then took the Aysa Musa scout on to the roof of the Residency, from which point of vantage he showed us where the camels were being herded together. With the aid of a telescope fixed on a swivel tripod we easily made out the raiders, but the scout could not even approximately tell us the number of horsemen we might have to contend with if we attacked them. He would not agree that they were mere Murrasseh bandits, but asserted that they were tribesmen led by two important chiefs. One chief was a Dulbanta with a large mounted force, and the other an infantry soldier magnate named Sultan Nur, who commanded in person possibly a few hundred horsemen of his own tribe and fifteen hundred footmen. The scout was certain that Sultan Nur was in command, since the sultan's horse, a whitish-grey, was well known to the Aysa Musa scout.

Morrison and I hurriedly consulted with each other, and we saw that if we exposed ourselves we could be easily wiped out without making a show. I suggested, therefore, that if we rode towards the Golis range of mountains, keeping to the eastward and well under cover of the thick bushes, we could get unobserved to within a couple of miles of the nearest section of the raiders. From such a point we might be able to stalk some of their foot sentries and vedettes, or to get near enough to fire at long range on them; or, again, to wound and thereby stampede the camels and captured live stock.

Morrison, with four picked shots, finally moved off, keeping his party screened from view, and advancing toward the south-eastward. His aim was to find a defensible spot where we might lie concealed and upon which he could retire. For my part I had hoped to obtain some reinforcements from the town; but only one man, an Arab elephant-hunter, arrived. He was a rifleman and expert tracker, and I sent him off on foot to join Morrison's party. A sentry had been thrown out from the position I had taken up, and after the lapse of an hour or more he

came in to report that he had heard firing in the vicinity of Little Dubar (a copious spring of brackish and undrinkable water). If Morrison were forced to retreat, he would necessarily fall back on me; so I considered it prudent not to leave the position at which he knew where to find me.

Now Sultan Nur was a very capable commander, and he had carefully selected the date and hour for lifting the grazing animals. He had calculated so as to place me at the disadvantage of being unable to collect for defence purposes the members of the small force at my disposal; consequently I should neither be able to resist his raid from a secure position, nor to protect the town live stock on the open plain. Sultan Nur always denied that he had authorized the round-up, or that he was present when the camels were driven away. There was, however, ample evidence to indicate that he had planned the raid, and I think he was actually seated on his white-grey horse when it was shot dead at a range of about 700 yards by Morrison or a member of his party. Morrison, the Arab elephant-hunter, and four Maratha constables, although not within range for aimed fire, directed their shots three or four feet to the left of a tree by the side of which the whippers-in of the captured camels had to pass. This was no doubt a long way off; it made, nevertheless, a fairly good target, and by a skilfully controlled fire Morrison saved a considerable number of camels from being carried off.

Furug, the head turnkey at the Dubar waterworks, concealed himself on one of the peaks of the mountain at the base of which the raiders had assembled. The enemy were thus within short range of Furug's rifle, and the turnkey claimed to have accounted for three of them. On seeing Morrison's party, Furug descended from his lofty perch, decapitated two of the raiders he had marked out as having fallen to his rifle, and brought their heads to Morrison. The latter suitably commended Furug's gallant and useful services, but at the same time could not approve of cutting off the head of a dead enemy. In this case, however, it proved to be useful, since the Arab

elephant-hunter recognized one of the heads as belonging to a Somali fellow-sportsman with whom he had frequently been associated in the field.

This Arab told us that the Somali in question belonged to Sultan Nur's Jilib, and was famed for the number of elephants he had killed. His methods, nevertheless, were different from those of hunters who shot elephants with a steel-headed bullet, fired from a heavy bore rifle. It appeared that three well-mounted Somalis would proceed to bring an elephant to earth in such a manner that it was quite incapable of rising from the spot where it had fallen. This was done by the best-mounted Somali riding just beyond the reach of the elephant's trunk, and inciting the animal to pursue him. The other two mounted men then rode close to the elephant's hind legs, and hacked with their swords at a joint or some other soft spot. This caused the elephant to fall to the ground, a helpless mass; whereupon the beast was either allowed to die of starvation or else was pierced with poisoned arrows to hasten death. The ivory was removed and sold in the market at Berbera.

To return, however, to the scene of the engagement. By this time about 200 Aysa Musa and 100 Makail spears had arrived near Bio Ghora. They demanded that Morrison should lead them in pursuit of Sultan Nur's *Kaum*; but since he had only half a dozen constables with him, they saw that he was not equipped to make an advance. The retiring raiders evidently expected to be followed, and found it impossible to drive off their slow-moving flocks of captured sheep and goats. They were compelled, therefore, to abandon those animals, and over 100 camels as well, all of which were recovered by the Aysa Musa and Makail spears.

Sultan Nur on this occasion had made a haul of about 1,500 camels, since there happened to be at Berbera three or four large caravans from the interior, in addition to the camels of the townsmen which had also been driven off. It transpired later that three raiders had been shot dead, and a few others were no doubt wounded by rifle fire. We also found four dead horses on the field. No doubt Sultan Nur had not been sufficiently punished, but I think



he was astonished at the fight we had put up with so small a force.

Mahomed Dosa and Baigsee Abseya (both of whom were personally acquainted with Sultan Nur) were then despatched to demand the restoration of the plundered camels, and to re-establish peaceful relations. Sultan Nur, however, not only declined to make restitution, but also refused to aid us in getting back the captured animals. All the animals, he said, had been taken by the Dulbanta chief; while, if any of his men had taken part in the raid, they were renegade Murrassehs over whom he had no control, and were regarded as no longer members of his branch of the Habr Gerhajis tribe. On the other hand, when on his mission to the Sultan, Baigsee actually identified some of our camels grazing in the vicinity of Sultan Nur's kraal!

Under these conditions the Berbera Administration was powerless, and I feared that it would be necessary for the Government to incur the heavy expense of sending a large force of regular troops to make Sultan Nur see the error of his ways. I communicated the whole of the facts to Major Hunter, my chief at Aden, but asked him to delay forwarding my official report until I had gathered further particulars regarding the intrigues which had induced Sultan Nur and a Dulbanta chief to make this raid on Berbera. In the meanwhile I had detained, or held on bail, all the members of Sultan Nur's tribe; and Major Hunter backed me up by expelling from Aden, and despatching to Berbera, all Sultan Nur's people upon whom he could lay his hands.

In one of my semi-official notes to Major Hunter I had used the word "pressure", and he quoted that expression in a letter which he had addressed to the Government of Bombay. The latter desired to be informed of the nature of the "pressure" referred to, as if it exceeded the ordinary course of prohibiting a recalcitrant tribe from trading with any Somali Coast port administered by the British, it would receive the disapprobation of Government. As it happened, the Bombay Secretariat soon learned the meaning which Hunter and I attached to the word

“pressure”, and I got into very hot water for my arbitrary and lawless action.

Of course, these views as to the conduct of Major Hunter and myself were written by a secretary who was absolutely ignorant of our weak position and the limited means at the disposal of the Berbera Administration. I remonstrated, therefore, and pointed out that although the names of Major Hunter and myself were on the list of Political Officers of the Bombay Presidency, yet our services had been officially placed at the disposal of H.B.M.’s Foreign Office. Consequently the Bombay Government had no authority to comment on the way we performed our duties under the orders of Major Baring, H.B.M.’s representative in Egypt. The Bombay Government had to agree with us there, and they never again attempted to interfere with officers of the Indian services serving directly under H.B.M.’s Government. Major Baring had been kept fully advised of the troubles and difficulties of the Administrator at Berbera, and he very discreetly did not alarm the Government at home, or find fault with what our hostile critics called high-handed methods and measures.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CAPTURE OF A PRINCESS

ABOUT a month after Sultan Nur's raid on Berbera, our senior lamp-trimmer, Obseyah Mahomed, of the Habr Gerhajis tribe and the Aden Port Trust service, asked permission to see me alone. I admitted him at once to my office, and he told me that his wife had travelled down country with the Garadah, Sultan Nur's wife, who had with her the Sultan's only son, an infant. The Garadah was *en route* for Karam, a port 60 miles to the eastward of Berbera, the embargo on her entrance to Berbera compelling her to go there to purchase clothes and the annual food supplies. She had, in fact, probably arrived at Bunder Karam that morning.

I thanked Obseyah Mahomed for this very useful information, and after he had left the Residency I immediately sent for Mahomed Dosa, the harbour master; Jemedar Khoda Buxsh (a Baloochi who spoke Somali fluently, and had married a Somalin); and Baigsee Abseya, a Makail (Ugas of Biladiehs). All three men sat cross-legged on the floor of my office, and I disclosed to them the whereabouts of Sultan Nur's wife and son. I then proposed to catch the lady at Karam, and to bring her by sea to Berbera.

To Khoda Buxsh I said : "You served for a few months as a Camel Sowar in the Aden Desert Mounted Police, and I now desire you to take command of a party of twelve camels. Each animal carries two riflemen, but as you may have to move rapidly, I think it would be safer to have only one man up. You will reach Karam at a little before three a.m., and fire on the town with blank cartridges. This discharge will, I calculate, induce all the fighting men to march out to oppose you ; in which case you are to run away, and under no circumstances are you to fight. You



will, however, not commence this manœuvre until you see my barge off the port ; my barge will have two lamps hung upon the mast. Mahomed Dosa will sail the barge to Karam and land me and two orderlies there, keeping the barge afloat with her stern to the shore. Every man in the boat will be armed with a repeating rifle, and the two swivel guns, under the direction of the police armourer, Elshi Buxsh, will be loaded with canister and trained on the beach."

Everything started according to plan, and before leaving the Residency barge I heard the *feu de joie* made by Khoda Buxsh's camelmen. I then landed and was directed by Baigsee Abseya to the only stone building in the town, in which he correctly predicted the Garadah would be found. Oomradin (a Cashmiri), my personal orderly, woke up the sleeping princess and endeavoured to carry her bodily out of the house. This, however, he was unable to accomplish owing to the prowess of the young woman's arms, and he summoned Baigsee to his aid. Thereupon the two stalwart constables tied Her Highness's skirt over her head, and so imprisoned her strong and vigorous limbs. The lady was then lifted on to my left shoulder, and I carried her safely to the barge. I had only just bundled her on board, when some twelve or fifteen of her retainers rushed on to the beach and hurled their spears at me and the barge. Fortunately their missiles fell short, and we got clear away without having fired a shot or injured anyone. On our side, too, there were no casualties.

Baigsee was very well known at Karam, as he frequently conducted caravans to and from that port ; his presence, therefore, had caused no surprise, and the inhabitants simply considered he was in search of a traveller by caravan. No one was aware that Baigsee had come to Karam with Khoda Buxsh's camel corps, or that he had any connection with the police party in the barge. In these circumstances I felt satisfied that he ran no risk by remaining at Karam. As it happened, after the barge had put to sea, Baigsee ran up against the commander of the Garadah's escort. The latter, having lost his mistress, was afraid to return to

Sultan Nur, and he asked Baigsee if he thought that he and his party, or at least some of them, would be permitted to enter Berbera to attend on the Garadah. Baigsee very rightly assured him that no member or servant of Sultan Nur's tribe would be admitted into Berbera, but he thoughtfully suggested that the Garadah's clothes should be forwarded to her there. This course was adopted, to the great convenience of Her Highness.

As soon as the barge was safely away, our sail was hoisted for Berbera. I unfastened Her Highness's skirt, whereupon she abused me roundly for having seized her in the dark by stealth, and not in the open field as a fighting man should do. She vowed dire vengeance, saying that her husband would attack and burn Berbera and drive the British into the sea, as he and his friends had determined not to accept the domination of the white man. I apologized, and expressed my sincere regret for the necessity of seizing Her Highness; but I explained that I had been obliged to do so as the only means I had to compel the Garadah's husband to restore the camels he had driven off from the grazing-ground at the foot of the Golis range. I predicted with deference that the Sultan would surely prefer to have back his favourite wife and his only son (who had also been captured) than to retain the camels and cattle. I assured the Garadah that she would be well treated, lodged, and fed while under my charge.

The sea was extremely rough, but the Garadah and her little son were made as comfortable as circumstances permitted. My Somali butler, Poblay Awali (Habr Gerhajis), respectfully presented the seasick lady with a cup of hot tea and a similar measure of cocoa and milk. The Garadah at first declined these refreshments; but Mahomed Dosa, with whom she was personally acquainted, assured her of her personal safety and good treatment, and, being terribly fatigued, she finally accepted the tea and soon dropped off to sleep. The infant prince meanwhile had made himself quite at home, and, moreover, proved that he possessed an excellent appetite.

On arriving at Berbera the barge was made fast to the pier, and I endeavoured to help Her Highness to step on



shore. She declined, however, to accept aid, and made indeed not the slightest acknowledgment of my overtures. I had hurriedly decided to accommodate the Garadah in the guest house on the Shaab, and I sent for a Somali constable's wife, who had been employed to take care of the women of the Nakib's slaves when they were interned in a quarantine hospital on an island in Aden harbour. I had seen a good deal of this Somalin, as I happened to be the officer in command of the police party on Quarantine Island. A *dhobie* was sent to convey the Garadah to her temporary residence ; but she preferred to walk, and I gathered that she had never before seen an ambulance.

As soon as the Princess was safely installed in the guest house, a strong guard was posted for her protection. I thereupon wrote a courteous, and in no sense defiant, letter to Sultan Nur, informing him that his wife was under my personal care, and that she neither had been, nor would be, treated with anything but the respect due to her high rank. I then invited the Sultan to restore the animals he had carried off from the Berbera town grazing grounds. I assured His Highness that when full restitution had been made the Garadah would be freed and sent under a suitable escort to whatever place His Highness might fix upon.

Having donned a white uniform, and wearing my medals and sword, I sought and obtained an interview with the Garadah. I showed and read to her my letter to her husband, which bore the official seal of my office and my personal signature, and I asked her if she desired to have a letter written at her dictation, to travel with mine to Sultan Nur. She said : "No", and then, to my intense surprise, after requesting me to hand her again my letter, she began to read it herself. Now I had never before heard of, let alone met, an indigenous Somalin who could read or write. The Garadah perceived my obvious bewilderment and disbelief of her claim to such an educational attainment, and she volunteered the following explanation.

"I am by parentage a Somalin, but I was born at Sannar, and resided all my girlhood in Arabia, where I was educated. Indeed, I speak Arabic as my mother tongue. My father, having prospered, purchased a considerable property in



live stock and, on the death of his father, settled in the home of his youth. My grandfather had sheltered in his kraal a venerable *widad*, who taught me to read the Koran and with whom I spoke Arabic. This holy man was not a great scholar, but he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca as a mendicant, and so had seen something of the world. I then grew up to womanhood and married Sultan Nur. Sultan Nur can neither read nor write any language; but he is a great foot soldier and leader of men, and I warn you your letter will make him furiously angry. He will probably tear it up, and at once send word to inform you of his intention to attack and burn Berbera. He will be afraid of looking ridiculous in the eyes of his neighbours if he surrenders your camels simply because I have fallen into your hands. I hope that Your Excellency will make it quite clear to my husband that I became your prisoner through no fault or negligence of mine."

I replied: "I will certainly comply with Your Highness's request, which it is only fair and just that I should do. I will now insert an extra paragraph in my letter narrating the whole circumstances of your capture." I held out my hand for the return of my letter, but apparently she did not wish me after all to add anything. In giving the missive back to me, however, she observed: "You write good Arabic, but your calligraphy is that of a child. You need to be taught by a scribe to write neatly, and to form better connections between your syllables." I answered her: "Your Highness is perfectly correct. Personally I seldom write Arabic, and consequently get no practice in penmanship. On this occasion I was compelled to write myself because I had no Arabic clerk available. I will, however, venture to request the honour and pleasure of being given a few lessons in calligraphy by Your Highness." She did not appear to be offended by this request, although she made no reply to it. She then smiled, and did not seem to have been annoyed or bored by our conversation.

My lamp-trimmer came to the Residency and asked me not to tell his wife (who was then in actual attendance on the Garadah), or indeed the Garadah herself, that I had learned from him of the Princess's presence at Karam. I readily

promised not to give him away to anyone. Soon afterwards the Garadah's clothes arrived, having been sent by Baigsee on a fleet *hygeen*. This thoughtful attention pleased the lady, and made her much more comfortable. As a matter of fact, I had already been mindful to leave money in the hands of the matron to enable her Highness to purchase whatever garments she might require; while the ladies of Mahomed Shermarki's household, who had called on the Garadah, had received a hint to place their wardrobes at the Garadah's disposal.

Ten days elapsed, but no reply to my letter came from Sultan Nur. I heard, however, that two Senousi Akwan were guests in his kraal; and this was a very significant fact, since it showed that these guests, members of a very influential community, were hatching a scheme to retaliate on and injure the Administration.

I donned my uniform, medals and sword, and in that "rig-out" called each day at noon on the Garadah. Little by little we became friendly. One day I was watching her playing backgammon with the lamp-trimmer's wife, who was a member of Her Highness's tribe, when, suddenly looking up, she asked in Arabic: "Does Your Excellency play this game, or is it beneath the dignity of the wearer of the 'Sword of State' to do so with a woman?"

"Indeed, no," I replied. "I should consider it a great honour and privilege to try a 'hit' with Your Highness." And thereupon I sat down and arranged the board, and we cast a die to decide who should have the first throw. She won, and we played several "hits" with varying success. But in the end she was two or three to the good.

In due course I received a note from the Political Officer at Zeila. From the contents of this communication I learned that a member of the Abubuker family had hired, from our side of the western frontier, several camels to carry goods from a Dunkali port, through the Gadabursi country, to that part of Somaliland in which Sultan Nur resided. As this was a very unusual route, and as also the hirer of the camels was a well-known seller of smuggled firearms, it at once appeared to me that rifles or ammunition, or both, were being despatched to Sultan Nur. I therefore



sent a mounted messenger to each of the two Duffadars in charge of the Camel Sowar posts situated to the south and south-west of Bulhar, with directions to scout in conjunction with each other to the southward and eastward of the Jibril Abuker boundaries, where they adjoined the Gadabursi limits. Jemedar Khoda Buxsh was one of my messengers, and he had orders to take charge of all the mounted men, including Friendlies. He could then collect the horsemen and personally conduct the operations.

Hassan Ahmed, Major Hunter's second interpreter, happened to be on leave at the time and at his house in the Berbera country. He was therefore in a position to assist, with some of his mounted friends. After a few days of watching they located the loaded camels on their way eastward, and they acquainted Jemedar Khoda Buxsh of the exact whereabouts of the quarry. The Sowars then speedily captured the lot, and found that the loads did in actual fact contain rifles. This was a smart piece of police work, and must have astonished Sultan Nur and his two Senousi advisers considerably. Incidentally, before the news of this seizure of rifles had reached me, I had received an extremely impudent letter from Sultan Nur. This I had returned to him, with an endorsement in red ink, requesting him to admonish and punish his clerk for the rude and undiplomatic language used on behalf of a Sultan to a neighbouring ruler. He took no notice of my remarks, but no doubt it had a useful effect, coming on the top of the news regarding the capture of his rifles.

A few days afterwards the head of a small Habr Gerhajis Jilib, who had once accompanied me on a short shooting tour, came to pay his respects at the Residency. He asked permission to see the Garadah, and the latter consented to receive this visitor. He was, it transpired, her distant cousin. Later the visitor saw me again, and, having assured me he was in no sense an emissary from Sultan Nur, he said he thought he might personally be able to bring about peace. He pointed out that the real difficulty of effecting an amicable settlement was the ridiculous position in which my tactics and strategy had placed the Sultan, a master of many thousand horse and foot



warriors. I answered that in order to indicate my desire for peace and a settlement, I would, as a first step, liberate the members of the Sultan's tribe detained as prisoners in Aden, and also those held on bail in Berbera. On the other hand, I definitely declined to release the Garadah until every animal carried off had been restored, or its full value paid for. I added that the amount of fine to be imposed on His Highness was a matter open to discussion. I flatly and firmly refused to pay *Dia* (blood money) for the three raiders killed, or any compensation for the four horses shot by my police. While I declared that, if Sultan Nur attempted to carry out his threat to attack and burn Berbera, I should at once send the Garadah to Aden for safety, and thus, whatever might be the result of the fighting, the Sultan would not recapture her. My visitor then left, after begging hard to be made the authorized bearer of milder terms. To that I replied: "You may tell the Sultan that it is a matter of indifference to me whatever course he may take."

After the would-be peacemaker had departed I sought an interview with the Garadah. She received me cordially, and observed that her husband was not unlikely to come to terms with me if I did not make them too onerous for his acceptance. With that I told Her Highness also that if Sultan Nur attempted to attack Berbera I would send her for security to be detained at Aden. She had never anticipated such an action upon my part, and my remark caused her to weep and to accuse me of being only fit and capable of making war on a woman. I said: "If Your Highness is sent to Aden, it will be entirely your husband's fault. Common sense dictates the value of the possession of Your Highness's person, because the physical detention of your priceless self provides an ample and adequate security in one sense or another for the loss of the looted animals." The Garadah admitted the force of my reasoning, and I think was not annoyed with this expression of my views.

Her Highness then went on to say: "I told Your Excellency that I had been taught to read the Koran, and have therefore a slight knowledge of Islamic laws and customs. I believe it is laid down in the 'Book' that a woman made prisoner in war becomes 'the spoil of war'.

I was captured by Your Excellency's sword, and therefore I ask if I am 'yours'? You have by force and skill gained legal possession of me. Are you man enough to make that announcement publicly to my late husband, for I must necessarily regard him as such, since I have ceased to be his wife in consequence of my capture by yourself." She added: "I have never read your Bible; but my old teacher told me that many of the stories and parables related therein resemble those in the Koran. Our revered prophet 'Nubbi-Isa' was as Jesus, the founder of your Christianity, and I have gathered that in his Bible women captives of war can be legally taken as concubines or made the slave wives of their captors."

"Your Highness has correctly stated and interpreted the laws of the Koran," I replied. "But Your Highness does not seem to understand that I am a humble, loyal, and obedient servant of the great and gracious Queen Victoria. My Queen is the foremost woman of all women, and for the protection of her sex she does not allow any servant of her Crown to take any woman as the 'spoil of war'. I am therefore not free to claim or act upon the laws and customs which Your Highness has so correctly alluded to and so appositely commented upon. If circumstances had been different, I could have afforded Your Highness another explanation of my conduct, attitude, and ideas." I thought by this reply to have very adroitly got out of the dilemma into which I had fallen by the Garadah's arguments and frame of mind. I had no desire to affront her, as I might easily have done, by asserting that, as a woman, I would not accept her at any price or on any conditions.

Another ten days elapsed, and then Sultan Nur wrote to say that he would treat with me with respect to the looted animals. I at once released all the prisoners belonging to his tribe, and had a properly drawn up agreement sent for his perusal. If he accepted the terms set forth in the agreement, he was himself to bring that document into Berbera and sign it at the Residency, after which he would at once take possession of the Garadah, his wife. With all these conditions Sultan Nur complied, and his wife was handed over to him in the presence of the Akil

and notables of Berbera, under a salute and presentation of arms by a Guard of Honour. The Garadah, veiled and standing at the main entrance of the Residency ready to mount her camel, publicly thanked me in Arabic for the courteous treatment she had received at my hands. She then turned, and to her husband, who also understood Arabic, she said: "We owe a debt of gratitude to this Christian officer. I felt much safer while in his charge than I would have done if I had been in the custody of a Moslem official."

Berbera, on the whole, was now both peaceful and prosperous. The sea-borne and inland trade of the port had largely increased, as had also the receipts from custom duties, which were the only source of revenue. The absence of a hut or kraal tax, or indeed of any direct taxation, made the people happy and contented; and none of the tribes of the interior directly interfered with, or levied tolls on, caravans. The latter were, however, still frequently threatened with attacks, and molested by bands of Murassehs, for which depredations none of the akils and chiefs of tribes would admit any responsibility. The joint efforts of the Somali Coast Mounted and Foot Police had failed to catch or punish these marauders, since at best the Biladihs escorting a caravan were only strong enough to beat off the attack.

Often the Biladihs had to send in to Berbera and Bulhar for help, but I seldom went myself on these tiresome jaunts, as I had Jemedar Khoda Buxsh always at hand to conduct a party of Camel Sowars to the place where their services might be needed. Poor Morrison, on the other hand, had no native officer capable of successfully carrying out a police duty of this kind, and he had, therefore, to go himself.

It was very difficult to obtain Somali recruits for the Camel Mounted force, and especially ones willing to ride in an Indian saddle, which carries two men. In these circumstances it was necessary to import Camel Sowars (*sandnis*) from India, who did not know the country or speak Somali. The Arab would only ride in the Maloofa saddle in the Arab style, with his legs resting on the camel's neck; from which seat, if in motion, he could not



use a rifle accurately. We were therefore seldom able to enrol Arabs for the Camel Corps, and were practically dependent on natives of India. Our very efficient Somali Camel Police force was broken up some years later, when the Government decided to garrison the ports with regulars of the Indian Army, and the Aden Troop (Indian Cavalry Regulars) took over very unsuccessfully the patrols of the local Camel Corps.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOME RELIGIOUS, MEDICAL, AND FISCAL ASPECTS

EVERY sane Moslem, having contracted a legal marriage, may divorce his wife at his sole pleasure, without any misbehaviour on her part, and without assigning any cause or reason for divorcing her. In order to render such a divorce legally effective, it must be pronounced by the husband on three separate occasions, with an interval, generally of one month's duration, between each pronouncement. It is then final, and the husband cannot take back as his legal wife a woman so divorced by him. He may, however, with her consent, marry her again. Marriage, in fact, under Islam is a civil contract made between a free man and a free woman. This contract is embodied in a written document, which generally recites the terms upon which the marriage was agreed to, and it is the only evidence of the marriage and its conditions. The preservation of these "marriage lines" is therefore very essential evidence, and practically a married woman's sole guarantee of her rights.

Now Mohammed was a reformer, and Islamic doctors have often told me that, being surrounded by Christian tribes debauched by drunkenness and many evil habits and customs, Mohammed considered Christians as very undesirable neighbours for his followers. He effected, therefore, as far as possible a complete severance between the two sects. In the first place, he absolutely prohibited the consumption of spirits, wine, and alcohol in any form ; while, secondly, he restricted the number of legal wives to four, whereas in the Bible (1 Timothy, iii) only Christian bishops and ecclesiastics were prohibited from marrying more than one wife, and that one was absolutely compulsory. Inferentially, and especially in the case of those hostile to Christianity, Mohammedans point out that



there is no definite restriction to the number of wives a Christian may marry; thus, if in practice he has only one wife, that is because he cannot afford to maintain more than one, and also because the plurality of wives is opposed to the ideas and habits of all white European Christian races.

Mohammed, however, hedged in the permission for legally marrying four wives with such obstacles and difficulties as to render it extremely difficult for an ordinary Moslem to have more than one wife, except under exceptional circumstances and with the consent of the Gazeer. And it is to be noticed that Moslems of position, even if rich enough to disregard the expense, seldom marry more than one wife.

A Moslem, if he has more than one wife, is legally bound to provide each of his wives with an entirely separate dwelling; unless, of course, the wives themselves agree, and he consents, to their living together under his roof. Curiously enough, I have known of many cases where the two wives of one man resided together on terms of genuine friendship. There is also a well-known facetious saying to the effect that wives simply cannot be accommodated in separate houses, since not even Mohammed himself could find a mason or bricklayer capable of erecting a wall high enough to keep the women apart! The Mohammedan contract of marriage generally stipulates that a woman born and brought up in the desert shall not be forced to reside in a town with her husband, while similarly a town-bred woman cannot be compelled to reside in the desert.

I can, of course, only relate my personal experience of the working of marriage laws and customs in countries in which I have resided, and I know that those laws and customs differ in nearly every Moslem country. Moreover, I do not claim to be an authority on this subject, beyond my personal observations.

I often discussed matrimonial questions with the Gazeer of Aden, and other Moslem controversialists, and they all agreed that a wife was the best and most reliable agent a man could have to look after his interests and his live stock. Suppose a man has camels and sheep, which must necessarily



be grazed in different localities, he is generally allowed by Mohammedan law to marry a second or even a third wife; as, if he has not easy and immediate access to one of his two wives, he must have another one to cook for him and conduct the house in which he resides. Questions such as the dower, maintenance, and place of habitation of a wife during the life and after the death of her husband, and a wife's right to remarry without forfeiture of property derived from a deceased husband, frequently lead to quarrels. In Somaliland especially, if a wife has been unjustly treated, divorced, or deprived of her dowry, and the wife is a woman of importance, the tribe will take up arms and support her case and thus start a tribal feud.

I endeavoured to settle these disputes by appointing a committee of three akils, one to represent the administration, the other two to represent the parties concerned. I found, however, that in the absence of documentary evidence no reliable decision could be arrived at, and it became essential to have records of marriages and the terms upon which they had been made. This was one of my reasons for seeking a desirable and capable man to hold the office of Gaze of Berbera.

It is my experience that it is much easier for any ruler, no matter what his religion may be, to govern a Mohammedan country if he shows a certain respect for the local Ulema. The latter are invariably inclined to support authority, especially if the administrator is tolerant, and does not himself proselytize or assist others to do so. Major Hunter and I always sought to lead public opinion, and to show the people by veritable statements of the truth the cause and the necessity for the presence of the British in Egypt and in Somaliland.

It struck us that we could best circulate these particulars by having them preached in the Musjid, and published in the Egyptian and Arabic newspapers which were read at the ports of the Red Sea littorals. Major Hunter and I would therefore compose a sermon in English setting forth our views; then translate it into my bad Arabic; after which, if Hunter approved of it, the native assistant revised and corrected the effort into good Arabic.

Our sermons tended to show that of all Christian nations the English Protestant faith and freedom were more closely allied to Islam than the Roman Catholic Christians, with their use of incense and display of altars, crucifixes, and other ornaments in procession round the towns of Egypt. Also I did not deny what Mohammedans have often urged as our debt to them: the aid rendered by the Porte to Queen Elizabeth of England when the Spanish Armada sought to place England under the yoke and banner of Rome. There is, indeed, some foundation for this legend, since after the Armada had sailed from Spain the Moors did in fact attack several Spanish ports and captured many of their trading vessels.

One day I strolled out of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo and ran up against a wandering priest. Observing that he carried a Koran tied round his neck, I saluted him and said: "O venerable student of the Book, come and expound to me a *surah* of the Koran." The priest accepted my invitation, and was presently sitting cross-legged on the floor, sipping some coffee and regaling himself with Turkish delight. I indicated the *surah* which I wished him to read, and perceived at once that he was an ignorant man, and did not understand the meaning of what he had read to me. I listened politely, however, and after a little produced one of my own sermons and diffidently placed it in his hands, remarking that that document contained my interpretation and appreciation of the *surah* in question. The priest read my effort, but I could see he did not approve of the tolerance and common sense expressed therein. Nevertheless, I pretended not to notice his disapprobation, and suddenly said to him: "I feel so strongly about the truth of the points set forth in my document that I would pay five pounds to have it preached from the pulpit of a Musjid." The man of God licked his chops and replied: "I am only a poor Moolla, not even attached to any Musjid, and having no pulpit of my own; but if I had a sufficient sum of money I could pay the beneficed Moolla of some Musjid to let me occupy his pulpit on a Friday." Whereupon I observed: "I also am a poor man. But I would pay ten pounds if you could personally preach the sermon in



full, or, better still, read it from the rostrum of an important Musjid."

The man of God returned the next day to say that all had been arranged. I therefore gave him an advance of three pounds, and directed a member of my Secret Police to attend the Musjid and hear the delivery of the sermon. This my agent did, afterwards reporting that my version had been correctly rendered, and had been fairly well received by the congregation. My detective, however, had also induced the editor of a small Arabic newspaper to publish the sermon *in extenso*, and to express an editorial approval of it in his columns. A number of copies of this production were posted in Egypt to the addresses of several editors of Arabic newspapers which had a circulation in Temen and at the ports of the Red Sea littorals; while other copies, bearing an Egyptian postage stamp, were forwarded to certain persons whom we considered were friends of tranquillity, and would welcome an opportunity of confronting mischief-makers and firebrands with well-reasoned arguments for peace from a Moslem source.

At that time the steamers of several large lines trading to the East shipped and discharged their firemen crews at Aden. With the purpose of keeping down the population residing within the walls of the Fortress of Aden, a woman, except with a licence available for a short period, was only permitted to live in Aden with her husband, or with the person who legitimately fed and supported her. The firemen, therefore, when about to ship on board a steamer, took their wives to the post office and there divorced them; and the men discharged from the steamer married these same women then and there, thereby saving them from expulsion under the Aden Police regulations.

During the first two and a half years of my residence at Berbera there was no Warrant Medical Attendant attached to the Establishment. Since, however, one of H.M.'s warships was constantly lying in Berbera harbour, the naval surgeon came to our aid whenever he knew we needed medical advice and assistance. I had provided two Bombay medical chests, in each of which there was a copy of Surgeon-Major G. T. Hunter's useful booklet,



*Medical Hints for the Districts.* The Berbera chest was placed in charge of my police orderly, Oomradin, a Cashmiri, who soon became known as the "Hakim", and was regarded as a man of considerable local importance. I used to spend an hour or two daily in treating the applicants for medical relief.

One morning there was a very severe fight between two clans on the plain outside the town. The police were quite unable to separate the combatants, who resented such interference and wounded three constables. One of the latter, an Afghan named Sherbaj Khan, had received a spear in the jaw, and the extraction of the spearhead was impeded by its barb. This man, infuriated by the pain of his wound, dropped on one knee and fired a dozen rounds or so at haphazard in the direction of the town. Nearly a mile away a Somalin was sitting in her hut, with a baby at her breast, when a rifle-bullet killed the child and passed through the mother's lung. The woman was carried up to the Residency, expectorating blood. I gave her a cold stimulant, and had her propped up on a bed in a sitting position, which was all that could be done for her. After three or four days' rest in hospital, however, she seemed much better, and in a week or ten days she was out and about again as usual.

The other two constables wounded on this occasion were badly hurt about the legs. One of them died, but the other had one leg hanging on by a mere piece of flesh, and eventually quite recovered, except for the loss of his limb.

At another time a party of Camel Sowars were escorting me on the plain, where a man with a spear through his body was being carried off the field on a donkey. I knew this wounded warrior very well, and I stopped to render him such aid as I could. I found that the barbed point of the spear had penetrated right through his bowels without injuring them, and was protruding quite close alongside the vertebra at the precise spot from which the original tail of a human being is supposed to have been cut off! Taking some tow out of my saddle, I steeped it in brandy and applied it as a dressing to the wounds.

I added a couple of splints made with the shaft of the spear to keep the dressing in position. The man was then wrapped up in his *tobe* and placed in a soft bed scooped in the sand and screened from the sun. His wounds were cleaned daily, and he got perfectly well in a week or ten days.

The fame of the Indian constable and the Wali of Berbera as "medicine-men" spread all over Somaliland, and daily the Residency was besieged by a crowd seeking medical and surgical attention. As the custom receipts increased, our finances enabled the engagement of an L.M.S. (Licentiate of Medicine and Surgery) of the Bombay Subordinate Medical Service. An L.M.S., if in charge of a dispensary, is generally a qualified hospital assistant, and is officially authorized to kill or cure with exactly the same professional responsibility as a commissioned officer of the Indian Medical Service. This man of ours turned out to be an excellent general practitioner, and soon became beloved by the people for his skilful attention to their ailments and requirements. Later on a surgery and a hospital with wards for in-patients were provided, and we all reaped the benefit of always having a competent Æsculapius within call. The latter in due course rose to the grade of Assistant-Surgeon; while later, in recognition of his good services, he was made an uncovenanted Civil Surgeon of an Indian station, a position ordinarily reserved for an I.M.S. commissioned officer. Many of these medical subordinates, or licentiates, were most capable men; they often held higher degrees and qualifications (obtained during periods of leave in Europe) than were possessed by their Commanding Officer. I noticed that an Assistant-Surgeon, if he settled in India after retiring on pension, always secured a lucrative private practice.

When the Egyptian Civil and Military Establishment left Berbera all public and other buildings remained in my charge. I was the representative of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, whose flag I had in obedience to orders continued to fly as usual. A complete list of edifices of all kinds had been made out, but since they had been erected on no settled plan, no accurate or full reference to them had



been endorsed on the map of the town. For defensive purposes a large number of houses had been pulled down, while others had been altered and a few new ones built.

I reported, then, to Major Hunter the receipt of a letter from an Egyptian officer, intimating that he was likely to be deputed to the Somali Coast to prepare a map of the various permanent structures and to assess the value of each. It appeared that several of the former Egyptian officials had resided in their own private dwellings, and now demanded payment for them. It was also hinted that money for such purpose could be provided from custom dues or other local revenue and sources. This application and suggestion rather upset my "apple-cart", as I did not want this financial burden to fall on Berbera, and moreover I did not know if it would be paid by H.M.'s Treasury or written off as a loss by the Egyptian Government.

Major Hunter appreciated my dilemma, and, not wanting to deal officially with the matter, he privately employed a Captain Onslow, R.E., Executive Engineer at Aden, to make a map of the town as it then existed. On this map I was directed to mark off the sites of the demolished buildings, and to colour in red all my own architectural efforts. Captain Onslow soon got out the required plan, and after it had been endorsed with the requisite information it was handed to Major Hunter. Captain Onslow and I, however, could not agree in the matter of values, as he estimated on Aden prices and I on the basis of the local cost of materials and labour. Fortunately we were never called upon to settle the case, the whole matter lapsing after the Egyptian flag had been hauled down, when the buildings passed to the Administration of Berbera.

Captain Onslow unfortunately disapproved of my combining the functions of an engineer with those of the Political Service. And this sapper took advantage of his insight into Berbera affairs to induce the Public Works Department to press for the appointment at Berbera of a separate Civil Engineer. The military also, under the same instigation, endeavoured to post a Royal Engineer officer in charge of the buildings and defensive works at Berbera. Major Hunter and I naturally resisted both of



these suggestions, on the simple grounds that the revenue and funds at the disposal of the Administration were insufficient to bear such additional expenditure. It was furthermore pointed out by myself that for some years to come no new works were likely to be needed at Berbera, all the necessary alterations and additions having been completed. For such work as there was to do the permanent staff was sufficient and fully competent. Major Hunter and I were pressed from all sides to create posts in Somaliland for military officers desirous of civil employment, but we successfully opposed these expensive measures until about the end of 1886. In that year I ceased to be "His Honour" the Administrator, and became the Assistant Political Resident at Aden, in local charge of the Berbera sub-agency.

The Bey of Berbera received a yearly salary of 1,500 Egyptian gold pounds and a furnished house, with free rent and water, a gardener, and three household domestics. He also received a monthly horse-allowance, and the cost of the hire of camels when travelling inland on duty. As Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden I drew a total emolument of about Rs. 1,000 per month, including a personal good-service allowance of Rs. 150 per month. Out of this I had to pay for my horse and water in cash; my sterling income, therefore, amounted to about £750 per annum. Major Hunter told me to settle the amount of my own salary at Berbera, but he warned me not to make myself too expensive, which would only increase the objections of the Bombay Government to my employment in the Indian Political Service. In these circumstances I deemed it fair, reasonable, and advisable to fix my total pay at Rs. 12,000 per annum, say the equivalent of £825 sterling yearly. Major Hunter thought that I had acted with discretion and moderation, and suggested he should recommend another £75 per annum. But that I asked him not to do.

Major Hunter endeavoured to get Mr. Morrison an increase of pay, and on his own authority raised Morrison's salary to Rs. 200 per mensem. He furthermore desired to have Morrison made a gazetted officer, so that the latter could be legally appointed to act for any of us if we

should happen to be away from the Coast. As this involved making Mr. Morrison a Deputy-Assistant Political Agent, with a salary of at least Rs. 250 per month, as well as allowances, the Bombay Political Department would not accept Major Hunter's proposal. Hunter then personally pressed the case on Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, emphasizing the hardship of a sick officer who had no deputy to whom he could hand over duties until some properly qualified successor should arrive from India. Lord Reay thought Major Hunter's request was most reasonable; while, moreover, the excellent services rendered by Mr. Morrison deserved such advancement. It was thus a real pleasure to Major Hunter and myself when we were able to announce to Morrison that he had been gazetted as a local Political Officer.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PUNITIVE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE JIBRIL ABUKER CLANS, 1888.

IN 1888 Major Hunter decided that punitive measures ought to be taken against the Jibril Abuker clans. They were to be punished for their repeated raids on the live stock grazing on the Maritime Plain, for attacks made by them on caravans entering and leaving Bulhar, and for their intrigues at Zeila. These latter were instigated by a member of the Jibril Abuker clan employed in a subordinate position at the French Consulate at Zeila. This member sought the Consul's favour by increasing the number of Somali applicants for French-protection papers, in order to show that French and Pashalic interests and influence in and around the town of Zeila were quite as important as those of Great Britain.

In the foregoing circumstances Major Hunter knew that no official permission would be granted for military operations against members of clans claiming or seeking French protection. On the other hand, the Government would probably not interfere with the efforts of the Somali Coast Police to maintain peace and to keep the caravan routes open. Major Hunter therefore made no report to Government of his intentions, but simply suggested the Military Officer at Berbera should be told to strengthen the garrison of Bulhar. This would set free a considerable number of policemen, and Hunter instructed Morrison and myself to organize a surprise attack by the police and some mounted Friendlies on the recalcitrant clans. We were then to advance on the fertile glens and grazing-grounds on the western borders of the Jibril Abuker country. Major Hunter did not desire in this expedition the assistance of any military officer, or the direct employment of regular troops, except



such as might be his escort and under his immediate command.

Hunter personally assumed command of the force, and marched out of Bulhar with detachments of the Aden Troop and 9th Bombay Native Infantry as his bodyguard. He first established a defensible post and zareeba near the plentifully supplied wells of good water at Biji. Morrison and I meanwhile remained at Bulhar, and as Major Hunter's move did not indicate an attack on the Jibril Abuker, but rather on one of the Gadabursi and White Aysa clans, the Jibril Abuker made no preparations to resist the police advance into their hills. As a mere act of prudence, however, they drove several immense herds to graze in a mountain glen (known as Wudna Gow, "The Heart of the Mountain"), which could only be entered through one very narrow pass, or water-course.

So soon, therefore, as Morrison and I heard that Major Hunter had prepared a base at Biji upon which we could if necessary retreat, we started with every available policeman for Wudna Gow. On arrival there the foot police were stationed to hold the summits at the side of this narrow and precipitous pass, and our mounted force were able to advance unmolested. We had completely surprised and out-manœuvred the wily Somali, and we captured an enormous number of live stock without firing a shot. But then began our difficulties and dangers in getting the animals out of the hills and culs-de-sac on to the Maritime Plain, across which they had to be driven *en route* to the coast. We managed, however, to carry off many thousand head of cattle before the clansmen could collect a sufficient number of spears to attempt to retake their beasts.

When finally the enemy had mustered their forces, a lot of the live stock were being conducted by our Friendly horsemen to Bulhar, while the rest of the animals had been sent to the shelter of Major Hunter's zareeba at Biji, pending their transmission to the coast. Morrison and I covered the cattle we had captured with a strong rearguard of police, and the accurate rifle-fire of the latter successfully checked the advance of the Jibril Abuker warriors. Nevertheless, the latter soon became dangerously numerous, and

correspondingly venturesome. After consultation with Morrison and myself, Major Hunter then decided to join our policemen, so that his own men and the police could move together to the rear in halting and retiring cordons and keep our pursuers at a respectful distance.

I was riding across the plain with a section of Camel Police, when Morrison came up and reported that a mounted Friendly had just treated him to a war-dance. The man had sung a joyous song of victory, in which "Wali Walsh" was referred to as a brave and skilful leader of fighting men, a *Sahab al Hibab* (master of tricks), and the astute director of the *Siyasa* (politics) *al Burr* (in the country). Morrison could not, however, make out the nature of the information which this ally desired to communicate to me, so he had brought the warrior to me. It appeared that our Friendly spear had galloped on to tell me that the Jibril Abuker had definitely abandoned all attempt to recapture the live stock we had driven off. It seemed that by following in pursuit of us the Jibril Abuker had left all the animals in and about their kraals entirely unprotected, and the latter were now being plundered and carried off by their neighbours. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the Jibril Abuker spearmen, horse and foot, to return at once to their homes.

The truth of this report was confirmed a little later by Morrison himself, and I acquainted Major Hunter with the good news. Hunter observed: "We are jolly lucky. I was afraid the Jibril Abuker spears would endeavour to retake their live stock when we were compelled to graze those animals outside of Bulhar. Or, again, they might have tried to stampede the animals in the town itself, where we had no enclosure in which to confine and protect them." As the expedition was finally ended, we then left Morrison to bring the force to Bulhar, and in the meanwhile Major Hunter and I hurried on to make arrangements for the sale by auction of our captured animals.

Our haul of live stock, when sold by auction and by private treaty at Bulhar and Berbera, produced more than sufficient funds to pay all the expenses of the expedition, and also to give a gratuity in cash to each of the allies who



had accompanied us into the field. Major Hunter was very pleased with the magnitude of our success, and reported his action to Government. In the same despatch he mentioned the good and useful services rendered by his two Assistants, Morrison and myself. The Secretary of State and the Governor of Bombay expressed their appreciation of the skilful way in which these operations had been projected and carried out.

No tribes, in my time, suffered to the extent of the Jibril Abuker on this occasion. And as a result of our action the Jibril Abuker severed all connections with supporters of the French intriguers at Zeila and became our most loyal and useful allies.

Later on Morrison became very ill, and was sent over to the hospital at Aden for treatment. There he got better, but was not sufficiently recovered to warrant his return to Bulhar. Most unfortunately, however, he heard that hundreds of the inhabitants of Bulhar had been smitten down with cholera, and he insisted on returning to his post. He said that not only his duty, but also the affection he bore for those in his charge, required his personal presence in the stricken town.

This gallant man went to Bulhar, and then immediately fell a victim to cholera. I was myself at Zeila, and had a letter from him, in which he said that, though still very weak, he had ceased to suffer from attacks of malarial fever and was able to attend to business. The *nakoda*, when handing this letter to me, said: "An hour before leaving Bulhar I heard that Morrison Sahib had died of cholera." This rumour proved, alas, to be true. I lost, therefore, a true and valued friend, and Government was deprived of the services of a courageous and capable officer, a loyal and devoted servant of the Crown.

David Morrison was buried at Bulhar. His friends erected, also, a small tablet to his memory in the church at Aden.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE OLD AND NEW RÉGIME IN SOMALILAND

CAPTAIN H. G. C. SWAYNE, R.E., had been employed at my suggestion to survey fifty to seventy-five miles inland from the sea, and also to compose an account of the flora and fauna of Somaliland. Captain Swayne was especially asked to attend to the latter task, as at the instance of an Austrian Archduke a report was desired on the birds lured to self-destruction by dashing themselves against the panes covering the powerful lamps of the lighthouse.

Major Hunter, however, started to complain by every mail that no survey work had been done, and that he had not received a report or map of any kind. Hunter insisted, therefore, that I must stop Swayne's work altogether, as it was not worth the Rs. 500 per month which it cost. I was, in fact, instructed not to disburse to Captain Swayne more than Rs. 450 per mensem. The Captain, at that, maintained that such a sum was quite inadequate to pay ordinary expenses, especially since he frequently had to purchase instruments each costing Rs. 500 or more.

Captain Swayne was an intimate friend of mine, a good fellow and a plucky all-round gentleman; but I must confess he did more big-game shooting than surveying in Somaliland. Both Morrison and I did all we could to induce Captain Swayne to satisfy Major Hunter's requirements, but without success. I was ordered, in consequence, to send Captain Swayne back to Aden. I did not, however, do so at once, and shortly afterwards Major Hunter went on furlough to Europe. On his return to Aden, Hunter did not stop there for any length of time, owing to his transfer to a Political Agency in India. In those lucky circumstances Captain Swayne avoided getting "sacked", and was enabled to make his "seventeen shooting-trips" in Somaliland.

Captain Swayne was exceedingly popular with Europeans and Somalis alike. He was admired as a great sportsman, and I have no doubt that he shot almost every species of the fauna of Somaliland. He gives descriptions and illustrations of the big game which fell to his rifle in his book entitled *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland, and a Trip to Abyssinia*. In the latter country he was a member of Mr. Rennell Rodd's mission to His Majesty, King Menelik of Abyssinia. Captain Swayne invited his brother, Captain Eric Swayne, 16th Bengal N.I., to shoot in Somaliland, and later this officer commanded the troops sent to suppress the Mad Mulla, and became Sir Eric Swayne, K.C.M.G.

Major Hunter desired to erect a new native town at Berbera, and to induce the merchants to build houses of stone. He indicated to me the site which he had selected, and I roughly sketched out my ideas. It was our intention to pull down as many as possible of the old mat huts, and a landing-stage was to be constructed considerably to the south of the present custom-house. Unfortunately, however, as the planning of this new town needed the services of a professional engineer, and at the time no such officer was available, I was personally unable to start the project. After my departure from Berbera, however, I heard that a very fine town had been designed, built, and occupied.

As the first appointed British Representative at Berbera, I claim to have been the pioneer of Somaliland. And I may here remark that under the régime inaugurated by Major Hunter and myself peace was kept, trade increased, caravan routes were protected and opened out. Moreover, all was paid for from local revenue, without any financial aid or contributions from the British or Indian exchequers. Hunter and I were nevertheless regarded by some home politicians as barbarians, and our methods those of savages; with the result that both of us, and later on all officers of the Indian Services, who for nine years had successfully administered Somaliland, were swept out and replaced by the *alumni* of the British Colonial Office. The system adopted by the latter officials was called "Reforms", and,

as introduced by those gentlemen, resulted in a war in Somaliland which cost the British taxpayer several millions of money. Colonel Hunter, G.B., C.S.I., Generals J. Blair, V.C., and Sir George Hogg, K.C.B., Colonel E. V. Stace, C.B., and David Morrison, have all of them in the course of nature passed away. And I am now the only "white man" living of the original *avant-coureurs* in British Somaliland, at the head of which possession there is now an important official, styled His Excellency the Governor, who receives a salute of thirteen guns!

Some years ago there were debates in both Houses of Parliament on Somaliland, and the non-observance on the part of Great Britain of the obligations under the terms of the agreements and treaties made with the Somalis.

It appeared from the internal evidence of the speeches made in both Houses on these questions that all the speakers had obtained their information from the records of the British Foreign and Colonial Offices. Those records totally ignore the fact that for nine years Somaliland was administered by officers of the Indian Political Service, under the personal and little-known supervision of Major Evelyn Baring, H.B.M.'s Consul-General and British Representative in Egypt. In reality, however, the whole business, from start to finish, was conducted solely by Colonel F. M. Hunter.

The Foreign Office records of the administration of Somaliland commence from 1893. At that date the British Colonial Office took over the country and ousted all the Indian officers who had been in power there since October 1884. I believe I am correct in saying that one of the reasons for the abolition of the Indian régime was that we held (if we were able to catch her) the wife of a chief, or any female relative, as a hostage until live stock looted by their tribe had been restored or paid for. Also that, in order to compel two tribes to stop fighting, we influenced and arranged marriages between young girls and young men belonging to the two tribes embroiled; with the result that if a male was the first-born child of such a marriage, peace was easily established.

Now these methods were entirely approved of by the



Akil, but the element of compulsion was condemned and regarded with disgust in England. The fact, however, remains that peace was kept by the adoption of this policy, and without the expense of police and military aid. By these nuptial arrangements the father of the girl received no payment for his daughter from the bridegroom, but this loss was adjusted by the Akil and myself. We entered into an agreement that if the bridegroom could not "stump up" at once he should settle on the bride half the sum, or the number of animals, he would have had to pay for her in the ordinary course. As far as possible we permitted the young people to select each other as husband or wife, but since there were only a few hours available for love-making, the Akil had to mate and match the couples who failed to come to terms with each other.

## CHAPTER X

### THE JAMES EXPEDITION, 1884

FOR the last forty-two years I have been held up to obloquy for my action and attitude towards the James party. This party was composed of the following :

William Dodge James ; Frank Linsly James, M.A., F.R.G.S. ; G. Percy Aylmer ; E. Lort-Phillips ; Dr. J. Godfrey Thrupp (in medical charge) ; Durling (English servant) ; Anselmier (Swiss servant) ; Girghis (Abyssinian servant) ; Duali Idris (Somali of the Habr Gerhajis tribe, head-man, organizer, and guide).

The James expedition was organized at Berbera, from which port it started for the Wibbi Shebeyli (the Leopard River) on the 21st December, 1884. Mr. F. L. James published in 1890 a book called *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, in which he relates, with great detail, the incidents of this shooting and exploration trip to the Leopard River. In his book the author alleges opposition, indiscretions, and general shortcomings on the part of Major Hunter, H.M.B.'s Consul for the Somali Coast, and on the part of myself as H.B.M.'s Agent residing in sole charge at Berbera.

I first heard the name of James after my removal from the post of Second Assistant Political Resident at Aden, when I reverted to my substantive position in the Marine Postal Service and resumed writing my weekly contributions to the Bombay Press. One day, having occasion to call on Sir Edward Malet, H.B.M.'s Consul-General in Egypt, in connection with an article I was writing, I learned that a Mr. James was going to the Sudan. I asked Sir Edward about that gentleman, and the object of his trip to the Abyssinian frontier and the Upper Nile Provinces. I had, indeed, heard a rumour that the same trip was being opposed, or at least surreptitiously obstructed, by the Egyptian Authorities. Sir Edward replied : "I have

only lately become acquainted with Mr. W. D. James, but there are also several brothers. They are the sons of a very rich Lancashire merchant, and the elder one has a place in Sussex, and a splendidly equipped yacht, the *Lancashire Witch*, R.Y.S. They each enjoy a huge income, are very generous, and no doubt are travellers of some repute. It is understood that Mr. W. D. James has entertained His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at his home in Sussex. These brothers are most hospitable to anyone who visits their yacht; it is, however, a curious circumstance that they have not been officially accredited by H.B.M.'s Foreign Office to the Consul-General, or to the British Ambassador at Constantinople. This fact naturally gives the Egyptian authorities some grounds for objecting to the admission into the Sudan of any of the James family."

Mr. W. D. James, then, should first have obtained the permission of H.B.M.'s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to visit Berbera, which was part of the North-eastern Mudirieh of the Sudan (i.e. Somaliland). So far as I know, however, all that Mr. James did was to acquaint H.B.M.'s representative (Major E. Baring), on the very eve of his departure from Cairo, of his intention to go to Berbera. Major F. M. Hunter, H.B.M.'s Consul for the Somali Coast, and myself as Major Hunter's assistant, residing at Berbera, were under the direct orders of Major Baring, but the latter never wrote a word to either of us on this subject of Mr. James. Mr. James then applied without any official introduction to Major-General James Blair, V.C., Political Resident at Aden, for assistance and permission to enter Somaliland.

General Blair courteously promised to do all in his personal power to assist Mr. James. In speaking to me later, however, the General observed that, as Resident at Aden, he had no more to do with Somaliland than had the Governor of Gibraltar, and he consulted me as to the best course for him to take in the matter. I replied: "Frankly, I think you would have saved yourself a great deal of trouble if you had told Mr. James of your exact position." With that General Blair agreed. "No doubt



that was my correct course," he said; "but I did not adopt it, as the Bombay Government did not want it to be known to the Chiefs of Kathiawar, and in Western India generally, that natives trading on the East and North-east Coast of Africa were now under the direct protection of H.B.M.'s Consular and Diplomatic officers."

Mr. James, therefore, not having taken the trouble to ascertain the exact extent of General Blair's jurisdiction, jumped to the wholly erroneous conclusion that Major Hunter and myself were both under General Blair's orders for Somali Coast matters. General Blair told me he had spoken to Major Hunter regarding the admission of the James party into Somaliland, and that Hunter had replied: "Neither Walsh nor I will take any direct responsibility in the matter of Mr. James's contemplated journey through Berbera. If Major Baring does not communicate with one of us on this matter, I shall certainly not write to him on the subject." Major Hunter added, however, that he was aware that Mr. Walsh was inclined to favour the visit of the James party to Berbera, since with their great wealth and reputation for generosity they would be likely to render the British very popular in Somaliland. Moreover, as Mr. James was personally an expert chart-maker, Mr. Walsh considered this expedition would afford an opportunity of obtaining from him an accurate map of the routes to the little-frequented parts of the interior.

I told General Blair that Major Hunter's disinclination to express a definite opinion, or to give me any orders how to deal with Mr. James, left me with a free hand to do as I thought best. I had therefore decided to render Mr. James all the aid I could give. Now Major Hunter was a Scotsman, and an exceptionally shrewd and cautious one at that, and he had remarked to me that, though he did not disapprove of my method of opening up the country, yet he did not see how I was going to exercise any control over the James party. And if we had not some sort of control, once the party were "on their own" in the far interior they might give us a lot of trouble. Major Hunter

had promised to drop to General Blair that the journey was not a difficult or dangerous one, as was evidenced by the safe passage of two Europeans recently travelling from the Leopard River to Berbera. At the same time, the route from Berbera which Mr. James proposed to take was an unusual one, as the Egyptians had always approached the Wibbi Shebeyli from the southward, following its course and the course of the other rivers flowing towards the Indian Ocean. Moreover, the Somali tribes inhabiting the north banks of the Shebeyli did not trade with Berbera, but to the eastward. As the regular caravans from Berbera broke up on reaching the Oogandein, special arrangements would have to be made for reaching the Leopard River, and it would be difficult to obtain transport from Oogandein onwards.

I wished General Blair to know the nature of the journey which Mr. James was about to make before he consented to assist Mr. James. General Blair then again wrote to me on behalf of Mr. James, saying that Major Hunter had undertaken to inspect the Somalis which Mr. James might engage at Aden.

A few days later Mahomed Shermarki, the leading aakil of the Habr Gerhajis tribe, reported to me that Mr. James had engaged as the head-man of his party one Duali Idris (a Habr Gerhajis). This latter was a very capable and experienced organizer of *Kawafil*, but he had arranged apparently to purchase or hire camels for Mr. James direct from the owner, thereby escaping payment of the Abban fees due under the British Agreement to the Ayal Ahmed. Mahomed Shermarki predicted that if Duali Idris was permitted to do this, considerable trouble must arise; moreover, we should be publicly accused of departing from the terms of our treaty with the Habr Awal tribes of Somaliland.

I agreed entirely with what Mahomed Shermarki said. The only and correct step, therefore, was to stop Duali Idris' action, and to compensate the Ayal Ahmed for the loss of their rightful fees. I was unable, however, to adopt that course, as I might thereby offend the owners and cause them to withdraw the camels they had

already placed at the disposal of Mr. James. I was therefore constrained not to interfere with the illegal practices adopted by Duali Idris, which practices Mr. James did not understand, and unfortunately supported and approved of.

General Blair became alarmed on hearing (presumably from Major Baring at Cairo) that he had assisted the James party by letting them have Government rifles and ammunition. The General therefore directed Major Hunter to write me from Aden the following letter :

*My dear Walsh,*

*The General says you should not have given those Snider carbines to the James party, so you must get them back. They can have Remingtons instead.*

*If they make any difficulty, you must say you have got yourself into trouble and must carry out your orders. Ammunition is so precious here they won't give me any for the public service, yet you present four boxes to the travellers !*

*I shall debit you with the cost of the carbines and ammunition, as an additional argument for you to use in getting them back. I know you meant to be kind, but this is a matter regarding which our Government are very particular. I cannot afford to let you get into a row about a trifle, you are too valuable.*

*Yours truly,*

*F. M. Hunter.*

Now I had personally selected the carbines referred to because ammunition for rifles of that pattern was not procurable. Consequently, if the rifles should chance to fall into the hands of the Somalis, such weapons would be useless to them. For Remingtons, on the other hand, ammunition could be purchased in any quantity at the Gulf of Tajura ports, where it was being sold by a French dealer in smuggled firearms. The Turkish Army in Arabia, for instance, was armed with a Martini rifle, and stolen cartridges for the same were sold in many places.

Major Hunter then wrote to me again, as follows :



*My dear Walsh,*

*You might let Mr. James have twelve or fifteen Remingtons, with about 100 rounds per rifle. Take a receipt.*

*Yours truly,  
F. M. Hunter.*

A further letter was :

*My dear Walsh,*

*The General did not give the James party the Martini-Henry rifles. Find out if you can, when they return, who did.*

*Yours truly,  
F. M. Hunter.*

I myself did not, and indeed could not, have given the James party any Martini-Henry rifles, as I had no rifles of that pattern in my store. Later, however, I heard that the Ordnance Officer at Aden had taken a dozen Martini-Henry rifles from the Arsenal and lent them to the James party, and that Mr. James had passed a receipt for the same.

Hunter's next letter was to this effect :

*My dear Walsh,*

*Please let it be known that the Ayal Ahmed are the Abbans of Berbera, and the Ayal Yunis of Bulhar. That is part of our agreement with the Somalis, and is very important. You had better tom-tom it to prevent mistake.*

*Yours truly,  
F. M. Hunter.*

This notification had the effect of satisfying all concerned that we would abide by our agreement, and that the infringement of the Abban rights by Duali Idris had our disapproval and would not be allowed to occur again.

Mr. James was truly astonished when I showed him the foregoing letters, and he admitted that he had misjudged me. He professed himself quite unaware of the embarrassment I had been caused by the action of Duali Idris, which action, through ignorance of the real circumstances of the case, had had his approval and support.

He said that he now realized I had been from the start the friend of his party, and had done my best to assist him; while, without my aid, he would not have been able to enter Somaliland. It now, therefore, appeared to him that the authorities at Cairo and Aden desired to oppose his projected exploration of the interior of Somaliland; and that they had purposely refrained from granting him any permission to attempt that journey, although not publicly or openly prohibiting it. Mr. James then expressed the hope that I should not get into any of the troubles alluded to in Major Hunter's correspondence with me; nevertheless, his later actions and reports would have affected me detrimentally if my chiefs had not known Mr. James and his faulty reasoning.

All the preparations for the departure of the James party were completed late in the afternoon of the 20th December, 1884. On that date their caravan marched out of Berbera, and Mr. James and his friends followed early next morning. I was very glad to get rid of Duali Idris and his entourage, and immediately wrote to advise Major Hunter that the party had successfully started off. I also told Hunter that by having his notification in the matter of Abban rights tom-tommed in Berbera I had composed the quarrel between the Ayal Ahmed and Duali Idris. I predicted that the James party would now have an easy and perfectly safe journey to the Wibbi Shebeyli, as in Duali Idris they had an experienced and very competent head-man to direct and arrange affairs.

The James party reached Burao in safety, and were there most hospitably received and entertained by Sultan Awad. A few days later, however, a son (or some other near relative) of Sultan Awad rode into Berbera to ask me if there was any truth in the report that the members of the James party were the "enemies of the British Government", and that Major Hunter and I had received orders from H.B.M.'s Wuzeer to use force against them. If this rumour was true, the Sultan, as a friend and ally of the British, would treat the "enemies of the Great Government" as his enemies. The Sultan, in fact, offered to save me the trouble of catching them by the simple process



of scuppering the lot, after which he proposed that he and I should divide equally the plunder taken from our common foe.

This talk with Sultan Awad's messenger naturally caused me great alarm. I therefore assured the messenger that Mr. James was an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales, and that the British Government would punish anyone who hindered or annoyed him and his party, but would reward any assistance given to these travellers. I then wrote very fully to Sultan Awad on the matter, and insisted he should treat the James party as honoured guests and loyal and obedient subjects of H.B.M. Queen Victoria. The Sultan's relative went sorrowfully away on realizing that the James party was not to be wiped out and looted.

I later wrote a demi-official letter to Mr. James (it is quoted in *The Unknown Horn of Africa*), telling him that, in entire agreement with my local advisers, I counselled his immediate return to Berbera. I said that, in consequence of the now publicly known prohibition of the journey by the Government, it would be positively dangerous to travel any further inland. I also wrote a personal and confidential note to Mr. James, explaining that in order to save the lives of the members of his party I had been compelled to tell Sultan Awad there was no truth in the report that the British Government had ordered force to be used to stop Mr. James from visiting the far interior. As an English gentleman, however, I said that I relied on Mr. James not taking advantage of my letter to Sultan Awad and using it as a lever to obtain the Sultan's assistance for the continuance of the party's journey to the Wibbi Shebeyli.

The explanation of the whole position was simply that I was not aware of Lord Granville's orders to stop the James party, by force if necessary, until after that order had left Berbera in hands of Major Hunter's special messenger for delivery to Mr. James.

What had happened was that Major Hunter, on receipt of Lord Granville's order in code, deciphered it and sent an *au claire* copy of the order to Mr. James. The bearer of this was instructed not to stop at Berbera, but to leave a



packet of letters for me with the police at the Berbera landing-stage and to go straight on inland to Mr. James's camp. As a result, since I happened to be at Dubar, I did not receive this packet of letters until about eight p.m., and by that time Major Hunter's special messenger was already eight or ten hours on his way towards Burao.

When Major Hunter's messenger returned to Berbera, I asked him if he knew the contents of the despatch of which he had been the bearer. The man said no, but he explained that after he had delivered the despatch to Mr. James at Burao, Duali Idris had told him that under the orders of which he had been the bearer the Wuzeer of the Great Queen (Lord Granville) had prohibited Mr. James from continuing his journey to the Wibbi Shebeyli, while if Mr. James did not comply with that order at once, Major Hunter and Mr. Walsh had been instructed to use force to secure its obedience. Later, I learned that Duali Idris had made similar remarks to other persons, and had suggested that Major Hunter and Mr. Walsh had asked for the interference of the Wuzeer.

The Sultan therefore heard of these "orders" either direct from Mr. James, or else from Duali Idris. In any case, the subject of Lord Granville's orders, and the course likely to be taken with respect to them by Major Hunter and Mr. Walsh, became the common talk of the camp. Sultan Awad was inclined to think there was some mistake or misunderstanding of the case; nevertheless, until he had received an explanation from me, he refused to render any further assistance to Mr. James. Sultan Awad then received my letter, and, as it entirely refuted the rumour which had created all the mischief and trouble, he assured Mr. James he would continue to aid the latter in every way in his power. He added he was glad of the opportunity of doing so, as it would show his devotion to Her Majesty and to Mr. James's personal friend, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

In addition, however, to using my letter to Sultan Awad to induce the latter to push him along as speedily as possible, Mr. James also exhibited to Sultan Awad a circular letter, addressed to "All Concerned". This last letter had been given to Mr. James by Major Hunter, and it stated that

the British Government would reward all who helped the members of the James party, but would punish those who hindered and annoyed them. It must be obvious to all that after his flat disobedience to the orders of Lord Granville, Mr. James had no right to use Major Hunter's circular letter, given solely to assist dutiful subjects of the British Crown.

Major Hunter and I considered that Mr. James had behaved very badly in putting our letters to a purpose absolutely at variance with the object for which we had written them. We discussed whether we should place the whole facts and correspondence before Lord Granville, or draw attention in the Press to Mr. James's conduct and the contempt he had displayed towards servants of the Crown who had good-naturedly endeavoured to help his exploration in Somaliland. We decided, however, in the end to let the matter rest.

It was impossible to get Mr. James to see and understand the real cause of the trouble. He pooh-poohed my advice and information, and implicitly he believed all that he was told by Duali Idris; he moreover supported and approved of the latter's action in hiring camels without the intervention of the Ayal Ahmed. I had fully explained to Mr. James that the Ayal Ahmed, by their treaty with the British Government, had the absolute right to levy Abban fees on all transactions carried out in their town of Berbera, and that this fact was known to Duali Idris. There was, therefore, no possible excuse for Duali Idris not paying those fees, which were in no sense buckshish, as alleged by Mr. James.

I had great difficulty in preventing the Ayal Ahmed from attacking the men who had hired camels direct to Duali Idris. It was estimated that Duali Idris had obtained sixty camels, and that the Abban fee per animal was reasonably totalled about Rs. 180. To square matters, that sum was paid to the Abbans; but they were given clearly to understand that if the members of the James party were regarded as servants of the Sirkar, and might make that claim, they would be exempt from the payment of any fee. I also undertook to have the "Right under Treaty" of the



Ayal Ahmed publicly proclaimed, so that there should be no repetition of Duali Idris' illegal course.

Duali Idris also had relations with Sultan Nur (the most powerful of all the Gerhajis chiefs) which did not tend to our own advantage. Moreover, since Duali Idris had failed to induce me to give Sultan Nur certain exclusive privileges and favourable terms with respect to his own trading caravans, and others visiting Berbera under his auspices, Sultan Nur was led to believe that the British at Berbera were hostile to him and to his rights and interests. Both Major Hunter and I did all in our power to establish cordial relations with Sultan Nur, but he never became friendly, and always regarded us with suspicion and distrust. In Major Hunter's personal opinion the attack on the Berbera live stock by Sultan Nur was either instigated by Duali Idris, or brought about by his machinations and intrigues.

It appeared to me, and also to Mahomed Shermarki, that Duali Idris aspired to place himself in such position in Somaliland that the British would be compelled to recognize him as the leader and controller of all Habr Gerhajis business and affairs. Unfortunately Mr. James had such implicit trust in Duali Idris' integrity that he considered Major Hunter and I were prejudiced against his head-man, and Mr. James invariably remarked that Duali Idris had been approved of by Major Hunter as a leader of the James expedition to the Wibbi Shebeyli. No doubt Major Hunter did consider Duali Idris as the most competent head-man procurable for a journey into the far interior of Somaliland; I thought so, too. And we agreed that with Duali Idris in charge, provided he did not meddle with politics, there would be little or no risk of danger to the James party.

Major Hunter, in talking the matter over with me, said: "I wish we had some hold over Duali Idris. He does not appear, however, to have any relations in Somaliland, and has practically never resided there." I then observed I had heard that Duali Idris had devoted a large portion of his not inconsiderable savings to the purchase of live stock, which I understood was being grazed in Sultan



Nur's country ; and I suggested that Duali Idris might be aspiring to the position of a Somali notable. Major Hunter replied he was not aware of Duali Idris having become an owner of camels and cattle, but he knew that the latter had bought one or two houses at Aden, and was engaged in a fairly large trade with the Arabian and Somali coast ports.

In his book, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, Mr. James blamed Major Hunter for all the mischief and trouble I have here related, but he did so without an iota of evidence. Of this the following instances are all in point. Major Hunter did not write or telegraph to Major Baring that, owing to the danger under the existing circumstances of a journey to the far interior, it was advisable to stop the James party from entering Somaliland. On the contrary, I think Major Baring made that decision by himself ; though he may have seen my letter to Major Hunter regarding Duali Idris' conduct towards the Ayal Ahmed and their fees, and as a result naturally have feared trouble would arise and the safety of the James party be endangered. Mr. James, again, accused Major Hunter of having originated the attempt to stop the James party by deliberately translating the cipher telegrams received from Lord Granville, and directing the bearer thereof to circulate the purport of those messages in the Berbera bazaar in order to create local opposition. Mr. James omits to mention that Major Hunter was compelled to decipher the telegrams before he could know their purport, and that they were rendered *au claire* because Mr. James had not a key with which to transcribe messages in code.

The charges made against Major Hunter, indeed, are not only in themselves ridiculous and at variance with the probabilities of the case, but also untrue in fact and substance. The bearer employed by Major Hunter to carry the telegrams denied ever having had any knowledge of the nature of their contents, until he learned it at Burao from Duali Idris. He also denied having been instructed by Major Hunter to stir up opposition against, or to hinder in any way, the advance inland of the James party. These circumstances were all elicited at the inquiry held to

investigate the charges made by Mr. James against Major Hunter, his interpreter, Mahomed Shermarki, the bearer, and myself.

I myself pointed out at the inquiry that Duali Idris, with the knowledge and approval of Mr. James, had not paid the Abban Fees (called by Mr. James "Buckshish"), and that such conduct on the part of Mr. James' servant had roused the clan against the expedition. I also mentioned the fact that the Senousi Akwan were preaching against the presence of the white man in Africa, and calling on all Moslems not to allow any Christian to drink the water of any well in Somaliland. It therefore seemed to me most likely that the promulgators of these doctrines of "Africa for the Africans" had endeavoured to use Duali Idris' illegalities and indiscretions to hinder, if not to stop, the advance of the James party.

It was, moreover, quite useless at the time to offer Mr. James any advice regarding the equipment of his caravan, or how to deal with certain Somali tribes (i.e. those under our influence and dependent on Berbera, and those independent of us politically and commercially). Mr. James claimed to be a most experienced African explorer, and referred to his numerous journeys in the Egyptian Sudan, which he asserted specially proved his personal fitness for dealing with all Africans inhabiting the Eastern Horn of Africa. In this respect a naval sub-lieutenant who had been told off to protect me from being chopped up by the Somalis used to amuse us all, and greatly annoy Mr. James, by calling him Mr. Sixteen-Winters-in-the-Sudan James. I reminded Mr. James that, in spite of the presence of Egyptian armed posts and garrisons in the Sudan, he had lost a number of his rifles, many of which had been carried off by force, while none of them had ever been restored or recaptured. If, therefore, on the present occasion he lost in the far interior the rifles belonging to his party, it would be quite impossible for me to recover them.

Mr. James thanked General Blair, and exonerated him from all responsibility for the ill-treatment which Mr. James alleged he had received from H.B.M.'s Government, at the instigation of Major Hunter and myself. He

maintained up to the last that the two latter officers were from start to finish entirely to blame.

The James party finally returned safely to Berbera, and continued to inveigh against Major Hunter and myself at Aden, Cairo, and the Indian Foreign and Colonial Offices in London. No kind of attention, however, was paid by the authorities to them.



## CHAPTER XI

### SHIPPING CAMELS UNDER DIFFICULTIES, AND A TRICK AGAINST THE FRENCH

A BRITISH ARMY contractor applied for permission to buy camels at various places in Somaliland, and to keep the animals so acquired near the pier at Berbera until they could be shipped by steamer to Suakin. The contractor also asked for Police protection for the actual brokers and buyers of the camels in question, as well as for the animals themselves. Captain T. P. Geoghegan (Bombay Cavalry) was also ordered by Government to purchase camels in Somaliland for the Indian Commissariat and Transport Department at Suakin. I therefore telegraphed from Aden and obtained the cancelling of that order, which was suspended until the contractor had obtained all the camels he required, and a useless and expensive competition was thereby avoided.

Captain E. F. Marriott (Poona Horse) was also directed to recruit Somali coolies for service with H.B.M.'s Forces in the Sudan. In accordance with instructions Captain Marriott came to Berbera to carry out that duty, and both he and Captain Geoghegan put up with me at the Residency. There was no lack of candidates for the Coolie Corps; nevertheless, Captain Marriott failed to enrol them. The reason for this was the organized opposition of the adherents of the Mahdi; also of the friends of Osman Digna, then fighting against us near Suakin, and whose trade relations with Aden made him well known to all the Somali coast ports. I had foreseen this trouble for some months past, but felt certain of being able to suppress it; the party actively hostile to British interests was not a numerous one, and largely consisted of religious fanatics from Faf and other anti-Christian villages in that neighbourhood.

The Akil had warned me that the contractor's camels

were likely to be plundered, and the purchased camels stampeded. I had myself come to a similiar conclusion, owing to the threatening speeches and the attitude of the small section of persons known to be anti-British, or, to speak more correctly, anti-Christian. Consequently, even before the arrival of Captains Geoghegan and Marriott, preparations had been made to defend the camels collected for export. Mahomed Dosa's dhow, with its two 3-lb. field-guns specially mounted on the poop, and loaded with canister, was anchored in a commanding position on the eastern side of the pier, so as to cover the camels, the swivels on the roof of the Residency and those on board the armed Residency barge. The dhow's full crew were stationed on the western side of the pier. The Residency guard was increased, and all the town police were moved into the abandoned Egyptian fort. Biladiehs, Arab traders, and reliable Friendlies belonging to the Ayal Ahmed, Aysa Musa, and Makail tribes had been warned to hold themselves in readiness to support me, while I had promised I would provide them with rifles and cartridges.

In the foregoing circumstances the arrival of Captains Geoghegan and Marriott was a welcome help. I placed the latter in command of the town detachment of police and others, and retained the former officer at the Residency to supervise the encampment of about seven hundred camels. A large number of these animals were driven on to the pier, and had their forelegs lashed together. These arrangements made, Geoghegan, Marriott, and myself remained at the Residency awaiting events.

Both of my companions were capable and courageous soldiers. And Geoghegan, in his impetuous Celtic way, was all for attacking, sword in hand, the band of savages seated on the plain behind some flags, just out of rifle range. If, however, the enemy had advanced, they would have been met with a concentrated discharge from all arms. And, indeed, as an effective demonstration, a few rounds were aimed to hit the ground some yards in advance of where the crowd gathered. Several leaders from time to time stood up and harangued their followers, exhorting

all Moslems to drive out the Christians and stop the export of camels to the Sudan for use against the Mahdi and the faithful supporters of Islam.

Nearly a week elapsed before the contractor's steamers reached Berbera, and then no time was lost in shipping the camels off to Suakin. With the departure of the camels the crowd dispersed, and we experienced no further hostility. Major Hunter and I, however, did not deem it prudent to renew the operations for which Captains Geoghegan and Marriott had been sent to Somaliland. As a result, in due course those officers returned to India, and Berbera remained in peace and prosperity.

Major Hunter, Mr. Morrison, and myself, nevertheless, were perturbed by these events. As we saw it, they foreshadowed the interference of the Military in Somaliland, in which case the Somali Coast Police would be abolished as a fighting force, and reduced to a few batoned constables. Peace and the caravan routes in Somaliland would be maintained instead by regular troops, mounted and foot, of the Indian Army; and under such conditions there would be an end to our *Ma-Bap* (parental) system of control. This system, moreover, though occasionally arbitrary and high-handed, suited the people, and its cost could be easily defrayed from local revenues. I was therefore not sorry when I heard from Hunter that I was to leave Berbera in a few days and take charge of the Zeila Agency. At Zeila the duties were chiefly those of a Diplomatic or Consular official, with only slight administrative work to do.

A certain *akil* of the Jibril Abuker Habr Awal tribe had formerly, at the instance of a Zeila group of *protégés français*, intrigued against us to get a road opened from Dongarita to Harar; and also had raided the live stock grazing in the vicinity of Bulhar. Since, however, we had severely punished his tribe, this *akil* had become a supporter of the British. He now, therefore, came and reported to me that some White Aysa (Mamasan) had invited the French to open a port at a place named Dongarita, which, it was claimed, was part of the Zeila Pashalic, in Turkish and not in British territory, and thus



capable of being occupied by the French in the same way that Zeila was held by a British officer.

Now the akil in question had a kraal on the spur of the mountain about fifteen miles distance from the sea, and he had been given a couple of British flags, with directions to fly one of them on or near the beach if any vessel came within sight of Dongarita. According to my information, the reefs off the shore, and the heavy surf which beat on it at all seasons of the year, rendered the construction of any kind of a landing-stage or wharf impossible for the debarkation of goods at Dongarita. I was, however, aware that the French party at Zeila desired to trade with Harar by a road which was not always subject to raids by the Black Aysa and Dunkali tribes, and they would therefore make strenuous efforts to reach Harar by opening a trade route to the eastward of Zeila.

I had ordered the Duffadar at Bulhar to patrol that part of the coast, and one day he heard that the French yacht *Pengouin* had been ordered to take an engineer from Obok to inspect the approach through the reefs to Dongarita. As Bulhar was closed for the hot-weather months, I did not expect the *Pengouin* at that season of the year; nevertheless, the master of the British steamer trading with Zeila and Berbera reported to me that he had actually seen the French vessel early that morning off Dongarita. In answer to my inquiry the master further told me that the yacht had no surf-boat in tow, and that the violence of the wind and sea made landing from a small ship's boat impossible. I thereupon sent for my "Oracle Nautical Adviser" and harbour master, Mahomed Dosa, who was personally acquainted with every inch of the coast, and he said that in his opinion the French captain would return to Obok, since there was no likelihood of a lull in the heavy sea and wind for several days.

I deemed it prudent to start at once on my camel for Dongarita, and if possible personally to hoist the British flag there before the French officer could get on shore. The distance by road from Berbera to Dongarita was about eighty-five miles, as it was necessary to go round the soft ground of the shores; I could therefore hardly

expect to do the whole journey in less than seventeen hours, and I doubted if my "Ship of the Desert" possessed the endurance and strength to carry me without a break to my destination.

I left Berbera at about nine p.m., fully equipped for the field. I carried with me a blanket and pillow, water-bottle and skins, a Colt Service revolver, a 13-shot Winchester repeating rifle, and a 12-bore double-barrelled C.F. fowling piece in buckets, a good supply of cartridges, and a field-glass; also plenty of biscuits and cheese, a Paysandu tongue, a flask of brandy, a couple of bottles of "Scotch", two bottles of claret, a corkscrew, cups and tumblers; a small spirit-lamp, a bull's-eye lantern, a few candles and matches; a pipe, tobacco and Trichinopoli cheroots; a writing pad and envelopes with pens, ink, and pencils; and a pair of brass knuckledusters. These articles were always kept aside for immediate use, and my orderly had securely and conveniently packed them on my camel-saddle. I decided to go alone, in order to give my animal every chance for quickness by carrying as light a load as possible.

I reached Bulhar in about nine hours. The weather was oppressively hot and fatiguing, and I found only three human beings in the deserted town: the two constables in charge of the Government offices, and the old woman who fetched water for them on a donkey, from the well at the foot of the neighbouring hill. When I arrived the water-carrier was absent on her mission, and until she returned there was no water to be had. I therefore directed one of the constables to unload my water-skins from the camel-saddle, and take the empty one to meet the water-carrier. The man was to give my camel a drink from the old woman's supply, load the water she had left on my animal, and then send the old woman with her donkey back to the well to get as much water as her beast could carry.

I had breakfast, and went to sleep out of reach of the sun. After lunch, my camel as well as myself being refreshed by our repose, I started off shortly after five o'clock for Dongarita, which I thought to be about thirty-nine miles from Bulhar. I made Dongarita at about two o'clock a.m.,



and there I could distinctly see the lights of the French steamer. As, however, the sea and wind were still very boisterous, it seemed to me that no one from the vessel could have landed on the beach.

My camel had badly strained his left shoulder by slipping on the soft mud of a *kehor* into which the sea had made an inroad on the land. The animal, moreover, was off his food; he would not eat any *jowari*, and I could only spare him a quart of water. I took the saddle off and tethered the animal's forelegs; and then, climbing up a tree, I tied myself to one of the branches, so that I could sleep without falling off my perch. I was awakened a couple of hours later by two hyenas, who had come to inspect my sick camel. I shot one of these voracious brutes, whereupon the other made off.

At daybreak I was astonished to see a British and a French flag flying from each of two neighbouring trees, and I proceeded to investigate the phenomenon. I found the Jibril Abuker akil up the tree from which the Union Jack was displayed, and, on recognizing me, he expressed great astonishment at my presence. He then explained that on perceiving a French steamer off the coast he had ridden to Dongarita in order to hoist the British flag there, and that he was now awaiting his horse and a camel-load of water and food for the man he proposed to leave at Dongarita in charge of the Union Jack. I sent this loyal akil off to ascertain who had charge of the French flag, and the custodian of the same, on seeing me, removed the French flag and decamped. My akil friend accompanied me back to my own tree, upon which he hoisted the British flag. I gave him a cup of tea and some biscuits, and observed that as my camel was too ill to carry me I did not see how I was to get back to Berbera. The akil thereupon proposed to let me have his horse, and to have my camel walked by easy stages to his kraal, there to be cared for till my Arab camel-man arrived.

The wind and the sea abated shortly after sunrise. By ten a.m. we noticed a boat from the French steamer approaching the beach stern first, feeling its way through the nearest reef with the obvious intention of landing



someone on the mainland. We walked down to the sea-shore, and took up a position hidden from view by the bushes. We watched the difficulties of the two French officers in effecting a landing, and as soon as they stepped ashore we went to greet them. They were very surprised to find me at Dongarita, and I explained that the place was under my supervision as the Administrator of Berbera. I told him that owing to my camel having become lame, I had been compelled to camp out under a tree, pending the arrival of my tents and staff. I offered my new French acquaintances some whisky or wine and biscuits, but they declined to partake of any refreshments, and after a few minutes' further conversation they retired to their boat, while a little later the *Pengouin* put to sea.

I told the *akil* that as the French vessel had gone, and the French flag had disappeared from the tree, there was now no necessity for him to leave a man in charge of the British flag at Dongarita. No other attempt was made by the French to establish a Port at Dongarita, but an article on the subject appeared in *La Gazette Géographique*. I was thanked by the Bombay Government, by Sir Evelyn Baring, under whose orders Major Hunter and I were serving, and by the India and Foreign Offices in London for my prompt action in the maintenance of British interests on the Somali Coast. Major Hunter, indeed, specially brought my humble services to the notice of each of the above authorities. The London *Globe* made a brief mention of the frustration of the French project at Dongarita, and headed it "Under Two Flags". In the British and Indian Press the incident gave rise to several articles discussing the question as to whether Dongarita in any way fell under the capitulations agreed upon. We held that Dongarita was under Berbera and formed no part of the Pashalic of Zeila, and consequently the capitulations were not in point.

Major Hunter, however, desired to utilize my services at Zeila, to deal with many disputes and troubles we had with our French neighbours there, as well as at Obok and Jibuti. Hunter had warned me that I might at any moment be transferred to Zeila without any previous

notice, and consequently I made such preparations as were possible.

I had collected a large number of the fauna of Somali-land. I possessed, in fact, a complete collection, except for an elephant and a lion. I nourished these animals with milk, supplied to them in feeding-bottles with rubber teats. As I could not take my specimens with me to Zeila, I sold the entire pack for a large sum to a Mr. Menges, and many of these bottle-reared animals were purchased from Mr. Menges by the Zoological Gardens at Vienna, Genoa, Berlin, and Paris.

Mr. Menges was a German from Hamburg, who had travelled extensively in North-east Africa. During the last few years of the Egyptian occupation of Harar he had passed through the Galla country, down to the southern bank of the Wibbi Shebeyli and other rivers flowing towards the East Coast of Africa; but he had never gone to or from the Wibbi Shebeyli by a route from Berbera. When Mr. James announced his intention of travelling from Berbera to the Leopard River, I first consulted Mr. Menges about the difficulties and risks attending such a journey. Menges ridiculed the idea of there being any more danger to Mr. James and his party in that direction than there would be in the most peaceful part of Somali-land. In Mr. Menges' opinion, since the James party would have a large number of riflemen, they would be able successfully to defend themselves against Somali or Galla, or any other force that might seek to impede their journey. Mr. Menges then suggested to me that I should procure copies of the surveys and maps which had been prepared by the Egyptian military authorities at Harar, under the supervision of an American engineer officer of the Khedive's Service. I accordingly wrote to the War Office at Cairo, but was never able to obtain or trace the maps in question; and when I mentioned to Mr. James that rough surveys up to the southern bank of the Wibbi Shebeyli had been made, he said he had never heard of them, while, speaking from his own experience, maps constructed by Egyptian officials were quite useless.

Mr. Menges did a large business in catching alive

wild animals of all kinds, and sending them for sale to Europe. He was known locally as "Jamrack's Agent", Jamrack being at that time the largest collector of and dealer in wild animals in the world. Mr. Menges also sold skins, hides, and horns of all the fauna of North-east Africa. I last saw him at the Crystal Palace, where he had charge of a party of Somalis who danced, sang, and gave exhibitions of the Somali method of fighting, which seem to have been greatly appreciated by the spectators. He had also on view a collection of horns, skins, spears, swords, and shields, which I heard he had sold very advantageously to a rich American.

There resided quite close to Berbera a well-known elephant with one tusk, named by the Somalis "Kuchar". Although wild elephants roam at the foot of the Golis range, yet Kuchar would not consort with them. Mr. Menges had sought my protection for this animal, and I ordered the police to look after the beast. One day Mr. Menges reported that Kuchar had been deliberately killed by a Somali who was known to him, and he asked me to catch and punish this culprit. The latter, however, made off inland before the police could lay their hands on him.



## CHAPTER XII

### VISITORS TO THE BERBERA RESIDENCY

GENERAL HAIG, R.A. (retired), and a Mr. Harper of the mission at Shaik Osman, Aden, landed at Bulhar from the trading steamer and asked Mr. Morrison to allow them to hold a religious service on the beach. Mr. Morrison, however, seeing the word "General" on the card which had been handed to him, took General Haig to be a "General" of the Salvation Army and declined to let him reside or preach at Bulhar. Mr. Morrison then at once acquainted me by a special runner of his having refused General Haig's request. The next day General Haig and Mr. Harper called upon me at Berbera, and petitioned me to allow them to preach to the Somalis in the native town or outside it. I declined, but offered them a room in the Residency, in which they would be at liberty to deliver a lecture or a sermon. These gentlemen would not accept this hospitality, and I had to tell them very plainly that by our agreement with the Somalis no proselytizing was permitted in Somaliland. These missionaries were very indignant that the British Government should have thus, as they called it, "prohibited" the "Word of God" being made known to the heathen.

The post of Administrator of Berbera was a very expensive office to hold ; chiefly because, as Lord Harris has specially recorded, it involved the cost of entertaining numerous visitors and sportsmen. Several applications for the grant of a sumptuary, or table, allowance had met with no success ; but I believe that after my departure from Berbera the payment of a monthly sum was sanctioned towards defraying these heavy expenses. During my time a great many guests were put up at the Berbera Residency, but it happened I could personally afford this additional expenditure, and Major Hunter frequently told me that one

of his chief reasons for keeping me at Berbera was that I possessed sufficient private means to "stand the racket".

Under permanent standing instructions the Administrator of Berbera is directed, irrespective of his personal, relative, or local rank, to call in uniform on vessels of war of all nationalities visiting Berbera. Ships of H.B.M.'s Navy always display the white ensign, and the steamers of the Indian Marine sail under the blue flag of the Indian Empire. An Assistant Political Resident holds the rank of Major, and I was therefore only legally entitled to that seniority, and not to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy as a Nain Makan in the Egyptian Army. Locally I was a full Colonel, as representative of H.H. the Khedive on the Somali Coast; but these ranks did not clothe me with a British military commission.

The rank of the Administrator at Berbera is of no practical importance. The Administrator there is relegated to a position which always makes him junior to the commissioned officers commanding ships of war, but not to those of the Indian Marine, who in those days did not bear commissions, and were recruited from the mates of the British Merchant Marine. The root of the difficulty is that Egypt is under the Sultan of Turkey, and the British Ambassador to the Porte has Egypt within his jurisdiction; whereas the *de facto* British representative in the Land of the Pharaohs cannot hold a higher rank than that of Consul-General. The next rank below that of Consul being Vice-Consul, the positions held respectively by Major Hunter and myself were very misleading, as they did not disclose the importance of our status in the Diplomatic and Consular world. Indeed, in my own case at Zeila I was actually junior in standing to my French and other colleagues of the Diplomatic and Consular Services of all European Powers.

The Residency signaller one day reported the approach of a steamer displaying a blue flag. He did not recognize the ship at all, but he drew my attention to her rigging and spars, which were slack and not in the usual trim condition of a Government vessel. I myself was puzzled by the blue flag and the general get-up of this strange craft.

The blue flag denotes a merchant ship employed on Government transport or reserve service; or one commanded by a master mariner holding a R.N.R. commission and having as members of his crew a sufficient number of R.N.R. hands to warrant his flying the blue ensign; or, again, it is the flag of the Government of India.

I boarded the newly arrived vessel. She had obviously been converted into a yacht, but had not been made suitable for pleasure cruises in the tropics. In fact, at close quarters she at once revealed herself in her true colours—a passenger-tender to a liner. I was received at the top of the companion-ladder by an officer, and informed that the ship was the private yacht owned by Sir Donald Currie, M.P. for Perth, who, together with his family and a few guests, was on board. Sir Donald himself, at that, came up from below and introduced himself to me on the break of his quarter-deck. He then conducted me “aft” and presented me to Lady Currie. I also met his daughter—who was engaged to the smart young soldier in attendance on her—and Mr. Currie, Sir Donald’s brother and agent at Havre. Sir Donald was a Radical in politics, and an intimate friend and companion of Mr. Gladstone, and by way of being a magnate in the British shipping world. He was the first person of importance to visit Berbera.

It happened to be an exceptionally hot day, and with the immediate thought of a cold drink I welcomed the hospitable invitation to have lunch on board. For my part I suggested that all Sir Donald’s party, as soon as the sun permitted them to land, should have tea on shore, walk round the town, witness a Somali war dance, and dine at the Residency. On hearing that this programme was acceptable to the visitors, I sent the coxswain of the agency barge to have the necessary arrangements made and then to return to take me ashore after “tiffin”. I descended after that into a very hot saloon, which was not fitted up with punkas, and was without any ice. Even worse, however, was to follow. I found that my host, being himself a total abstainer, considered it was incumbent on him not to tempt his guests by the offer of alcohol in any shape or form. I was therefore quite overcome and greatly fatigued by the



intensity of the dry heat, and in due course I gladly got away for a siesta under the punka in a well-ventilated room of the Residency.

The first guest to arrive that evening at the Residency was Sir Donald's brother, and he made a bee-line for a bottle of Scotch which he saw waiting invitingly on my table. After quenching his thirst, he observed that on board he had not been able to obtain for love or money a taste of the comforting fluid, and he positively dreaded a further ten days of the alcoholic abstinence which Sir Donald's rules imposed upon each person on board his ship. I sympathized with him, and suggested that during his stay at Berbera he might prefer to remain in the Residency rather than return to the yacht. My suggestion he accepted with alacrity.

Sir Donald Currie was invariably attended by a Mr. Smith, who hailed from Cupar Angus, and carried a note-book in which he recorded all the data and material he and his master collected while on their travels. After I had been allowed to sleep ashore and not aboard the ship of war at anchor in Berbera harbour, a naval sub-lieutenant had been ordered to guard me at the Residency against being chopped up by Somali savages. I did not need this protection, but as it involved my having a white companion constantly at the Residency I was delighted with the arrangement. I now sent this young naval officer to show Sir Donald and Mr. Smith round the town, and was much astonished afterwards to hear that Sir Donald had with him a list of my own misdeeds, and information generally of the oppressive nature of Major Hunter's autocratic régime in Somaliland. Sir Donald's list of charges comprised : the seizing and holding of women as hostages for offences committed by their male relatives ; compulsorily enforcing marriage between members of belligerent tribes ; destroying wells and slaughtering live stock as a punishment for robbing caravans ; and making raids on the property of opponents to the Sirkar's rule. It transpired that another Scottish member of the House of Commons had styled my methods as those of a barbarian, and had denounced me to the Foreign Office as acting in a manner he considered discreditable

to a British officer. He had requested Sir Donald to verify on the spot the allegations he had made against me.

My young naval friend said: "Sir Donald has been endeavouring to pump me regarding your proceedings. I have been careful in replying to his questions, and gave it as my opinion that you were very popular with the Somali; though I told him you certainly regarded keeping the peace, at all hazards, as a first duty. May I, however, tell Sir Donald a few fairy-tales for insertion in his clerk's notebook? You will not be in any way responsible for my remarks, and it seems to me that the animosity against you is so venomous that Mr. Smith will readily record any nonsense. In that case some of my yarns and remarks in his notebook will have the effect of rendering his views and deductions ridiculous and useless." I laughingly replied: "You may do and say whatever 'seemeth to thee best' or amusing. I give no orders or directions in the matters to which you refer."

Sir Donald and Mr. Smith were accordingly shown what appeared to be a gallows (in reality it was simply a lift for hauling boats in and out of the sea), and they were then told the following romance: "Mr. Walsh has not as yet actually hanged anyone, but when a rascal causes trouble a noose is placed round the offender's neck for the apparent purpose of hauling him up. However, just as all is ready for hanging the culprit, some *akil* or influential person begs Mr. Walsh not to execute the offender. Mr. Walsh generally arranges to have requests of this kind made to him, and then graciously complies with the petition, thereby gaining great credit and popularity for his clemency. Mr. Walsh, indeed, has the reputation for hanging, shooting, or flogging at sight, in all cases of behaviour and speeches likely to create disturbances in the town. The *akils*, without whose advice and knowledge Mr. Walsh rarely acts, are very proud of their *Wali-Al-Belad* (Governor of the town or country), and invariably support him. In order, however, to ensure respect for him, they relate to the members of inland tribes terrible tales of his fierce methods, dictatorial manners, and firm ideas. And with this policy Mr. Walsh entirely agrees,

holding that it makes it easier for him to rule than if he had a reputation for softness and hesitating measures."

I did all I could to make Sir Donald see that the Somalis were well and justly treated by Major Hunter and myself, and that we were compelled to adopt a *Ma Bap* (parental) policy because any other form of administration involved the expense of increasing our Military and Police establishments. I failed, however, to gain Sir Donald's approval, or even the promise of his neutrality towards the continuance of this inexpensive way of administration. He was undoubtedly prejudiced against our system, and said he anticipated that Indian officers and their régime would shortly be removed. Somaliland and its affairs would then be conducted by milder and specially trained Colonial Office servants, who were only desirous of exhibiting their ideas of justice to natives, a feature so sadly lacking in the present system by the autocratic Indian officer.

After a stay of four or five days Sir Donald and his party departed in the yacht, and we neither saw nor heard from him again.

The Duke and Duchess of Connaught visited Berbera. His Royal Highness, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, came to inspect the garrison. He was shown round the temporary defence curtain-wall which had been erected on the Shaab, and he expressed his approval of the way in which it had been planned and executed. His Royal Highness laughingly asked if I had been the engineer, to which I replied: "Yes, sir; here in Berbera I am 'Lord High Everything'!" Her Royal Highness had requested the Resident at Aden to let her witness a Somali war dance at Berbera. I therefore got together a party of the best dancers and fully armed warriors, all of whom were selected by the Akil and myself. His Royal Highness was greatly pleased at seeing their evolutions, and I added a *pas seul* dance by a Somali woman to the programme.

Early one morning the Residency signaller reported that a British ship of war, under the white ensign, was within sight of the port. After examining her carefully through the large and powerful telescope, he remarked: "She is a



vessel of the Royal Navy right enough, but she does not belong to the squadron on this station." I rigged myself in plain clothes, and, running alongside this very smart and well-equipped yacht, I was piped over the side in regular man-of-war style. The commander, in a R.N.R. uniform, met and saluted me as I stepped on the quarter-deck, and at once introduced me to His Grace the Duke of Hamilton. His Grace greeted me in the most cordial manner and offered me some refreshment. This I accepted with pleasure, and it took the form of a well-iced gin and Belfast gingerade, then the drink *par excellence*.

I stayed to lunch, and became very friendly with His Grace. It appeared the latter was in ill-health and suffered greatly from sleeplessness. He was under the treatment of the surgeon of the yacht, who was also his regular medical attendant. I suggested that the Duke would be more comfortable ashore than in the confined quarters on board ship. I therefore invited him to the Residency, where, in a cool room and with a punka under which to recline comfortably, he was likely to obtain sleep and comfort. The doctor appeared to consider that the change to the shore would benefit his patient, and the Duke was removed in a *dholie* to the Residency.

The Duke liked his new quarters, and I asked him to remain on shore at the Residency during such period as his yacht might stay in Berbera harbour. His two guests, a Mr. Hill and Major Burton, preferred to live on board the yacht.

I told the doctor that the Agency was in the medical charge of a warrant officer holding the qualifications of a Licentiate of Medicine and Surgery. Our doctor was therefore legally able to treat Europeans and natives for all the ailments of human nature, although these practitioners were generally and incorrectly called "passed hospital assistants". I pointed out that if the Duke was suddenly taken ill it would be necessary to call in my medical attendant until the doctor from the yacht could reach the Residency. I therefore suggested that His Grace's case should be explained to our own man, and to this the Duke's doctor agreed.

The water at Berbera is a slight aperient, and the then temperate climate of the place suited the Duke's condition. Indeed, I once induced my ducal guest to ride in the second seat of my camel-saddle, and from there he shot an antelope. His Grace had a couple of good dogs, and Oomradin, my orderly, showed them a colony of plucky rats, thereby affording the Duke considerable sport, which did not involve much physical exertion. My native cook and the Duke also struck up a great friendship. The former reported to me that the supply of cocoa and milk was exhausted, and, on my expressing astonishment, said: "Him Duke man order me sometimes twice a day to make 'cocoa-milk pudding'; no more got it. The 'Europe' shopkeeper in the native bazaar has no more cocoa and milk tins to sell, what can I do? It will take many days to get cocoa and milk tins from Aden." However, though my cook could not give His Grace any more of that favoured pudding, yet he managed to regale him with some other inviting delicacy.

The Duke of Hamilton remained three weeks at Berbera, and I think he benefited by his sojourn there. He promised to return for another course of the waters and to hunt some more rats, but he never did so. I gave him several specimens of the fauna which had been reared by hand, but he wrote to tell me that all these kids had died. In his opinion this was chiefly because no one properly understood their dietary requirements. In this connection I may observe that cow's milk kills the kids of all wild animals, even when the milk is rich and strong, as it creates curds or cheese in the kids' stomachs. The remedy is to dilute with water, and if the juice of a fresh lime is added, the kids generally thrive. Goats' milk, however, is better, although it also needs water and a lime, especially in the case of wild kids picked up shortly after having been dropped by their mothers.

For many years the Duke of Hamilton sent me each Christmas a hamper of wine, plum pudding, ham, and other dainties from Fortnum and Mason. On one occasion he presented me with a cask of Scotch whisky, with his good wishes and best salaams. I never saw His Grace again, and he died in 1895.



Faithful native servants, and particularly those whose forebears have for several generations served European families connected with India, regard the maintenance of their master's *Abru* (reputation) for hospitality and generosity as a sacred duty.

On one occasion the Berbera Residency had been equipped with groceries, wines, and spirits of all descriptions for the requirements of a large party about to be entertained there. Indeed, I really did not think it possible for a guest to solicit any article which could not be supplied. Even so, my butler came to me in great distress and said : "Our *Abru* is for ever lost. I have been asked for a piece of toilet soap which I cannot provide, and the keeper of the 'Europe' shop has not any of that kind of soap in stock. My face has, therefore, become black, as we are now for ever disgraced as hosts."

Now in the East, Europeans of all ranks and grades use carbolic soap; it tends to keep off mosquitoes and other venomous insects, and allays the itching of their bites and stings. My butler, in accordance with custom, had supplied each guest with a chunk of this particular lubricant, but the maid-servant of our most important guest had returned her mistress's piece and demanded a soap fit for the use of a woman with a delicate skin. In this predicament I had a lucky thought, and said to my servant : "The difficulty can be easily solved. Go to my Gladstone bag, and in a glass receptacle therein you will discover a piece of scented toilet soap wrapped in silver paper. Take it at once to the maid." My butler, of course, was triumphant at this find, and presented the article to the Abigail with the remark : "You no tellie me that you want 'smellie soap'. My master plenty got it, woman soap." This last observation, however, was somewhat boastful, inasmuch as this piece of toilet soap was the only one of its kind in North-east Africa.

Incidentally, this tale was related at lunch, when it transpired that our exalted guest had not sent for any kind of soap, being perfectly satisfied with the brand in general use. It was her maid who required the scented toilet variety, as being more suitable for her refined, delicate, and tender skin than our regulation sample.



Mr. Dorabji Dinshaw was a partner of the well-known ship-chandlers firm of Cowasji Dinshaw Brothers at Aden, and also the Consular Agent at Aden for "His Very Faithful Majesty" the King of Portugal. He wrote to introduce to me Major the Viscomte de Serpa Pinto, an African explorer of fame and repute, one of the first travellers who had crossed Africa from east to west. This nobleman was an officer of the King of Portugal's bodyguard, and a member of the Portuguese Legislature, but had been expelled from Portugal for three years for having fought a duel and killed his opponent within the grounds of the Royal Palace at Lisbon. I found Major Serpa Pinto a most interesting man, and learned from him the nature of Portuguese difficulties in South Africa, their strong objection to concede any rights or privileges to the British, and also their general opposition to all settlers of our nationality. Many years later I had similar discussions with Colonel Machado, Governor-General of Goa (Portuguese India). The topics then were the frontiers of Portuguese possessions adjoining British districts in India, and the Sawant Wadi province forcibly held by the Portuguese Government, who refused to accept the payment of the money for which it had been mortgaged to the Governor-General of Goa. Major Serpa Pinto remained for nearly three weeks at Berbera before departing for South Africa. I never met him again, and heard that at the expiration of his period of expulsion he was restored to his former position on return to Lisbon, where he died in 1900 at the early age of 54.

Cavalieri Gecchi, the Italian Consul at Aden, wrote to ask me to entertain at Berbera Prince Ruspoli, a cadet of an ancient and illustrious Roman family, who was travelling in the East, but not for the purpose of sport, exploration, or commerce. As it happened, I had already met the personage under rather peculiar circumstances. In effect, at Aden he had thrashed a Somali Gharjwalla, and was "run in" by the police and charged before the Cantonment Court for assault. I happened that day to be the Presiding Magistrate. The Prince admitted his offence, and I fined him the sum of Rs. 5, with costs. At our next meeting

he was a guest at my table in Berbera. He professed himself then greatly amused by his experience of British officials ; they were, he declared, too soft with the black man, and failed properly to support the dignity and position of the white man. And I may here observe that most foreigners are of that opinion. Prince Ruspoli stayed a week at Berbera, but did not take any interest in the place. He then returned to Italy, and I never saw him again.

Prince Boris was a man of means, a large landowner, and, I think, of Russian nationality, though he may have been an Austrian. He stayed for several days at the Berbera Residency, when I found him a well-informed traveller, and a very entertaining and pleasant companion. He hated Germans and Jews, and was a great pal of the English.

A French Bourbon prince, about seventeen years of age, whom my guests chaffingly called "Roi de France", stopped for a couple of weeks at the Residency, together with many other foreigners of rank or importance. Nevertheless, although in a big-game shooting country, not one of them ever went on a trip inland to shoot elephants, kudees, oryx, and other denizens of the jungle. This fact was noticed by the Somalis of all the tribes who had trade relations with Berbera, and contributed greatly to the aggrandisement of the Englishman,

An Italian and a Frenchman had each been granted a permit to shoot all kinds of game, except elephant, within the limits of the Berbera jurisdiction. One of these foreigners reported to me in my capacity as Administrator that the other, not having been able to kill a lion in a sportsmanlike manner, had poisoned and then skinned one, so as to make it appear that he had shot it in a legitimate fashion. I inquired into the truth of this allegation, and ascertained from several sources that a couple of lions had been surreptitiously poisoned. I thereupon demanded an explanation from my original informant. He was then accused of a similar offence, and that charge was also proved to be absolutely true. I therefore cancelled the shooting permits held by both of these foreigners, and directed them to return at once to the coast. They refused, however, to comply with those orders. The police were

then instructed to send the Somali attendants on each foreigner to Berbera. The latter consequently could neither move a step forward nor backward, nor graze their camels. Under these circumstances they each wrote me an abusive letter, and expressed their detestation of the British brigands who had arrogantly seized and held possession of the habitable portions of the earth. From these desirable places, however, I was assured we should be driven at no distant date, by a combination of the White and Black Races we ill-treated and regarded with such contempt.

The two foreigners I have just mentioned travelled into Berbera by separate roads, but met near the lighthouse and opened rifle fire on each other. Fortunately their respective marksmanship was so inaccurate that neither could hit the other; nevertheless, the police took their rifles away and sent the weapons to the Residency. One of the lighthouse "hands" then rushed into my office and said that two "*ghora log*" were fighting a duel with their revolvers. As my camel happened to be at the door and saddled, I jumped upon my Mahira ("Ship of the Desert") and rode off to the scene of action. Duelling or any kind of fighting was, of course, strictly prohibited within the boundaries of the British Administration.

I arrived in time, but not before each combatant had fired half a dozen rounds. I tried to stop the duel, but was met with shouts of: "*Combat d'outrance!*" I was, told, moreover, that if I interfered in any way they would shoot me, so as to be able to continue their *combat singulier* without my disturbing them. I thereupon took my 13-shot Winchester out of its bucket, and ordered the Camel Police to load their carbines. Under the muzzles of those firearms Oomradin, my Cashmiri orderly, disarmed and handcuffed the foreigners. The latter were then handed over to Jemedar Khoda Buxsh, with instructions to embark them, if possible, on a steamer not touching at any British possession, or else to ship them off to Mocha by a dhow.

To ensure repayment for the expense of their deportation the Crest rifle belonging to each foreigner was to be retained by the police, to be returned to the owner if



the latter paid all expenses in cash. I got rid of these troublesome persons in a Khedival steamer. Each of them complained to his Consul of the ill-treatment he had received, and demanded my removal from Berbera. Needless to say, however, no notice of those complaints was taken by any authority.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ZEILA

MAJOR HUNTER sent me an urgent message to the effect that H.B.M.'s Foreign Office was under the impression that I had actually taken charge of the Zeila Agency, where, owing to serious complications with the French, several questions under the capitulations had cropped up and needed speedy and judicious handling. My instructions were to maintain friendly relations with our French neighbours, as the greatest importance was attached by the British Government to *la bonne entente* with them.

It appeared that up to a couple of years ago I had been personally very popular with the French colony. The members of the colony had always regarded me as *un ancien élève* of a French Imperial *lycée*, who spoke French fluently, and was in sympathy with French views and ideas. Recently, however, so Major Hunter said, the Quai d'Orsay (Paris), and the French Consular authorities at Cairo, had in a very delicate and demi-official manner suggested that I should not be employed at Zeila. Their reason, apparently, was that I had frequently placed the French Consuls at Zeila, as well as other French officials serving in Western Somaliland, in ridiculous positions. Major Hunter, nevertheless, in consultation with Sir Evelyn Baring, had urged my retention at Zeila; and indeed I was being sent there to cope with the machinations of the *officiers de carrière* of the French Service Diplomatique, and with the regulars of the Corps Consulaire.

Officers of the Indian Political Services, even when serving under H.B.M.'s Foreign Office with the temporary rank of Consul or Vice-Consul, were not recognized "colleagues" of the *alumni* of the Quai d'Orsay, and were regarded as inferiors in the *chancelleries* and *salons* in Europe. We did not agree with the French in this

estimate of our status and intellectual capacities, and scored off these *officiers de carrière* by combining the common sense of a servant of H.B.M.'s Crown with the astuteness of the wily Brahmin, or other Oriental.

If the French Consuls did not limit their efforts under the capitulations for upsetting our arrangements, they certainly started making agreements, or treaties, with the Somalis to the westward and southward of Zeila—thereby absolutely ignoring the agreements which Major Hunter had made with those tribes in 1883-84.

Major Hunter called for me at Berbera, and during the voyage to Zeila we had a long talk regarding past events and our future policy. Hunter said: "Look here, Walsh, I rely upon you to frustrate the French Consul from getting an agreement signed by any tribe, and especially by the members of the tribes with whom we have already signed agreements. The French agreements must on cursory examination be found to be of a totally innocuous nature, and their valuelessness exhibited at a glance. I have told Sir Evelyn Baring that quite recently, at your instance, the signature of a policeman was surreptitiously affixed on each of two French agreements, and was simply added to those documents in order to render them obviously ridiculous and unreliable. I intimated to Sir Evelyn that we expected to receive an order from the British Government not to interfere with the two tribes who had applied for French protection, and that pending investigation no British officer would be allowed to have any relations with the tribes in question. I answered Hunter that when such instructions came to hand it would be time enough to solicit an inspection of the two agreements upon which the French based their demand for our non-intervention with the tribes mentioned in those agreements. Then, indeed, the "fun" would begin, and I should need his full support against an official request for my removal from Zeila.

Major Hunter in conclusion said: "The Egyptian flag is to come down, but the French have purposely not been advised of the date, as it means that the British either retain or abandon Zeila, a question not yet decided.



The French, however, are sending a Diplomatic and not a Consular official, with the high rank of *Chef de Cabinet*, to conduct French affairs and politics at and in the vicinity of Zeila, so as to be ready for the anticipated change."

Monsieur Gaspari, French Consul at Aden, had hinted to Major Hunter that owing to my being *hors de carrière*, and in view of my subordinate grade under the British Foreign Office, I was necessarily junior to *un officier de carrière Diplomatique*. Monsieur Gaspari also suggested that as the family of the late Governor of Zeila (Abubuker Pasha) had vacated the Palace (Hookumderieh), it should be occupied by this French Diplomatic officer of rank, and not by me, even though I was *de facto* Governor of Zeila. And this course was taken in consequence of my apparent acquiescence.

Major Hunter's final instructions to me were: "Let the Frenchman rush for the Palace and install himself in, and while thus adding to his outward importance you should at once seize the custom-house and command of the Police—a damned good share of the government of any town!" I complied with this excellent and adroit advice, and thereby scored on all points.

Major Hunter suggested to Sir Evelyn Baring that after the lapse of a reasonable period permission should be asked to inspect the recent agreements made by the French with certain Somali tribes—when the "fun" would commence. The Republic would certainly request H.B.M.'s Government to remove me from Zeila, and I should need not only Major Hunter's help and support, but also the assistance of H.B.M.'s Representative in Egypt (Sir Evelyn Baring).

Captain T. S. King, Bo.S.C., Assistant Political Resident in charge at Zeila, wrote to me in despair regarding his total inability to stop or even to check the French moves at Zeila under the capitulations. Captain King asked for my advice, and if possible my assistance. I therefore sent a Somali detective of the Aden Police to watch and give me accurate information with regard to the methods adopted by the French to obtain signatures to their agreements.

My constable reported that a European white officer usually had charge of an agreement, upon which he generally made a mark if the party were unable to write ; sometimes, however, it was signed by the actual visitor to the camp, and the subscriber then invariably received a handsome present in cash by way of reward. In some instances, again, the detective had observed that the French officer forwarded the agreement by an ordinary messenger to the kraal of the person whose signature was needed ; while in the not infrequent absence of the French officer, an agreement for signature by some specially desired person was despatched to the latter without any ceremony or question. It therefore occurred to me that it would be possible, though no doubt very difficult, for me to get temporary possession of one of the agreements which were thus hawked about the bush, and I could then apply my personal signature to it in Arabic. I knew the French officer detailed for this duty, and I was aware that, though he spoke Arabic, yet he could not read or write that language.

I very carefully thought out this scheme, but eventually I decided that it was a very precarious one, and likely to end in failure. I therefore planned instead to send one of my smartest police-constables to personate a Somali chief or *akil* of importance. This constable was to be properly robed and mounted, and attended by half a dozen spears. He would then boldly attend the French officer's camp, and announce to the latter that he had specially come to sign an agreement with the French, for the purpose of driving the English land-grabbers into the sea.

The French officer naturally warmly welcomed this apparently well-to-do friend of France, and handed him the agreement on which to make his mark. The constable, acting the part of a genuine Somali chief and hater of the British, proudly announced his ability to write his own name on the agreement and to stamp it with his personal seal. This, of course, caused great joy to the French officer, who thought to have found a really intelligent and important chief, come for the sole purpose of signing an agreement with France to expel the British from Africa. My capable constable, indeed, succeeded in every respect,



and aroused not an iota of suspicion. He wrote in Arabic on the agreement : "*Mahomed Ali, Havildar, Berbera Police; by order of Mr. Walsh, Governor of Berbera.*"

A few days later another clever member of the Berbera Police successfully played the same trick elsewhere.

As a result, when the French authorities at the Quai d'Orsay examined and translated the signatures on these two agreements, the fact that those documents bore the signatures of a couple of members of the Berbera Police rendered them ridiculously invalid and un-presentable for inspection at Berlin.



## CHAPTER XIV

### COMBATING FRENCH INFLUENCE AT ZEILA

As David Morrison had been gazetted a Deputy-Assistant Political Agent, on my departure from Berbera he automatically took charge of my office, pending the appointment and arrival of a regular Assistant Political Resident from India. During that period of temporary incumbency Morrison received under the Civil Service Regulations his own "full pay" and two-thirds of the difference between his salary and my substantive pay. No part of the allowances were divisible, however, and thus the total emoluments of my *de facto* successor amounted to about £480 per mensem, with free quarters and a travelling allowance.

After installing me at Zeila, Major Hunter was to proceed on furlough to Europe. He said that he would make a point of seeing Sir Evelyn Baring, at Cairo or elsewhere, so as to discuss Zeila affairs with him. One of the main questions was the exact significance of the methods employed by the French in the Zeila locality, to make their documents valid for the inspection of the Committee at Berlin. This last matter could only be properly dealt with after consultation with Sir Evelyn Baring at Cairo.

Under the capitulations, which were admittedly legally in force at Zeila, the French were able to hinder and annoy the British officer in charge of the administration of the town Pashalic. This interference was not a friendly action on the part of the French Government, and especially since we had up to this date continued to fly the Egyptian flag. When it seemed likely that at any moment the Crescent might not be displayed at Zeila, the French endeavoured to compel the British to accept a dual control of the Pashalic. This we by no means desired; on the other hand, the British Government would not definitely announce

if they intended to remain at Zeila or not. The French Consuls, as I have already mentioned, had prepared a lot of agreements on parchment, which purported to pray for French protection, or for the annexation by France of several districts in Western Somaliland. These documents were sent round the bush, and were not always in charge of a French European officer; they could be signed by anyone who represented himself to be an *akil* or a notable of his tribe. An agreement of this kind was also sometimes signed secretly by a man in his *kraal*, without the knowledge of his neighbours or of anyone else who might have repudiated his claim to be considered as a notable or a representative of his tribe.

All agreements and treaties made with African potentates and chiefs had at that time to be laid before an International Committee, permanently seated at Berlin. It was, however, impossible for such a body to decide upon the genuineness of such a document—in appearance one such agreement looked as good and as binding as another. The British agreements made with the *akils* and chiefs in 1883-4 were entirely valid, having been signed by individuals who were fully entitled to do so. The agreements recently obtained by the French, on the other hand, bore no such weight. Moreover, the signatories to the French agreements were largely made up by adherents of the family of Abubuker, a Dunkali chief (a French-protected subject, and the late Egyptian Governor of Zeila).

The new broom at Zeila, styled *Chef de Cabinet*, determined to have agreements publicly signed at the French Consulate, instead of running the risk of having such documents signed surreptitiously in the bush. He therefore specially invited some fifteen or twenty of his leading partisans to Zeila, to sign an agreement in each other's presence. I heard, of course, of this manœuvre, but I was at the moment powerless to counter it. I retired, therefore, up on to the roof of my Consulate to think the matter out, with a "jumping mixture" of whisky and soda and a good supply of Trichinopoli cheroots.

Several hours passed without my hitting upon a suitable

idea. Then suddenly an inspiration came to me, and, putting my head over the parapet, I shouted to the sentry below: "Send the Mulazim of Police to me at once!" This man had formerly been in the Egyptian Service, but had been taken on by my predecessor and retained in the Zeila Police. I actually knew the fellow to be a French or an Abubuker Pasha spy, but regarded him nevertheless as a useful rogue. I had him carefully watched and supplied with suitable information, and he was allowed to take drafts of letters out of my waste-paper receptacle. I had caught him one day rummaging the latter, and at once suspected his object. I therefore communicated my suspicions to Colonel Stace, my chief at Aden, and in future dropped into the basket carefully prepared scraps of papers, containing statements which we desired the French and Boorhan to know and act upon.

Now, therefore, on the Mulazim's arrival, I said to him: "You know that a *protégé français* cannot be arrested by the local police without the previously obtained sanction of the French Consul, unless caught by the police *flagrante delicto*. But I do not suppose that the French Consul would object to my arresting, even in his Consulate, an actually convicted murderer who has escaped from prison. I hear that there is a Gadabursi now sleeping in the compound of the French Consulate who murdered the Egyptian *harrar mukattib* [courier]. If this convict knew that I was aware of his presence in Zeila, he would make off before he could be seized; I have therefore determined to arrest this murderer at once, and so prevent his escape. You are to tell the Subadar of the Native Infantry from me to fully arm and assemble his men near the open space adjoining the French Consulate, and you will direct the police to fall in at the same place. Return then to meet me at the French Consulate, as I may require you to identify and point out the murderer to me." I calculated, of course, that, as Mulazim Awad was Boorhan's spy, he would warn the murderer, and the other inmates of the French Consular compound, on his way to the Native Infantry lines. That would give his friends ample time in which to escape from the enclosure, and also from the town.



Now some months earlier the French Consul had intimated to me that, owing to the inadequacy of my police arrangements at Zeila for the protection of European lives and property, he intended to ask his Government to station a guard of French troops in his Consulate. Incidentally, an attempt had already been made to introduce French troops into the Pashalic, but had failed. Ultimately, however, on this latest occasion the French Consul had let the matter drop.

Major Hunter, nevertheless, mentioned the matter to Sir Evelyn Baring, who some years previously had also successfully resisted an effort to establish "dual control" at Zeila; and Hunter pointed out that by declining to land a force at Alexandria when the British first occupied Egypt, the French Government had virtually denied any such desire. In any case, I did not want to have this question reopened, and I was therefore constrained not to give the French Consul any cause for complaint. And in order to meet his views, I undertook a reorganization of the local police.

It was finally arranged to have a night alarm signal. This was to consist of three rifle-shots in rapid succession from the British or French Consulate, and repeated by all posts, while a ship's lamp was to be hoisted at the flag-staff on the roof of H.B.M.'s Consulate. With the giving of the alarm, the military and police bugles were to be sounded, and the troops and police were to fall in, fully armed, at a spot which would be verbally indicated by special messenger to the Subadar commanding the Native Infantry. In the absence of orders, the Subadar was to assemble his men at the British Consulate.

Soon, therefore, after the departure of the Mulazim to call out the military and police, I personally fired the alarm signal from the roof of H.B.M.'s Consulate. Bugle-calls, bustle, confusion, and the tramp of armed men added to the consternation of the Somalis encamped in the enclosure of the French Consulate, and corroborated the warning given them by the spy that the Wali in person was coming to arrest certain evildoers. And the immediate result was the departure of the Somalis whose presence in Zeila

I considered as undesirable in British interests. The police had been instructed not to molest or hinder anyone leaving the town for the interior, and within an hour of the firing of the alarm every inmate of the French compound had left the town. I did not personally go near to the French Consulate on the day in question.

The French Consul was, of course, terribly angry and disappointed at the complete breakdown of his plans for publicly obtaining signatures to the French agreement, and he accused me of having deliberately stampeded his potential signatories. I thereupon pointed out that, being myself a Consul and fully conversant with the capitulations, I was unlikely to order the arrest of any *protégé français* without his sanction. I also reminded him that by his own request I had reorganized the local police, and explained that in this instance I had been simply rehearsing the arrangement of which he had full notice. The truth of the matter, I went on to remark, appeared to be that my rehearsal had frightened several criminals among the French partisans assembled at his Consulate; at least one of whom was a convicted murderer who had escaped from jail. I furthermore called the Consul's attention to the encouragement he had given to Somalis who attacked British Civil and Military Servants in the open bazaar; and I reminded him that lately three armed Somalis had assailed a Naik and three privates of the N.I. detachment (two of the latter being badly wounded by spear-thrusts, and one Somali bayoneted). For this serious offence the Consul had fined each of the assailants two annas (3d.), and had not proposed any compensation for the wounded sepoys. In the circumstances related, I informed the Consul that I considered these Somali *protégé français* had been inadequately punished.

## CHAPTER XV

### ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS—THE SAGALLO INCIDENT

THE Aysa Mamasan (White Aysa) inhabit the Maritime Plain to the eastward of Zeila. This tribe made several raids on the live stock at Zeila and Bulhar, and stopped several caravans from entering those ports. No amount of remonstrances had any effect, and some kind of action became necessary.

Colonel Stace reported our predicament to Sir Evelyn Baring, and explained that as the White Aysa could speedily place over two thousand spears and some mounted men in the field, it would be necessary to increase considerably our resources. The Zeila police, and other local allies, did not exceed one hundred and fifty rifles all told; but we might obtain some reinforcements from Berbera and Bulhar, and by the withdrawal of the constables from the Bio Koboba well, between Zeila and Harar, make a sudden surprise raid on the live stock belonging to these marauders.

After considerable discussion, it was decided to assemble a force at Zeila as follows :

Regular and local forces; under the command of Major J. R. C. Domville, Bo.S.C., Aden Troop.

Party of 13 Bluejackets, with two machine-guns; under the command of Lieutenant Clarke and Gunner Churchill, Royal Navy.

75 sabres, Bombay Regular Cavalry; Aden Troop.

One company, Indian Sappers; under the command of Captain Russel, R.E.

Two companies, 17th Bombay Infantry; under the



command of Captain Hughes, Bombay Staff Corps.

Detachment of Somali Coast Police, Biladieh Riflemen and Mounted Friendlies (about 150, all told); under the command of L. Prendergast Walsh, C.I.E., Assistant Political Resident, Aden, and H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul and Administrator of Zeila.

The above force was to march without delay on the White Aysa kraals and live stock at the foot of the mountains. We occupied the well at Hoosein at sunset, but it was too late for us to fortify ourselves properly in a position commanding the well. We were compelled, therefore, to erect a zareeba in a space so confined that an enemy could approach without being subjected to a destructive fire. Later, when I was out reconnoitring the tribal levies, I caught a gleam of their spears in the light of the setting sun, and hastened back to report. I stated that in my humble opinion we were encamped too close to the enemy, and that our cramped position was dangerous and undefensible. Our whole force was then put on to cut down trees with which to strengthen the zareeba; the two naval guns were mounted so as to enfilade our flanks; while the camels were collected in the centre of the zareeba with their forelegs tied together, and the horses of the Aden troop were placed near to them.

When all our defensive preparations were at last complete, Colonel Stace and myself, with my detachment of police, took charge of several yards of the zareeba-front on which we expected to be attacked. I was on watch in our camp up to two o'clock a.m., and was to be relieved by Lieutenant Lister of the 17th Bombay Native Infantry. Just before turning in, I observed to Lister that the Somalis always attacked a little before dawn, and the words were hardly out of my mouth, when one of the naval guns opened fire. A few seconds later about forty fully armed White Aysa warriors broke into the zareeba.

We had to fight with our swords and revolvers, being in danger of shooting our own people if we used our rifles.

The "Cease Fire" was therefore sounded, and Colonel Stace cried: "Gentlemen, follow me! The enemy must be driven out by our swords!" The gallant Colonel, followed by twelve European officers, then charged the invaders of our zareeba, nearly all of whom fell to our combined efforts. Our casualties numbered 34 of all ranks, out of our force of about 400 men.

We at once retreated into the open plain towards the coast, being about 30 miles to the eastward of Zeila as the crow flies. And eventually we dug ourselves in, with our rear close to the beach. Colonel Stace, attended by two camel-mounted Arab guides, then rode off along the shore to Bulhar, at least eighty miles distant, and *en route* to Aden, to report on our unfortunate conditions and to ask for a reinforcement. Captain Domville remained in command at the camp, and was instructed by Colonel Stace on no account to leave it until he returned.

Captain Domville, however, against my verbal and written advice, took the whole of his cavalry and eight European officers, together with the naval guns and their crews, to attack the Aysa Mamasan, and moreover ordered his infantry to support that movement. The expedition was ambushed, one Raisadar and twelve Sowars being killed, and half of Captain Domville's horses were either killed or captured. The Captain managed to reach his infantry, nevertheless; but even with their aid he was not strong enough to stand against his pursuers. Captain Domville wrote begging me to come to his assistance with all my force at the camp. I declined, but later I sent out a detachment of my police, supported by my "catch-'em-alive" allies, to cover in some degree his retreat. As I feared that these successes would embolden the Mamasan to attack our position on the coast, I got a few boats to convey our tents and stores to Zeila, and then stood on the defensive on the spot from which Colonel Stace had ordered me not to move.

Colonel Stace, therefore, got back to the camp to find he had no longer a force to command, and that the expedition must be abandoned. Primarily, of course, Colonel Stace blamed Captain Domville, but he also considered

that I ought to have restrained the latter from his foolish act. To do Captain Domville justice, he was very contrite and keenly felt his position. Moreover, he at once showed Colonel Stace my letter objecting to the attack planned by him. On that evidence Colonel Stace exonerated me from any share in the disaster.

We returned to Zeila, and the force was there broken up. We had failed to thrash the White Aysa ; nevertheless the akils of that tribe expressed a desire for peace, and attributed their escape from punishment to the fact that Captain Domville was a stranger to Somaliland and the wily tricks of its fighting men. One akil, indeed, observed to me that if Colonel Stace or myself had directed the expedition, it would probably have succeeded.

Captain Herbert, the Surgeon-Major with our force, had an amusing and nearly fatal experience at Hoosein zareeba. He was lying on his cork mattress at the moment of the unexpected attack, and a savage endeavoured to transfix him. The warrior's spear, however, pierced the cork of the mattress, and there stuck fast. Captain Herbert then rolled off his mattress and took shelter behind it, thereby giving himself time to get at his revolver. He fired at the Mamasan, but the bullet hit the pony of Captain Jones, R.N., through the nose. Eventually Captain Herbert's assailant was shot down, but I believe he managed to crawl out of the zareeba.

On the very date on which the Mamasan expedition left Zeila I received a télégram by post from Aden, advising me that I had been created a Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire.

Captain Nurse (17th Bo. N.I.) acted for me as the Political Officer at Zeila. Captain Nurse was one day placed in a fix by the Commander of an Italian war vessel landing in the town 500 Abyssinians (armed with Vertilis rifles, but without either food or money), to be sent to Shoa. I accordingly ordered the sum of six annas per diem to be paid from the Indian Sub-Treasury at Zeila to each Abyssinian. The Bombay Government subsequently debited this charge to me personally, and admonished me for taking money out of the Treasury without the previous



sanction of the Accountant-General! I reported this to the British Foreign Office, and they ordered the money to be refunded to me. They directed, moreover, the Bombay Government, or the India Office, to withdraw the censure passed on my action, as it was an important political point which I had properly and correctly appreciated.

The Zeila Water Police, on another occasion, learned from the *nakoda* of an Arabic dhow that a large party of European soldiers, in Russian uniform, had been landed at Sagallo in the Gulf of Ghubbet Kharab. These troops were under the command of two Russians officers, and had occupied at Sagallo the mud fort which had been seized by the French on its evacuation by the Egyptian garrison in 1884. I at once communicated this report to Colonel Stace, but as the seizure of a fort in French territory by a friendly Power was a most unusual occurrence, he considered that my information was likely to be incorrect. The Colonel added that the presence of Russians at Sagallo, if true, probably implied (since France and Russia were allies) that the occupation of Sagallo by Russian regular troops had been arranged diplomatically between the two Governments.

I was instructed to make further inquiry into the matter, and I learned definitely that about four hundred and fifty infantry, under the command of the Hetman Achinoff and Lieutenant Mascoff, had occupied the fort, and had hoisted over it the Russian flag. No French officials or warships were at Sagallo, but it was rumoured that the French Admiral in command of the Fleet stationed in the Gulf of Aden had been summoned, and was momentarily expected to arrive on the scene. Colonel Stace, however, being still dissatisfied with the accuracy of my information, ordered me to prove the whole matter to him indisputably. It was, of course, impossible to comply with Colonel Stace's requirements, since, even if I went to Sagallo myself, I should only be able to record my personal opinion regarding what I found and saw there.

In these circumstances, and in accordance with my usual custom, I retired on to the roof of H.B.M.'s Consulate,

to imbibe whisky-and-soda and smoke Trichinopoli cigars. I carefully thought out the problem which had to be dealt with, and then I called for Police Havildar Shere Ali.

Now Shere Ali was a great rascal, but also clever and a plucky man. He hailed from Central Asia, and in my opinion had served in the Indian, Russian, and Turkish Armies. He possessed a good appearance and manners, and read and wrote Arabic well and with facility. I had placed him in charge of the main gate of the town, and unknown to me he had imposed there a tax for his own benefit, to the extent of half an anna on each loaded camel entering Zeila. A week or ten days later the merchants complained of the levy of this *octroi*, chiefly on account of its inconvenience, owing to camel-drivers from the interior never having cash on their persons. Shere Ali was, of course, thereupon removed from his office at the gate, and cursed as an untrustworthy rogue. Nevertheless, on several occasions since he had unflinchingly stood by me in tight corners, and as a result I had no idea of turning him out of the Service. Indeed, such a clever and personally plucky man was to be cultivated and retained for duties requiring special intelligence.

On Shere Ali's arrival, then, I told him to sit on the floor and to pay careful attention to what I was about to tell him. I said: "Russian regular troops are reported to have landed at Sagallo, but the Russian Consul at Aden has denied that fact to Colonel Stace. Go, therefore, to the Indian who keeps the 'Europe shop', and join his boat from which he intends to sell stores to the Russians at Sagallo. Obtain from my butler a bottle of whisky for presentation to the Hetman Achinoff, and solicit that officer's protection for yourself. Take also that opportunity of cursing the British and their tyrannous treatment of natives, and explain that you have been wrongfully discharged from the Zeila Police Force, and forcibly expelled from the town by Mr. Walsh. Inform the Hetman that there are a number of *poste restante* letters at the Zeila custom-house, and that if a list of the persons expecting correspondence was sent to Father César of the French Roman

Catholic Mission at Zeila, he could withdraw and forward to Sagallo all letters addressed to members of the Russian Force."

In practice the Hetman was delighted with this suggestion, and at once directed his Adjutant, Captain Mascoff, to prepare a list of the kind required. The latter officer then passed on that order to the Sergeant-Major, and the Sergeant-Major, to save himself trouble, sent Father César the Official "State of the Command", giving the name, home, and other particulars of each member of the Russian force at Sagallo.

I personally watched the mission, and saw a letter delivered to Father César by the *nakoda* of a native boat just arrived from Sagallo. That man of God took it at once to the Parsee head clerk at the custom-house, and I followed quickly. I told Aderji to show Father César all the letters we had on our hands, but there was none for any persons named in the "State". Father César was then about to leave the office with the "State" in his hands, when I suggested that that document should be placed on our files for future reference. This the priest readily agreed to, and with that he departed. I speedily examined the "State", which I found bore an official signature and a seal of office. It was, therefore, the best possible direct evidence for my chief, Colonel Stace, and I sent it to him by the Muzli torpedo-boat. Colonel Stace, on receiving the document, confronted the Russian Consular Agent with it. . . . Tableau !

I left Shere Ali at Sagallo, with orders to report as frequently as possible all news and developments. A couple of days later he informed me that Admiral Olroy, with two ships of war, had anchored off Sagallo Fort. The Admiral ordered the Hetman Achinoff to haul down the Russian flag and vacate the fort immediately. The Hetman, however, refused to comply with either demand, and said he would not surrender unless *force majeure* was used against him. The French Admiral had then gone off to consult the Governor of the French possession of Obok, or else possibly to discuss matters by cable with the French Government in Paris.



On hearing of the French Admiral's departure, I started for Sagallo in the Consular barge. The distance from Zeila is about forty-five miles, and, as the sea was calm, the voyage was speedily made under the most comfortable conditions. I called on, and had lunch with, the Hetman Achinoff and Captain Mascoff, both of whom were, I thought, very pleasant fellows and capable soldiers. The Hetman said that he had no intention of surrendering the fort until it had been fired upon by the big guns of the French flagship.

No sooner had I left the two Russians officers than Admiral Olroy hove in sight, and after he had anchored his vessel I paid him an official visit. Admiral Olroy received me courteously, but stormed and raved at the conduct of the Russians who had thus invaded and seized French territory. I replied: "The British acquiesced in, and have since recognized, the French seizure of Sagallo, although it was originally under British protection. No doubt you are aware that the place is properly part of the Pashalic of Zeila, held by the Khedive direct from the Sultan of Turkey. The French, however, disregarded the rights of the Khedive, and ignored the flag of the Ottoman Empire, by forcibly seizing Sagallo. The British did not, and do not, want Sagallo, but the Hetman Achinoff holds that he has the same right to annex Sagallo as the French Government had to seize the place from under the Turkish flag and British protection."

The Admiral had never heard these arguments, and was greatly incensed at them. And he sent Achinoff an ultimatum, that he would fire on the fort within a couple of hours if it was not surrendered to him. I endeavoured to make some terms between the two parties, and pulled to shore and back again to the French flagship three times before I abandoned my efforts to pacify these fire-eaters. In the end Admiral Olroy opened fire on the fort, killing or wounding nine Russians. The Hetman Achinoff thereupon lowered the Russian flag, and surrendered himself and his men. They were removed to Obok, and shipped back to Odessa.

The French newspapers afterwards attacked me, and

attributed the trouble to my intrigues. As France and Russia were at this time great friends and allies, Admiral Olroy was blamed for having fired on the Russians, and was removed from his command. And so ended the Sagallo incident.



## CHAPTER XVI

### MY UNPOPULARITY WITH THE FRENCH AND WITH THE SLAVE-TRADERS—WELL-SINKING NEAR ZEILA

THE Senior French Official, who held the rank of *Chef de Cabinet*, was professionally a very distinguished and much decorated member of the *Corps Diplomatique*. He was obviously bitterly dissatisfied with the way in which French affairs and interests had been conducted at Zeila, and by the totally untrained and haphazardly appointed civilians who were clothed with various Consular powers to perform intricate Diplomatic duties. In the early days the French Consul was merely a merchant who, under the appellation of Consular or Vice-Consular Agent, had the carriage of French Consular business, and in addition followed his own private commercial vocation.

The engineer of an Aden Harbour coal-touting launch, who spoke Arabic but could neither speak nor read English, had been appointed as the whole-time French Vice-Consular Agent at Zeila ; while his son, an assistant in a French coffee-merchant's office at Aden, had been permanently employed in a subordinate post at Obok and Jibuti, and was always at war with the British Frontier Police and Zeila traders. These two inexperienced officials, then, were at first our opponents, and naturally they could not contend successfully against us. When, however, the Quai d'Orsay started operations in Somaliland with a trained staff, we were occasionally "put in the cart", although even when not "on top" we generally got off with a creditable draw. I knew that my personal actions in Zeila and its neighbourhood had made me unpopular with the French Foreign Office, and I anticipated that their Chargé d'Affaires at Cairo would drop a hint to Sir Evelyn Baring not to retain me at Zeila. This, as I have already mentioned, did happen, but no notice



was taken of the informal communication. Later on the French Ambassador in London unsuccessfully demanded my removal from Zeila, and the disavowal by H.B.M.'s Government of my policy and proceedings. H.B.M.'s Government, however, officially defended me. In the foregoing connection, I received the following information in a letter from a French friend :

*On m'écrit de l'Égypte que le Zeila ministre de France s'est refusé à ce que l'on vous envoyât à Zeila.—Voilà donc votre procès gagné.—Le Ministre de France aura pensé que vous étiez un adversaire trop dangereux pour le nouveau Consul Français à Zeila, qui n'est au courant de rien des choses Somalies, tandis que vous les connaissez parfaitement. Je pense, si ce refus est vrai, comme je le crois, qu'il ne pourra donner qu'une excellente opinion de vous à vos chefs.*

*La Gazette Géographique*, under the heading "L'Incident de Doungareta", had an article on Major Hunter, which stated that the latter's plans for the establishment of complete British control over the whole of Somaliland had been entirely upset, notwithstanding *le mensonge et le fourberie* employed by the said British officer. My name is not given in that particular article ; I am simply referred to as the British Vice-Consul at Zeila, engaged in carrying out Major Hunter's orders.

The article in question was useful, however, as it gives the names of the chiefs of the two tribes said to have been authorized to sign agreements with the French. If any such agreements had been executed, they must logically be regarded as invalid, as they ignored or treated as non-existent the prior agreements made by Major Hunter with the Jibuti Abubuker, Habr Awal, and Gadabursi clans and tribes. This was a matter of irrefutable fact ; moreover, the British agreements had been officially communicated to the French Consul on the spot and also had been deposited at Berlin. The French Consul at Zeila maintained that the signatories of the British Agreements were made by insignificant akils and notables, whereas the recently dated agreements made with France had been

signed by well-known influential representatives of the Jibril Alriker and Gadabuin tribes. No doubt these French agreements could not have been legally recognized in Berlin; Major Hunter, however, did not desire them to be discussed at all, for fear that the French contention, although ridiculous, might be viewed as grounds for some slight set-off to the detriment of the British claims.

I desire to make it perfectly clear that the French Government, its civil, military, and naval authorities, and the public opinion of France are just as honourable and as strongly opposed to the slave trade as H.B.M.'s Government and all classes in the United Kingdom. It appears, however, that in some parts of Africa, where there are only a few French merchants conducting legitimate mercantile business, the only obtainable allies of France are those carrying on illegitimate trades. As an instance I point to the Abubuker family; they hate the British and aid the French, because of their hostility to the English policy of opposing the traffic in slaves and firearms. And without this group of men France would have no allies at all in Zeila.

Abubuker Pasha was a Dunkali chief of importance and the possessor of large private means. He had been Governor of Zeila for Egypt; while his son, Boorhan, had been Deputy-Governor of Zeila, and later was the Assistant-Governor of the French port of Jibuti. Both father and son were removed from Zeila when that Pashalic (except for a small portion seized by the French) passed under the administration of a British officer.

Every member of the Abubuker family was engaged in slave dealing; and some of them organized on the Coast bands of Arab riflemen to attack villages in the far interior for the purpose of capturing children to sell as slaves. The whole Abubuker family hated me personally, because since 1874 I had drawn attention to the cruelty of their wicked traffic; and they were greatly perturbed by my coming into power at Zeila. The "lid was put on" their animosity towards me when they learnt I had suggested to Sir Evelyn Baring that he should send me on a special mission to the Negus, King of Kings of Ethiopia, to try to

secure the stopping, at source, of the catching of slaves on and beyond the confines of Abyssinia. Sir Evelyn Baring decided to appoint me to carry out my suggestion, and at his request I prepared a report and map on the subject, which were printed by H.B.M.'s Foreign Office in London.

Boorhan Abubuker, therefore, persuaded the French Consuls that my mere presence in Abyssinia would be detrimental to French interests and trade, and thus gave the French another reason for attempting to bring about by official pressure my removal from Zeila.

I actually returned to Zeila, *en route* for Abyssinia; but my mission was impeded by cattle disease, cholera, and smallpox, and I remained eleven months in Zeila imprisoned by quarantine regulations. Later on, however, two Italians of importance in the diplomatic world, Count Antonelli and Cavalieri Casure Nerazzini, shared my internment. A Mr. Zimmerman, a Swiss mechanic in the service of the Abyssinian King Menelik, was also my guest for over six weeks. We became very intimate together, and Zimmerman promised to aid my mission by using his influence with King Menelik on my behalf. Mr. Zimmerman hated Frenchmen, Italians, and Germans, but took credit for his relations with me—his sole English friend.

I never actually met Ras Makunen, a nephew of King Menelik, and the latter's Governor of Harar, but I had got on very intimate terms with the royal nephew, and rendered him considerable commercial assistance and advice. Makunen's agent at Zeila practically lived at the B.M.'s Consulate during the trading season, and had been instructed to consult me on all business matters. Makunen complained that the European buyers of ivory, both in Harar and at Jibuti, never paid him a fair price for the ivory he sold to them, and that if he employed one of them to ship ivory for sale at Marseilles or Trieste their charges swallowed up the value of a consignment. He admitted a slightly more generous treatment from the Jew, the native of India, the British subject, and the merchants of Aden and Bombay, but he also considered their prices inadequate. I had no personal knowledge of



the price of ivory in Bombay and at Liverpool, but I arranged to obtain a weekly telegraphic quotation, by which means Ras Makunen had the prevailing market rates up to within ten or twelve days of my advice being despatched to him. The Europeans at Jibuti were astounded at Ras Makunen's market information; but nearly a year elapsed before my action in this matter became known, and it did not add to my popularity!

Ras Makunen had frequently desired me to visit Harar and Abyssinia. And in order to facilitate my journey to those places he asked King Menelik to present me with a very handsome and unique armlet, which entitled the wearer to travel without hindrance and to be provided with free transport, guides, coolies, and food. As, however, this armlet was a personal present to me, I could not accept it without the specific sanction of Government. The latter therefore ordered (in a Government Resolution, No. 6772 of the Political Department, dated 12th October, 1885) "that if Mr. Walsh desired to retain the armlet, its value should be assessed and the money paid by Mr. Walsh to the Treasury". I still possess this article, and keep it on view in my drawing-room.

One night when I was at dinner in H.B.M.'s Consulate at Zeila my butler placed in my hands a Remington rifle cartridge-case, from which the bullet had been withdrawn and reinserted with its base outward. A bullet so treated indicated that a police post or party had been successfully attacked and most of its members killed.

I directed that the bearer be admitted at once. He turned out to be a wounded Somali police-constable, who had been struck in the palm of his right hand by a bullet, and had also received a sword-cut on the left shoulder. This plucky man, although terribly exhausted, hung on to his rifle; and while waiting to have his wounds attended to by the hospital assistant, he narrated that at Hensa (where it had encamped under a guard of five regular police and five Biladiehs) a large caravan had been attacked by a strong band of Gadabursi spearmen, several of whom were in possession of rifles. The Havildar had therefore sent a reliable messenger to acquaint me of the disaster,

and to obtain an immediate reinforcement. Hensa is about 55 miles from Zeila, and there is only one well between those two places. The police, it appeared, had been driven off with three casualties; two Europeans were killed and two wounded; while some twenty-five Arab and Somali traders had been either killed or wounded. The Gadabursi had in effect captured the whole caravan, but they could not remove their spoil under the accurate rifle-fire directed by the Havildar, who was endeavouring to retake the specie.

The hot-weather season having set in, there was no transport of any kind at Zeila. Indeed, my riding-camel and a horse belonging to an Arab elephant-hunter were the only quadrupeds in the town. We started, nevertheless, without delay, hoping to pick up the well-sinking party at Dadab, forty miles from Zeila. This party consisted of seven Indian sappers, five police, and a party of Arab coolies. I had ordered the return of this detachment, as the total absence of water necessitated the cessation of work, and the party might have started before I could reach Dadab.

As it happened, we did meet the well-diggers, and the Gadabursi were finally driven off.

The digging of wells is generally regarded as a commendable act, and one very acceptable to the inhabitants. I was anxious to get a permanent supply of drinking-water half-way between Warabode and Hensa, and for that purpose I obtained the services of an Indian-trained sapper. We sank a shaft twenty feet deep, by seven feet in diameter, and then fixed into it an Abyssinian tube well, which had to be screwed or hammered into the ground. This, however, worked badly, and at forty feet there was no sign of water. I therefore removed the apparatus and sank the shaft down to nearly sixty feet, where the indications were a little more hopeful. My operations were then suddenly stopped by a telegram, from which I gathered that the Italian Government (at the instance of King Menelik, and also, I think, of Ras Makunen, Abyssinian Governor at Harar) demanded a cessation of the search for water at Dadab. It transpired that the Negus

feared if water was found at Dadab the invasion of Abyssinia by the British would be an easy matter.

The clans residing outside Zeila also protested against a well at Dadab, on the ground that if it provided water mounted cattle-raiders could carry off live stock with impunity, whereas under existing circumstances the horses of the raiders were exhausted before they could reach the grazing-grounds on the plain. The well-shaft at Dadab was therefore abandoned, and the project given up. Some years later the skeleton of a lion was found at the bottom of this pit, into which the "king of beasts" must have accidentally fallen.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE BAITING OF THE BLACK AYSA UGHAZ

SOME fifteen years ago I related to Edith Nepean, the well-known Welsh novelist, the story of how the Ughaz (King) of the Black Aysa was induced by strategy to visit Zeila against his personal will and wishes. She wrote an account of this amusing incident, which I append below *in extenso*. Needless to say, the "gallant Political Officer" described in Edith Nepean's story refers to my humble self.

#### "THE BAITING OF THE BLACK AYSA UGHAZ"

EARLY one morning, when brilliant Eastern sunshine cast a mantle of shimmering gold over the white houses of the town, the Representative of Her Britannic Majesty and of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt at Zeila was lying half asleep on his bed on the flat roof of the Consulate. The Consulate was a square, roomy building, with a shady den overlooking the blue waters which separated the Somali Coast from Aden.

The officer's Arab orderly cried out: "Saadatuk, a steamer on the horizon!"

The officer opened his eyes with a start, and yawned and stretched himself somewhat regretfully before he jumped up. Seizing his field-glass, he gazed seawards for some seconds in thoughtful silence, then, turning to his Arab attendant, he said:

"Go to the signalman as quickly as possible. Ascertain through the large telescope the colours displayed by the vessel."

The man, saluting, went off noiselessly to obey orders, and his master once again turned his attention seaward, until he caught sight of a blue flag.

"An Indian Government steamer!" he exclaimed. With a suspicion of a smile he laid his field-glass aside. He was pleased at his discovery. To a lonely man isolated from his countrymen, a visit from a Government steamer was likely to be of importance; and it would certainly prove entertaining, if there were ladies on board! Frequently the officer's chief extended this courtesy to the fair sex. They were usually the wives of soldiers from the garrison at Aden, who were glad enough to get away from the heat of an extinct volcano. They eagerly jumped at the prospect of a sea-trip round the Gulf of Aden in the Government steamer. But even if that pleasing prospect was denied to this man waiting for developments, there would undoubtedly be news from home, and interesting tidbits of gossip to while away an hour or two. In a tolerably good humour with the world and himself in particular, therefore, the officer called out to his butler:

"Robelai, my uniform. I shall not want breakfast, but tell the cook to prepare lunch for eleven guests."

He gave his orders for "lunch for eleven" with no misgivings; the well-trained domestics of the higher Indian official are the most perfect servants in the world, able to cook and improvise a feast for any number of persons at a moment's notice.

Robelai salaamed, with features as immobile as those of the Sphinx. Then, turning to his servant, the British officer directed the Residency barge to be held in readiness, and not long afterwards he was pulling off towards the steamer, which had then anchored in the harbour, about a mile away from the landing-stage.

Robelai, the butler, watched the departure of his master with interest, and then went off in search of the cook. It may here be mentioned that there was never any love lost between those two important personages.

"The sahib orders me to have lunch for eleven, O Master of Cooks!" he remarked laconically. "Take care to obey."

"Eleven!" exclaimed the cook, with raised hands. "Why, we have not got anything in the larder—there is

not even bread enough for so many. How can we provide out of nothing?"

"Well," retorted Robelai, secretly enjoying the cook's consternation, and desirous of showing off his superiority, "we have plenty of tinned provisions."

"No doubt," grunted the cook, suddenly roused to action; "but if we only supply tinned food for our lord sahib and his friends, I foresee that there will be a row."

This observation was intended as a snub for the butler, the cook having quickly determined to show his rival that he was not necessarily the only person equal to such an emergency. The cook went on:

"Why not send those idle policemen to go and shoot some game and catch some fish? There are still some hours before the sahib returns," he added, with a sly glance at the other man.

Robelai was forced to admit the wisdom of this course, and, taking the hint, he rushed off, to return in a few minutes with a couple of fowling-pieces and a supply of cartridges. He then hunted out the "Bobbies" known to be possessed of sporting instincts, and begged them to hurry away and shoot a hare or two, a sand-grouse if possible, or anything indeed that they came across. The cook, meanwhile, now thoroughly on his mettle, marched off to the bazaar to purchase a sheep and some fowls, and on his way used his persuasive powers with some idlers to go fishing for the Governor's table. Thus, by the joint efforts of the Residency staff, a substantial, if not an altogether *recherché*, lunch was soon being prepared for the expected guests.

By this time the British officer was alongside the vessel, and at once ascended the ladder. On reaching the deck, he found several men walking about in pyjamas and sleeping-kit.

"Good morning," a tall, handsome, soldierly-looking man called out genially. "Glad to see you. I got your letter about the Aysa King, and I have come to talk matters over with you." And the next moment the officer's hand was warmly grasped by his Chief. "Your news is of great importance," the latter exclaimed, "and we must try to avoid a slap in the face."



The letter which necessitated the despatch of an Indian steamer to the African coast referred to the new king of the Black Aysa, the nominal ruler of one of the most fanatical and warlike tribes in North-east Africa. The men of this tribe were not supposed to marry until they could wear in their hair a feather which denoted that the wearer had killed an enemy. The old king of the Aysa having just died, his son was to have his head shaved under a certain historical tree. This operation had to be performed in recognition of his succession to the rank, dignity, and authority of his forefathers. The ceremonial tree was situated at a point in the interior about equi-distant from the British port of Zeila and the then newly opened French port of Jibuti. Zeila was a Turkish Pashalic leased to Egypt, and at the time of this story it was administered by the British Government on behalf of His Highness the Khedive. Now Zeila had always been used as the route by which Egyptian garrisons occupied the towns of the Eastern Mudirieh of the Sudan. And it had been the custom of the Black Aysa to dominate the caravan road from Zeila to Harar, the headquarters of the Province, attacking and pillaging caravans not strong enough to resist them. The policy of the rulers of Zeila in the past had been to subsidize the Aysa. It was therefore usual for a newly appointed Ughaz to pay his respects first of all to the Governor of Zeila, who on his side was always anxious to propitiate the King of the Black Aysa, in the hope that he would restrain his clansmen from molesting all caravans on the Zeila-Harar road. The advent of the French on the coast at Jibuti had considerably altered the position of affairs, however, as Zeila was no longer the sole outlet for sea-borne trade. And the chief French native allies, the Abubuker family, desired the Ughaz to go to Jibuti before visiting Zeila—as a slap in the face to the British.

“Before we seriously get to business,” the Chief Political Officer said to his Assistant, “you had better stop to breakfast.”

“Very kind of you,” laughed the British Representative. “I have already invited myself!”

It was a lively breakfast-party, and the Government-vessel had seldom been put to a happier use. The stories related were crisp, and the conversation interesting. The ladies on board were pleasant in manner and appearance, and were in high spirits at the prospect of a tour through the little white town, with its narrow winding streets, its native shops, and the curious customs and garments of its population. They also glanced with admiration at the stalwart, powerful man who represented British rule at Zeila—the only Englishman in the place. Perchance they dimly realized the tact and patience, the dogged pluck and endurance, required for the occupation of such a responsible position. At any rate, at breakfast that morning the British officer in question was the recipient of many alluring smiles.

"You must all come to lunch with me," he insisted, as the party was about to break up; and his invitation was accepted with zest. "While the visitors are sightseeing," he added, turning to his chief, "we can talk matters over, sir."

Soon afterwards the rest of the party left the vessel in the steamer's launch. On landing, the ladies and some officers from the Aden garrison went off gaily to saunter round the bazaars, bent on learning all that there was to be learned at this outpost of the British Empire.

The local officer and his chief meanwhile sought the solitude of the little writing-room, which led out of the main dining-room of the Consulate. They settled down at once to discuss the main difficulties of the situation, and to study the map of the Black Aysa country and its proximity to the French Settlement at Jibuti.

"Well, I am anxious to hear your plans," the Chief exclaimed. And, choosing a comfortable chair, he carefully lit a big cigar, which seemed to afford him not a little satisfaction. "It's an unequal game for you," he added, with a sharp glance at his assistant.

"I have already weighed the pros and cons," the latter replied, "and it seems to me that this sable potentate desires to put his visit up to auction. I have, however, no local funds available."



"Which," the Chief intervened, "looks very much as if you must dismiss all ideas of getting this rascal into Zeila. By the by, what are his terms?"

"Well, sir," the Assistant remarked gravely, "he asks two thousand dollars. But he would probably be glad to get a thousand dollars clear, if I undertook to feed his mob of followers. His visit here would in that case cost three thousand dollars—nearly seven thousand rupees, at the least. The emissary of the King of the Black Aysa, I may say, made himself very clear on that subject. And the amount, furthermore, ought to be paid in lead, and not in silver. On the other hand, if the payment is refused, the King will at once pay his respects and make obeisance to the French Governor, and incidentally obtain a large sum in cash in return. He will act in that way for the express purpose of insulting the British, and thus show the other tribes and travellers that he can afford to offend us. Moreover, he is quite powerful enough to protect travellers visiting Jibuti, instead of trading through Zeila."

"As I have already said," the Chief grunted, "you have an unequal game to play. I have also discovered that the French have set great importance upon receiving the first visit of this potentate."

"Then, sir, you also see the object!" the Assistant continued grimly. "It is to lessen the prestige of the British by placing them in a secondary position before the Somalis, and it is my duty to prevent that indignity."

The Chief made no answer for the moment, as he placidly pulled away at his cigar. He was a personage whose position did not permit of giving way to sentiment, but he was genuinely sorry for the man facing him. Every word uttered by the latter had but added to his own impression of the difficulties and obstacles which surrounded his Assistant. Incidentally, the French Government official at Jibuti was a different man from the British officer at Zeila. The former was a man who prided himself upon his European training as a member of the "Corps Diplomatique", but in fact he knew more about the boulevards of Paris and other cities of Europe than he did of the sandy, waterless desert and barren plains of North-east Africa.



The Frenchman, moreover, with the purse of the Republic at his command, and the advice and aid of the Abubuker family, had already proved himself to be a very formidable opponent.

All these disquieting thoughts passed through the Chief Political Officer's mind as he sat reviewing the case. And at length he broke out eagerly :

"At any rate, you have had a great deal of experience. You possess much knowledge of the East, and I should say what you don't know about the ways and ideas of the Somalis is not worth knowing. On the other hand, that French chap at Jibuti has the Treasury of the French Republic at his back, whereas unfortunately neither the Indian nor British Exchequers are behind you. Your expenditure for administering territories under your authority depends, indeed, solely upon the amount of revenue you collect, and so a thousand dollars is out of the question." The Chief did not wish to be disheartening, but he considered that in this case the emphasizing of plain facts was best.

"Exactly," agreed the Assistant. "It is a long way beyond the means of an officer circumstanced as I am. That sum of money represents to me many rifles and much ammunition ; in fact, my resources are quite unequal to pay blackmail to the Aysa chief." He got up from his chair and paced the little room restlessly, rather a favourite trick of his when working out a problem.

"It should be paid by the British or Indian Treasury," the Chief Political Officer broke in emphatically. "Let us see if you can persuade the Foreign Office, or the Indian Government, to give us funds to buy the Ughaz of the Black Aysa."

"No, sir, please don't apply to them," the other man answered with suppressed excitement, pausing abruptly in his restless walk. "It would be bad policy in the end to pay the rascal. It would most likely only stimulate him to make further demands in the future, which would probably mean our losing control over him altogether."

"Well, I see by your manner you do not intend to play

a losing game. What are your plans?" his Chief asked, with a faint smile.

"*I intend to bring the Ughaz, and all his followers, into Zeila by strategy!*" the local officer answered coolly, sitting down again in the easy-chair and anxiously watching the effect of his remark.

"Strategy!" exclaimed the Chief Political Officer, tapping the polished surface of the table at his side impatiently. "I am deeply interested at this idea. Fire away with your scheme!"

"I have been, as you know, many years on this coast, sir," his Assistant thereupon explained, "and I have discovered that nearly all Somalis can be attracted by their bellies. Moreover, of all the tribes the Black Aysa are the most hungry and greedy for food. I expect that you are fully aware of how little real power the Somali chief has over his clan? Well, I believe that if food was placed in one spot, and the Ughaz wanted to go somewhere else, *where there was no food*, the rabble accompanying him would make for the food, whether the Ughaz liked it or not. In fact, he would be entirely unable to prevent them from going; neither his power nor authority would be sufficient to keep his men away from such an attraction as a good feed."

The Chief laughed heartily. "I quite agree with you, but I don't see how that helps the present case."

"Why, don't you understand, sir?" exclaimed his Assistant. "If I prepare a feast for the Ughaz and his men at the Ughaz tree, where the ceremony of shaving his head takes place, and thus give them a taste of the culinary arts of the Zeila Residency staff, and I then prepare a similar feast at a halting-place on the road to Zeila, I am certain that half of the starved rabble who accompany the Ughaz would, to a man, go in that direction, no matter how much the Ughaz desired to take his men to Jibuti. A visit of the Ughaz would be of no value to the French if he arrived there unaccompanied by his clansmen. It would only show that, while he might personally be desirous of the friendship of France and the Abubuker family yet his followers harbour friendly relations with

the British. Moreover, custom counts for a good deal; the Aysa have always been in the habit of dealing with Zeila, and Jibuti is a new place, with which they have had no past connection. I propose, therefore, to *bait* the wells between the Ughaz tree and Zeila, and I guarantee that I shall draw every man from bait to bait and into Zeila."

"Splendid indeed!" his Chief admitted, with admiration. "Let us look at the map."

A sketch of the Black Aysa country was hastily consulted, and the British officer traced the proposed route with one of his fingers.

"You see, I have thought it all out, sir, and have marked the places where the food could be conveniently placed. I am convinced that the scheme could be carried through without much difficulty. Of course, feeding the multitude will be costly; but then, if the Ughaz came to Zeila we should have had the rabble to feed in any case, in addition to our having to give him presents in cash. My idea is to spend the money on feeding the rabble, which will gain us popularity, and not to pay the Ughaz in any form. I will, instead, formally present him with a sword of honour when he arrives here. His public acceptance of the latter will enable us to retain all the prestige we have hitherto enjoyed. Our French friends and Boorhan Abubuker will be disappointed, but they will save their shekels."

"I think so well of your plan that I cordially agree to its being carried out," the Chief Political Officer exclaimed with enthusiasm.

"In that case, perhaps you will let me have a suitable presentation sword from the Coast gift-store."

"Very good," his Chief approvingly responded. "At the same time you must look out, you know. I suppose you fully realize that you will make the Ughaz infernally angry and hostile to you personally."

"Yes," smiled the Assistant; "but I don't think that he will dare to show it. You must remember that if we gave him a cash present he would have to share a considerable part of it among his followers. In this case, his rabble



will have had several good feeds. They are quite cute enough to perceive that this is much better for each of them than the two or three annas at most which they might, or might not, receive from the Ughaz. In other words, the old proverb explains their probable point of view: 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'"

"What a lark!" cried the Chief. "I should like to see the fun!"

"Come over," laughed his Assistant, as he led the way into the dining-room.

A few minutes earlier the rest of the party had arrived at the Consulate. The women were amused at their adventures in the bazaars, and perhaps a little tired; the men quite ready to partake of the lunch which Robelai and the cook (to say nothing of the "lazy policemen" with sporting instincts, and the hangers-on) had so skilfully prepared. . . .

At length the day of days dawned. Outwardly, the British Officer at Zeila betrayed no signs of anxiety. Tall, masterful, alert, he showed little concern for the fate of his scheme for bringing the Aysa king and his black hordes into Zeila. As he calmly gave orders for all preparations to be made, there might not have been the slightest possibility of the failure of his daring scheme.

Meanwhile, far away across the sun-baked Dunkali plains, the Black Aysa king with his adherents drew near the historical Ughaz tree, where the leader's head was to be shaved, so that he became the acknowledged chief of his tribe. The sun beat down mercilessly on those hundreds of half-clad human beings. It played upon their spears; also upon the barren earth, seemingly only productive of stones, with no promise of verdure under its forbidding surface, and yet, when rain should come, green blades of grass would generously spring forth, as if touched by some magic wand.

As the Black Aysa advanced nearer to their goal a rumour spread like wild-fire through their weary and half-starved ranks. The rumour concerned the promise of food. Food! How they yearned and craved for it! And their desire for immediate sustenance swiftly

mounted, until it had become a dominating passion, only to be appreciated to the full by those who had suffered from the cruel pangs of hunger in its most diabolical form. A savoury smell, moreover, presently whetted the savages' appetites, and at last they found that the rumour was no tissue of idle lies. Rich food in great quantities was awaiting their arrival at the Ughaz tree!

The Black Aysa in a trice went wild with excitement. The Ughaz, like some masterpiece in bronze, looked on in bewilderment. Little thought did the Black Aysa give to philosophical reflection. They wasted no time, but fell ravenously upon the good things with which it seemed "the gods" had provided them. Never had they known such a feast! Their cruel, beadlike eyes sparkled with greed as they voraciously and gluttonously devoured the rice and dates, the sheep and *ghee* (clarified butter). While, what was more, the wily British Officer had not forgotten to tell his native police, moving casually among the black hordes, to drop word of a similar feast waiting a little farther along the road. "There will be more food like this at the next well, fifteen miles on the road to Zeila!" The meaning sank deep, and later bore fruit. More food! More food on the road to Zeila!

But it was certainly not the intention of the Black Aysa Ughaz to go fifteen miles further away from Jibuti. It was his resolve to go straight from the Ughaz tree to his destination, and his followers with him, as was so much desired by the French and Boorhan. But when the Ughaz gave orders for the direct march to Jibuti, his followers listened sullenly and made no attempt to go in that direction. For the famished savages of the desert, Jibuti had no charms; on the other hand, the culinary prospects at the next well on the road to Zeila drew them like a magnet. And suddenly a cold chill of fear descended upon the Ughaz. "Was the British Officer at Zeila too strong and artful for him after all?" Mad with anger, and eagerly desirous of carrying out his contract with the Boorhan for the gift of money promised him, the Ughaz vainly begged and implored his men to accompany him to Jibuti. In the end,



therefore, he was compelled to follow the spears of his own adherents.

On reaching the next well, there was great rejoicing, and more feasting and dancing. The blatant boom of the *tabl* and the wild war song of the Aysa rang out into the air. The Ughaz meanwhile knew growing anger and resentment, and, noting his followers' gluttony and delirious raptures, he became more and more determined that they should accompany him to Jibuti.

But the Officer at Zeila was again too clever; he had been careful to cause it to be known that yet another feast had been prepared for the Black Esa at the next well in the direction of Zeila. Whereupon, roused to frenzy, the Ughaz by turn beseeched, threatened, and cajoled his adherents, but once more entirely without effect—the motley rabble preferred the certainty of a third feast to the certainty of no food at all on the way to the French port. And with intense bitterness of heart the Ughaz found himself again obliged to follow the direction taken by his hungry mob, moving on still further away from Jibuti, and nearer the white houses of the English port.

For some time, calmly smoking a cigar on the roof of his house, the British Officer had been looking intently across the torrid plains for the dark quivering line which at length appeared on the horizon. At sight of that line, he drew one long breath of satisfaction. He had received a human signal that his dream had come true. The bait had been swallowed, and with marvellous self-control the officer watched and waited as the black line drew nearer. His features were placid, but there was something strangely alert and brilliant in his blue eyes. It accentuated the determination of the somewhat heavy jaw, the only indication of emotion displayed by a strong man at the fruition of his plans. *He had won!*

Nearer and nearer they came, those fanatical savages in their hundreds. They came in all their nakedness and barbarism, long straggling ropes of hair, falling limply on their ebony shoulders, emphasizing the wildness of their appearance. By the brain of a single white man



that unkempt, dangerous horde of humanity had been drawn from the very heart of the desert.

The yellow sand seemed to palpitate under their sinewy feet as the Black Aysa advanced steadily towards that calm figure waiting so patiently. From time to time they executed a wild war-dance, but always moving onward. And in their midst, bareheaded but shaded from the fierce glare of the sun by a large white umbrella, rode the Ughaz. Without showing a trace of anxiety, the British Officer slowly went to meet them. He wore no resplendent uniform to mark his elation at the successful consummation of his scheme, yet there was something strangely dignified and impressive in his bearing. For here, indeed, was a man !

The Ughaz of the Black Aysa approached the Officer, and the British Representative handed him a sword, the scabbard of which was sheathed in green velvet. Then, in a low voice quivering with deep, triumphant emotion, the Officer half whispered : "You dog ! I've brought you to heel !"

. . . . .

I did not officially receive the Black Aysa Ughaz at the Residency, but had him properly fed and entertained at the police station adjoining the main entrance to the town.

One of the Zeila stipendiary Akils was a Black Aysa by birth, and claimed to be the lineal descendant of the senior branch of the Ughaz family. He should therefore rightfully have been the present Ughaz. He had, however, never resided with his tribe, and, having been engaged in trade at Zeila all his life, he had never claimed his birthright.

I said to this Akil : "You know how the Ughaz, at the instance of Boorhan Abubuker, the former Deputy Governor of Zeila and now the Assistant Governor of Jibuti, has endeavoured to divert the Harar caravans from entering Zeila, and has directed them instead to go to Jibuti. I have for the present frustrated that scheme, and have shown the Ughaz that the British Governor of Zeila exercises more influence over the members of the Black Aysa clans than the Ughaz himself. I want, however, to frighten the

Ughaz further, and propose that you should help me. This you will do by meeting him at the Residency at eight p.m. to-night, when I will introduce you as the salaried Black Aysa representative on my staff, at the same time explaining who you are."

I accordingly sent for the Ughaz, and seated him on a chair in my office. I then proceeded, in the presence of the Black Aysa Akil, to say :

"Zeila is a Pashalic belonging to the Commander of the Faithful, and is leased by His Majesty the Sultan of Turkey to his Highness the Khedive of Egypt. The latter, with the knowledge and consent of his Suzerain, has placed the British in charge of Zeila. Now you have ignored the over-lordship of the Porte, and have attempted to injure the trade of Zeila ; moreover, you have been actually rude to, and intrigued against, the British Raj. Your people, however, were opposed to your attempts to aid the French and Boorhan Effendi against Zeila, and have assembled here in crowds to render homage to the British. It is consequently clear that they prefer obtaining the support of the British Representative at Zeila to obeying you. If, therefore, you create further trouble likely to damage the trade of Zeila, I shall consider it my duty to oust you from your position as Ughaz, and I know that your present adherents will then abandon you."

I thought that I had really frightened the Ughaz ; at any rate, I made him "think furiously" by my remarks. He finally left me in a humble frame of mind, and promised to be loyal in the future. To that I replied : "If in a couple of years you show your obedience and allegiance, I will restore you to favour."

Major Hunter having gone to Europe on furlough, he had been succeeded by Colonel E. V. Stace, C.B.—my present chief. The latter was most eulogistic over my treatment of the Ughaz, and volunteered personally to bring my services to the official notice of the Foreign Office. Colonel Stace also proposed to notify in that respect Sir Evelyn Baring at Cairo, and to suggest to him that I should receive some recognition in the form of a decoration. The Companionship of the Most Eminent Order of the

Indian Empire was later bestowed on me, but I had been recommended to the Foreign Office for the British Decoration of a Companionship of St. Michael and St. George. This latter, however, I did not receive, as ill health necessitated my departure from Zeila.

Colonel Stace observed: "Your good services at Berbera, notwithstanding the efforts of General Hogg and Lt.-Colonel F. M. Hunter, could not be recognized or rewarded by the British Foreign Office, as your work then did not fall under the supervision of the latter authority. But now that you are at Zeila, all duties will in future be performed under the auspices of the Foreign Office and Her Majesty's Representative at Cairo. Your work will therefore necessarily attract their attention, and I will on every opportunity press your claims on them, as will also General Hogg, the Resident at Aden.

Mr. Walter B. Harris, the famous traveller in many Arab lands, happened to be passing through Zeila on the day the Ughaz came into the town. Some years later Mr. Harris wrote in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for December 1894, an account of the visit of the Ughaz to Zeila. He did not at the actual time know the reason for the chief of the Black Aysa coming to Zeila, attended by a large number of his tribesmen, and of course he could not, for political reasons, have been given that information.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### I RETURN ONCE MORE TO ZEILA AND RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL DEPUTATION

I RETURNED from leave in Europe to Aden to fill the post of Second Assistant Resident, and I did not expect to be switched off to Zeila again. However, my chief, Colonel E. V. Stace, C.B., with whom I was stopping, told me : "There are a few delicate matters requiring judicious and tactful handling, and, as you alone possess the requisite knowledge, it is necessary to send you to Zeila to deal with them. The French on the coast will be greatly annoyed by your resuming charge of your former office. Monsieur Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, has already said in allusion to you that '*un officier subalterne*' should not be permitted to create difficulties between the two friendly Governments of France and Great Britain." Colonel Stace observed that, as far as he could judge, I had been accused of having committed every sin and crime in the decalogue !

In support of some of these ridiculous charges my own letters to the French Government of Jibuti were quoted against me. For instance, a small Dunkali chief, who alleged that he had been ill-treated by the French at the instigation of Boorhan Abubuker, came to tell me that he had arranged to make a surprise attack upon Jibuti. He proposed to burn and sack the town, and to compel the Europeans in it to seek safety on board their ships in the harbour. This rascal desired to sell in Zeila the loot he might capture, and to ship some of it to the Aden market. If I would accede to these latter requests, he suggested he should secretly give me (as was customary under an Egyptian governor) half the proceeds of the sale of his ill-gotten goods. I naturally refused his suggestion, and I told him plainly that if he attacked the French I would do

all in my power to arrest him if he came into British territory. He departed, and it seemed to me that he was merely bouncing, and would not actually molest the French. Nevertheless, as a matter of prudence, I at once sent a warning letter by mounted messenger to the French officer at Jibuti, and advised him to take immediate steps to resist any attack. I received no reply to my neighbourly warning, which was regarded as nonsense and totally ignored. Two days later Jibuti was partially burnt and pillaged, no proper preparation having been made for its defence. This unfortunate letter of mine was urged as evidence that I had incited and helped in planning this raid on the French settlement, on the ground that the free port at Jibuti was injurious to the trade of Zeila.

It also appeared that I had sent the Zeila police into French territory to recapture live stock lifted by Black Aysa and Dunkali robbers from British limits, instead of having these depredations dealt with by the French authorities. It was further alleged that Somalis residing on the British side of the frontier were allowed, if not indeed encouraged, to raid over the French boundary; and that I had frequently arrested and disarmed *protégés-français* Somalis, ignoring their rights, privileges, and status under the capitulations. Monsieur Gaspari, the French Consul at Aden, who was my personal and intimate friend, told Colonel Stace to drop to me that the chief cause of the French enmity and resentment against me in Somaliland was owing to my having placed the various French Consuls at Zeila in ridiculous positions, and also because I had frustrated their schemes to thwart British power and lessen British influence in the interior. Colonel Stace said to me: "No doubt you have read the reports, printed by the British Foreign Office, recounting your many iniquities. On the other hand, you should regard the defence officially made of your actions and the remarks by two of Her Majesty's Ministers as a very complimentary sign of their appreciation of your good and useful services in Somaliland."

Colonel Stace one day handed me two letters addressed to him by a Lady Delamere. These letters stated that her



son and a party of friends were going through Zeila on a shooting expedition into Somaliland, under the auspices of a Captain Palgrave Turner. Lady Delamere begged to be kept constantly advised as to the health and whereabouts of her son. Colonel Stace had replied that her letters had been forwarded to Mr. Prendergast Walsh, the British Officer at Zeila, who would attend to her ladyship's requests and do all in his power to assist her son. It so happened that Lord Delamere and his party crossed over from Aden to Zeila in the same steamer as myself, but we actually first met in Colonel Stace's office at Aden.

I had been introduced by the squire of Thorneycroft Hall, near Macclesfield, to a near relative of Lord Delamere, and she told me that his lordship had failed at the recent examination to obtain a commission in the Army, and contemplated settling in Africa, as he could not live in England on his private income. I now learned that Lord Delamere, in addition to his shooting-tour in Somaliland, was on the look-out for a desirable spot in that country in which to settle. I liked what I saw of Lord Delamere at Aden, and proposed to Colonel Stace that he should be invited to plant himself near Hargeisa. I suggested he might there prospect for gold, select a suitable area for the cultivation of long-stapled cotton, and collect aloes (from the dried shreds of which a strong rope, resembling Manilla cordage, could be made, and which fetched a good price). Colonel Stace agreed that Lord Delamere, although poor, would be a very eligible "settler", and would, moreover, help to open out the country. His lordship had therefore a good look all round, but was not tempted to pitch his tent in Somaliland, and went to the East Coast. The East Coast was formerly called I.B.E.A. (Imperial British East Africa Company's Concession), and was under Sir William Mackinnon. It did not succeed, however, and the Province was taken over by the British Government; it is now part of Kenya Colony. There Lord Delamere settled permanently, and gained a well-merited reputation as a pioneer of British enterprise.

Sir William Mackinnon desired to employ in I.B.E.A. an Arabic-speaking officer with experience in dealing with



Arabs and with natives of North-east and East Africa. Sir William came, therefore, to Aden (where Major Hunter was First Assistant Political Resident, and temporarily Acting Resident) and offered Major Hunter the Governorship of Mombasa at £2,000 per annum. Major Hunter declined, however, Sir William's offer, chiefly because acceptance would involve his taking his first pension of £250 from the Indian Government. The Captain-Assistant and Cantonment Magistrate of Aden was then proffered the post, on a yearly salary of £1,200, rising to £1,500; but he also refused. Sir William then approached me with the same proposal of £1,000 rising to £1,200 per annum. At that time I had put in nearly ten years' service, and I anticipated being kicked out of the Indian Political Department, in which I was then serving as Acting Second Assistant Resident at Aden. In these circumstances I was not unwilling to accept Sir William's offer, but I stipulated that £1,000 should be lodged with a bank of repute, and the income arising from the investment of that sum paid to me for life if I was invalided on account of ill-health or on completion of fifteen years' active service. Sir William, however, declined to grant these terms, and later I was sorry for having refused his offer. In effect, when the I.B.E.A. Charter was surrendered, and the country was taken over by the British Government, had I been Governor of Mombasa, I should as a matter of routine have become the First Commissioner of East Africa, and eventually have risen to Governor of British East Africa under the Colonial Office.

Definite orders had been sent to me at Zeila that the Native Infantry Detachment was not to be moved more than one mile inland from the town. I did not and could not obey those instructions, as the water-wells on which the inhabitants were entirely dependent were situated at Takusha, in the bed of a watercourse rather over three miles distant from the town, and a large number of camels were usually grazed in that vicinity.

One morning the Havildar in charge of the police guard at the wells sent into H.B.M.'s Consulate to ask for immediate reinforcements, as he was being attacked by a band

of Black Aysa horsemen, supported by several hundred of their foot spears. The Subadar was ordered to march one strong company on Takusha, and the Police Mulazim was instructed to call up all the available Polic Biladieh riflemen, together with Friendlies who possessed their own rifles. A position was then to be taken up on the right of, and in line with, the Native Infantry. By this arrangement a force of one hundred and thirty-five reliable men was assembled, and with it I hoped to attack and punish our assailants.

I mounted my camel, with my armed Arab attendant behind me in the second seat, and my repeating rifle in its bucket. Since, however, shooting at long ranges was probable, I also took a Martini Henri rifle from the Office arms-rack with me. In order to shorten the distance to be covered I took advantage of the low tide to cut off a corner by riding over the soft mud. Now camels have pads, and consequently they slide about all over a slippery surface. On this occasion my animal frequently floundered on to his knees, and so made my progress slower than if I had gone by the ordinary track. With one of these stumbles the muzzle of my long Service rifle dipped without my knowing it into the wet mud, some of which penetrated inside the barrel.

I reached the spot from which the Havildar was firing at long range at the enemy spears, who were employed in rounding up the town and caravan camels so that they could be driven off by their mounted brethren. And, at once dismounting, I opened with my Martini rifle at a mounted leader, who was directing operations. To my bewilderment, then, the barrel of my weapon burst at the foreband and turned its ends towards me for inspection! I had certainly a very lucky escape, as my arms would have been blown off if the barrel had burst nearer to the breech-piece. This rifle, incidentally, had been drawn from the Arsenal at Aden, and the Ordnance Officer held me responsible for its value, on the grounds that it was not part of my equipment and I had therefore no right to use it.

I may mention that the raiders were driven off with the loss of a few horses and three men killed. For our part,

we had no casualties, and had succeeded in saving all our live stock. Our success was undoubtedly attributable to the initial and gallant efforts of the Havildar, also the speedy way in which he had been reinforced by some of my best police marksmen, who effectually taught the Black Aysa to remain at a respectful distance.

A day or two later, near to the scene of the foregoing raid, a Turk was murdered by a man who had sought the hospitality of his hut. The Turk was killed by a spear-thrust below his shoulder-blade. I suspected the son of a White Aysa akil as the murderer, it being rumoured that that man had failed to induce a young and good-looking Somalin widow to marry him, she accepting the murdered Turk instead. I was personally acquainted with the individual suspected, and, sending for the Turk's widow, I examined her minutely as to her knowledge of the facts and, circumstances of her husband's death. She admitted that she had not actually witnessed the attack made on her husband, but she said that her former lover had entered the hut, and, after telling her he had freed her from the Turk, had pressed her to fly with him. She refused, and ran off to fetch the police, whereupon the murderer fled.

On arrival of the Police Havildar the Turk's dead body was found close to the hut. He must have been killed instantaneously. The widow seemed to have been fond of her Turkish husband, and she begged me to hang his murderer out of hand; she did not, however, seem to consider that want of evidence was any obstacle to that course. It appeared to me that this Somalin merely sought a husband, and she was quite willing to be the mistress of any well-to-do man. Her only provision was that her associate must be a Moslem or, as she put it, a "Man of the Book" (Koran), which expression generally also includes the Bible. Obviously she had neither religious nor racial prejudices against what, in her eyes, was a suitable mate for her arms. The dead Turk had been a sportsman, and had had many friends in the garrison of Aden. The officers made his hut their base when visiting the plains of Warabode to hunt wild boar.



Lord Harris having been appointed to the governorship of Bombay, he was ordered to visit Zeila on his outward journey. He arrived at Zeila with Colonel Frank Rhodes (a brother of the great Cecil) as his Military Secretary; Mr. Lee Warner, Bo.C.S., C.S.I., Political Secretary to the Bombay Government; General A. G. F. Hogg, C.B., Resident at Aden; and Colonel E. V. Stace, C.B., H.B.M.'s Consul for the Somali Coast.

One day all these gentlemen were seated in the dining-room on the first floor of H.B.M.'s Consulate, discussing local affairs and waiting to receive a deputation of the akils and leading merchants of Zeila. In due course I introduced this latter representative body, whose sole prayer was that the management of the water arrangements might be allowed to remain entirely in the hands of their governor, Wali Walsh Sahib. It was pointed out by them that the Egyptian governors of the town of Zeila had always provided for the safety of the wells at Takusha, and also for the carriage in skins of the water required in the town; and they called attention to the recent successful defence of the water supply by Wali Walsh Sahib, whose skill and prompt action had given the greatest confidence and general satisfaction to all classes.

Colonel Rhodes having made a memorandum of the proceedings, it was to be signed by each of the investigators. In that document no decision or directions were recorded for the future guidance of the British Officer in sole subordinate charge of the Administration of Zeila, and that officer was left to carry out his own devices, as he had hitherto done, without any outside interference. General Hogg and Colonel Stace, however, before signing the memorandum, added to it their individual testimony to the efficient services rendered by Mr. L. Prendergast Walsh at Zeila and elsewhere in Somaliland, and desired that their evidence should be submitted for the consideration of the Bombay Government and the Foreign Office authorities in London and Cairo.

The conference thereupon being over, and there being no more business to transact or to discuss, the party left Zeila for Berbera at about five o'clock in the same Indian

Marine steamer from which they landed. And, left once more alone, I retired to cogitate in my refuge on the roof of H.B.M.'s Consulate.

Before I was in official charge at Zeila, Major Hunter once sent me there to confer with Captain King regarding the proposal of Count Porro, an Italian, to land at Zeila and take from there a small scientific party of Europeans by the ordinary caravan route to Harar. From Harar they intended to start an exploring expedition in the Galla country and on the eastern side of Abyssinia. Major Sir Evelyn Baring, H.B.M.'s Representative at Cairo, had been specifically asked in a demi-official capacity whether Count Porro was to be allowed to enter Somaliland through any British port. Sir Evelyn, however, would not definitely instruct us what course should be adopted, and directed that local circumstances and conditions should guide the British Officer at Zeila as to the best policy. Sir Evelyn said that if it was considered a party of Europeans ran more than the ordinary risks to which all travellers in N.E. Africa were exposed, that danger should be specially pointed out to Count Porro. In any case, it should be clearly stated that the British declined to take any responsibility for his safety inland, where at the time we had no power and very little influence. The Italian Consul was therefore advised of our attitude towards Count Porro's aims and scheme.

The Count and his party dined with the British Officer on the night of their departure, and they were told that according to police reports they were likely to be attacked at a particular spot. The Administrator then pointed out that Count Porro was travelling inland without having engaged a police or Biladieh escort, which was taken and paid for by all travellers and traders using a caravan route. Count Porro at once asked to be allowed to employ an escort as far as Gildesa, and one Havildar, six Regular Constables and four Biladiehs were sent off that night to Warabode, in order to march at daybreak with Count Porro's caravan.

The Count, who was an enormously tall man of about six feet six inches in height, held very curious ideas of



the British policy and methods of ruling in tropical provinces of Africa, and he told me that if he was molested he would tell whoever sought to impede his advance that he was not English. Moreover, in support of what he said, he proposed to show his confidence in the native people by asking any obstructor to his peaceful progress to take care of his rifle. Most unfortunately he then publicly expressed these sentiments and intentions. Before leaving Warabode, therefore, the police Havildar in command of the Count's escort returned to ascertain from me personally whether he was to obey the Italian sahib's orders or to act on his own judgment. I replied that as the rifles belonged to the British Sirkar he was under no circumstances whatever to part with them. The Havildar, greatly relieved by these orders, pityingly remarked that the Italian was mad and not of a fighting race.

Count Porro was stopped by a strong band of mixed Somali clans, and, after voluntarily giving his arms up to them, he ordered the police to do likewise. The Havildar, in accordance with my instructions, refused, insisting that he would retain the weapons of his men, even though he was not allowed to resist or attack the enemy. The police eventually fought their way back safely to Zeila, but Count Porro and the Europeans and natives of this party, numbering about thirty-five persons in all, were massacred outright, since they had parted with every means of protection.

The flesh of the dead bodies of Count Porro and his attendants was eaten by vultures and hyenas, and the human skeletons left to bleach in the sun. A year or two later the Italian Government asked the British Government to instruct their representative at Zeila to collect the bones of the European members of Count Porro's party, and to forward them to Italy in an Italian ship of war, which was calling for that purpose at Zeila. A detachment of police and a warrant medical officer were sent up country to the site of Count Porro's massacre, where they found the bones strewn over the plain, having been dragged about by birds and beasts of prey. The search party had some



difficulty in determining which bones belonged to a European and which to a native. In the case of Count Porro himself, however, the size of his massive limbs rendered his identification an easy matter. The collected relics were then taken back to the coast, placed in coffins, and delivered over with a salute from a Guard of Honour to the Commander of an Italian war vessel.

## CHAPTER XIX

### SOMALI CHARACTERISTICS AND CONDITIONS

ONE day I was riding my camel on the main track into Zeila, when I met a Mugrubi (Western Arab, Algerian) leading a donkey with a veiled person in female attire seated on the animal's back. The Algerian saluted me respectfully, which I acknowledged by wishing him a safe journey. A little further down the road I was stopped by a Somali, who reported that several bustard were feeding about a mile on our left (south-western) rear. I hastened off in that direction, but found the birds too shy to allow me to get within gunshot range. I had, therefore, to abandon my quarry, and returned to the main road. Suddenly, hidden in a thicket, I spied the Algerian I had recently met with a man standing by his side, and I could not resist observing to the conductor of the donkey that he had a good but rather masculine-looking wife. As a matter of fact, I recognized the man in the saddle as an Italian doctor whom I had often seen at Aden, and I entered into conversation with him. He explained that, veiled and habited in the garb of a woman, he could penetrate with safety into any part of the Moslem world. He told me of his travels, thus disguised, in and beyond Yemen, where, notwithstanding the efforts of the Turks and the Arabs to keep out Christians and Europeans, he had resided for three weeks in the city of Senaar. He then added that he anticipated no difficulty in now entering Harar under the skilful care and guidance of his old and faithful servant, the leader of his "moke".

We had some talk after that about the risks run by European travellers in general, and he observed that in most cases they were attacked on account of their supposed wealth. If their camels were visibly laden with merchandise, they were regarded as ordinary traders and exposed to the usual dangers of the latter; but if not



"buyers and sellers" they were specially liable to attacks from predatory assailants. A medicine man, with a wallet stuffed with herbs and drugs strapped to his back was always hospitably received at any kraal. Some of these wandering practitioners, if able to peruse Arabic, made themselves extremely popular by reading to their hosts stories from the *Arabian Nights* and the *Nuphat el Yemen*. Race and colour, indeed, did not prejudice their reception, provided, of course, that they were Moslems, and followed the laws, customs, and tenets set forth in the Koran.

I have often been asked if I considered the Somali a brave and formidable fighting man. In my opinion the Somali does not make a good soldier. By nature he has no idea of discipline, and he cannot be trusted to remain alert at night when placed on sentry duty. Even when specially selected to keep watch at some particular spot, the Somali were often found sound asleep, perfectly oblivious of the possible consequences. On one occasion near Biji I prepared an exceptionally strong zareeba, the sides of which had been constructed against the inroads of lions. This zareeba had been crammed with tethered live stock, herded together in the centre, and with riflemen stationed inside the enclosure. A lion leaped into this zareeba, seized a fully armed constable round the waist, and carried its victim over the barrier in its jaws as a cat does a mouse. It was pitch dark, and, as the zareeba was surrounded by lions, it was therefore dangerous as well as useless to follow in pursuit of this voracious man-eater. At daylight we found the sentry's rifle and his feet inside his boots—but no other trace of him.

A lion, I think, prefers to eat cattle grazing outside a kraal; but in the prime of its strength it can overtake or pounce upon the swift antelope. Even wild boar, unless close to its den, has no chance of keeping out of the way of a lion desirous of a toothsome feed of pork. With age, loose teeth compel the lion in search of a meal to stalk human beings, as easier to catch.

The well-trained Somali constable, under the leadership of a European, makes a very formidable fighting-man;



while, since all Somalis are more or less sportsmen, they soon become devoted followers of the white man in whom they have confidence. I have been in some very tight corners, and entirely dependent on Somali pluck and loyalty, and on no occasion did they ever desert either me or their posts. The Somali has not enough meat behind him to push home a bayonet effectively, but I have seen them attack in a most creditable way with that weapon, and they soon become expert riflemen. Many Somalis excel as detectives and spies, and on such secret duties they have frequently exhibited boldness, discretion, skill, and personal courage in the execution of my instructions.

I had half a dozen Somalis who were constantly employed in eliciting detailed particulars regarding men and matters of importance. Once, for instance, a party alleged to be composed of Russians was being fitted out at Smyrna for some tropical destination. The officer in command, however, did not desire to enrol or equip his force within a British sphere of influence. In that case it seemed to me impossible to plant someone in his party who could communicate information to the police at Zeila. Now the 105th British Regiment was originally the 5th Madras Europeans of the H.E.I. Company Service; and even in my time, long after that regiment had passed into the service of the Crown, there were at Aden over four hundred Germans in that Corps. Each company had a master cook with several small mates, and every member of the kitchen staff soon learned to jabber German. One of the latter, a Somali, on attaining manhood joined the Aden police, and had been selected for transfer to the Berbera police, and I had seconded him for detective duty. I therefore sent for this man, and told him that he was to go to Smyrna in Asia Minor. At first he did not know in what part of the world that town might be situated, but, on learning that it was in El Sham, he brightened up and said that he spoke Arabic fluently. I cautioned him not to speak a word of English or Hindustani, and to talk German to any European he might meet; this would indicate that he could not reasonably be connected with the British Service or trade.

I had to explain that it was necessary for me to know whether this Smyrna mission was being organized by the Russian or any other European Government, or by the Coptic Church in Russia or Alexandria. The Abyssinians being Nestorian Christians, the head (the Albuna) of their Church always emanates from the Coptic Institutions in Alexandria and the Levant. In consequence there is a close religious affinity between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Head of the Copts of Egypt. The Albuna of Abyssinia has equal power with the Negus, the latter being also styled "King of Kings" of Ethiopia. Now a black Coptic priest had recently passed openly through Zeila, in charge of a packet of documents for delivery in Abyssinia. This priest had engaged and paid for an escort of Biladiehs to protect him and his belongings as far as Gildesa, but I did not know who was responsible for his mission.

If the party at Smyrna was destined for Abyssinia, it would presumably land at one of the Abubuker-owned ports in the Gulf of Tajura; but it might also travel by the old Massawah route. In any case, however, it would require mule transport, and if the officer in command of the party was collecting and purchasing mules at or in the vicinity of Smyrna, that would be an indication of the destination of his mission.

The German-speaking member of the Berbera Police reached Smyrna in due course, and there I had arranged for his obtaining funds *sub rosa* from a Jew merchant. He soon scraped acquaintance with the commanding officer, a Russian, who was buying mules; and thereupon, without any invitation, he helped to control the animals and made himself generally useful. As a result, having attracted notice, he was emboldened to say that, although he was not a muleteer, yet he could turn his hand to any job. By actual profession, however, he was a cook, and was seeking employment as such. That last qualification "put the lid on" matters, and obtained for him from the Russian officer the immediate offer of a cook's place. But he declined that position unless he could be placed in charge of a separate kitchen, and not under the orders



of any other cook. His prayer, fortunately, was granted, and he thus became an important member of the staff of the mission. Most unhappily, however, the mission was not proceeding via the old and regular caravan route from Massawah. My police spy naturally dared not go to any Tajura port, since there he would at once be recognized as a member of the Somali Coast Police. He kept me well informed, nevertheless, of the objects of the mission, which he ascertained were religious and not political. At the same time, the interest which the French Consul at Smyrna had taken in the mission, and his conversation in French at dinner, with my policeman in attendance as a waiter, made the latter apprehensive that Boorhan Abubuker had endeavoured to induce the French Representative in Egypt to influence the Coptic Albuna-elect against the good relations then existing between King Menelik and the British Officer at Zeila. There might also be in the background the prohibition of the return of the Roman Catholic Bishop Taurin, then residing at Zeila, to his diocese in Abyssinia. (This prelate was, in fact, a French agent, and extremely hostile to the British.)

The steamer conveying the mission through the Red Sea touched at Massawah, and there this smart and intelligent policeman slipped away in a vessel bound for Aden. Soon afterwards he was sitting cross-legged on the floor of my office at Berbera relating his adventures. In his opinion he did not consider the mission could or would wittingly injure British interests in Ethiopia, but he suggested that our correspondents there should keep their eyes on it. He was, of course, suitably rewarded for his work, and awaited further employment in the Secret Service.

Is the ordinary Somali a cruel man? Here is an illustration of what I considered a cruel and wanton murder, and if I could have caught this fiend he would have been hanged out of hand.

I was shooting at the base of the mountain some twenty miles to the south-west of Bulhar, when I heard a woman scream. The woman was standing at the door of her *goorgi* (hut), with a man brandishing a sword alongside



her, and I at once went to her assistance. I found that the miscreant had chopped her infant male child into four separate pieces, which were lying on the ground. On seeing me the murderer made off, and it took me some moments to realize what he had done. The fugitive thus got a start, and by dodging behind bushes he prevented me from drawing an accurate bead on him in his rapid and zigzag flight. I fired several shots at him, but they were all ineffective.

It transpired that it was the woman's brother who had hacked the babe to pieces, and the motive for the crime was that the infant belonged to a man with whose tribe the murderer was at war. It was therefore the latter's duty to deprive an enemy tribe of an infant who one day would have been a potential warrior. I endeavoured to get the akils of the murderer's tribe to catch and hand this cruel devil over to me. But they would not move in the matter, on the grounds that he had acted in accordance with tribal law and custom, which regarded the stamping out of a possible viper as a meritorious and proper act.

## CHAPTER XX

### I MEET THE RT. HON. SIR HENRY MORTIMER DURAND, AND IN 1892 LEAVE ZEILA

THE post orderly had just delivered to me the outward mailbag, which he had landed from the small coasting steamer from Aden. Taking it from him, I had thrown myself on a sofa under the punka to enjoy a "European morning" with my home correspondence, when two cards were presented to me. It appeared that in my office there were waiting to see me the two following gentlemen : Graf Samuel Teleki de Syak, of Marosvasarhely, Saromberg; Lieutenant L. Ritter von Hohnel, Pola, Austria.

I at once ordered my butler to place these visitors in the dining-room, to tell the cook to prepare breakfast for them, and to put some refreshing beverages before my callers. I sent also to apologize for my absence, and to explain that I was dressing and would appear in a few minutes. Although I was not personally acquainted with these travellers, nor were they the bearers of any letters of introduction to me, yet I knew both of them by reputation. I had seen a short notice in the Press of their successful exploration of Lake Rudolf and of some parts of the countries of N.E. Africa adjoining that inland sea.

I offered them the hospitality of the Consulate, and expressed my surprise at their arrival at Zeila, while I especially remarked in private that they were accompanied by Duali Idris (the well-known and capable head-man of H. M. Stanley's search expedition for Livingstone, and also of Mr. James's party to the Wibbi Shebeyli). It was therefore natural to suppose that they intended to explore in Southern Somaliland and in the Galla country. I was told, however, that they only intended going as mere sightseeing tourists to Harar, remaining there for about

ten days, and then returning to Zeila, *en route* for Europe.

Graf Samuel Teleki de Syak was a Privy Councillor, a Hungarian magnate, and the owner of large hereditary estates in Hungary. He was also Commandant of the Honver Hussars, a *corps d'élite* which was on duty during the King of Hungary's visit to a castle at or near Saromberg. Now a Cornet in this Royal Guard belonged to a family of ancient lineage, and was also a magnate. The Graf presented this young nobleman to His Majesty, who expressed the pleasure that it gave him to make the acquaintance of the head of the young officer's illustrious house. The Cornet became very intimate with His Majesty the King of Hungary, and one day observed that, though the latter was now the head of the nobles of Hungary, yet His Majesty's family were simple swineherds when his own ancestors were lords of the soil which as a magnate he now possessed. His Majesty laughed, and took this remark in good part, but when he later mentioned it to Graf Teleki the latter was horrified and gave his subaltern a very severe wiggling for his impudence. Nevertheless the matter entirely ended there, and on the departure of the King this young officer proffered his sword to be touched by His Majesty, declaring that he would defend with his blade his sovereign's person and throne to the last breath of his life. This assurance greatly pleased His Majesty.

Graf Teleki was a *raconteur de première classe*, and related many interesting stories of the Court life of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, their entourage and intimate friends. Lieutenant von Hohnel—now a retired Rear-Admiral—was a very well educated and talented officer of the Austrian Navy, and is the author of several interesting books of travel in Africa and other parts of the world. I found, indeed, both my guests very entertaining men, and was truly sorry when they finally departed. Graf Teleki died at Budapest on the 16th March, 1916, and was universally mourned by all who had the good fortune to have known him in life.

The Right Honourable Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.I.S., K.C.I.E., was the second son



of General Durand. Sir Mortimer's father had been awarded a Baronetcy for his eminent services in India; but he asked to have the honour kept in abeyance until his eldest son, Lt.-Colonel Edward Law Durand, C.B., of the Bengal Staff Corps and Indian Political Service, who had a good prospect of being left a fortune, was well enough off to take up and support the title.

Sir Henry Mortimer Durand was born in 1850, and entered the Bengal covenanted Civil Service in 1873. In 1885 he had risen to the high office of Foreign Secretary to the Government of India. He was then knighted, took his Indian pension of £1,000 per annum, and was appointed H.B.M.'s Representative at Teheran (Persia) in 1894. From there he was transferred as British Minister at Madrid, and held that position in 1900. He retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1897; and went lastly to Washington, U.S.A., as Ambassador from the Court of St. James, London, 1903-6.

During his term as Foreign Secretary, Sir Mortimer Durand was ordered during an outward voyage to visit Zeila, in order to study the British position and prospects there, and to discuss them with H.B.M.'s Agent in administrative charge of that town and Pashalic. He came to Zeila, and though up to that date I had never met him personally, I had corresponded with him demi-officially for many years. I set forth to him my views, pointing out that Zeila was entirely dependent on the levy of five per cent. import and one per cent. export custom duties, and that as the French had opened a free port at Jibuti, 25 miles to the westward of Zeila, and were spending large sums on the erection of a harbour (from which point their projected line of railway would soon be open for traffic), a considerable portion of the trade of Zeila would then be diverted from the old caravan route, with a great loss of revenue to the British Custom House. Sir Mortimer agreed generally with my remarks, and promised to send me his own views after he had submitted them to the Government of India and to the British Foreign Office.

Sir Mortimer alluded to my services having been recognized in despatches for the Egyptian Campaign of

1882. He told me that Sir Owen Burne, of the India Office Political Department, had dropped him a hint that because I was too old to have my case submitted to H.M. for the Commission for which I had been recommended, my name might be put down for the C.I.E. Also that Colonel Hunter and General Hogg had both asked that my services at Berbera should be rewarded by the bestowal on me of a decoration. Sir Mortimer explained that the Government of India had always wished to recognize my services, but that a group of Bombay covenanted Civilians had demanded my removal from any Political appointment, on the ground that as an unconvenanted officer I was ineligible to serve in a Department exclusively reserved for covenanted and commissioned officers.

Sir Mortimer was aware that I had on three occasions been ousted or squeezed out of Political posts, and that the Secretary of State (in a despatch, No. 99, dated the 18th September, 1883) had declared me eligible to hold any Political office. Even so, as Sir Mortimer also knew, the Bombay Government, being under the control of Competition wallahs, had ignored my claims and the removal by the Secretary of State of the prohibition to my employment on the Political Service. Sir Mortimer said that he considered I had been shamefully, harshly, and unjustly dealt with. He had, however, unknown to the Government of Bombay, himself put my name down for a C.I.E., and when the newspapers announced my having had that distinction bestowed on me my Bombay opponents were very much annoyed.

Sir Mortimer then said : "I will tell you my own experience, which is not unsimilar to yours. In the ordinary course, on receipt of Sir Herbert Macpherson's despatch and Sir Owen Burne's demi-official note, the military authorities in India ought to have brought your name forward for a C.I.E., or some such special recognition. Nothing was done in that direction, however, because the abandonment of the ammunition boxes of H.1. Battery of Royal Artillery would have had to be investigated by a military court, and it would then have transpired that a civilian had recovered the limber boxes which had enabled the Battery



to go into action. Now my experience of that sort of thing was in a fight outside Cabul in 1879-1880. The Royal Artillery had lost a gun, and Sir Charles MacGregor (of the Bengal Army, who later married my sister) and I recovered that gun. The officer in immediate command proposed to report my share in the deed, so that I might be suitably rewarded for my efforts. Nevertheless, that particular officer was constrained to remain silent, as any report on that matter would have necessitated the assembly of a Court of Inquiry, which the military authorities did not desire to appoint. My claim consequently was dropped, and I never received any reward or recognition. You, on the other hand, have an entire despatch all to yourself; and although you may not have benefited by it as yet, still it is on the record of your services."

Sir Mortimer's closing words were: "Write to me personally and very fully on all matters, and I will always do what I can to further your interests and advancement in the Indian Political Service, of which you are now a permanent member."

Some years later I married a Miss C. A. MacGregor, sister of Sir Charles MacGregor, while the latter married Sir Mortimer Durand's sister. These ladies became great friends, but both have passed away. I saw a good deal of Sir Mortimer Durand after my retirement from the Service, and he endeavoured to induce the India Office to give me the "Additional" pension. Nevertheless, I did not get it, as it was held that my good services had been rendered in Africa to the British Government, and not to the Government of India.

Towards the end of 1892 I had very bad health at Zeila, owing to my long sojourn on the Somali Coast. Colonel Stace, H.B.M.'s Consul and British Agent for the Somali Coast, wished to get me a change of climate, but without my making an application to the Foreign Office to quit Zeila, which might injuriously affect my future prospects in Somaliland. Colonel Stace, therefore, induced the Resident at Aden to recall me temporarily to fill my substantive post as Second Assistant in his Residency.

I left Aden in May 1893, retaining a lien on the Second



Assistantship at Aden. As it happened, I never returned there, or to Zeila, or Berbera; and finally I severed my connection with Somaliland. If I had remained at Zeila, or at Aden, I should in ordinary course have succeeded to the Commissionership (now a Governorship) of Somaliland, when that country passed under the control of the British Colonial Office in 1893. Yet, on the whole, and on the principle of "a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush", I did quite as well (if not, indeed, better) by accepting an immediate Political Agency, with a summer residence situated on the top of the Sayadri range of mountains in the Bombay Presidency.



## APPENDIX

IN *The Pioneer*, an important newspaper published at Allahabad, India, there appeared on the 13th May, 1910, an article headed "Early Days of the Somali Protectorate". This article apparently attracted the attention of the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* and several other persons; so much so that Sir George Birdwood, late Bo.M.S., Librarian at the India Office, London, was asked to collect and write those Somali Coast reminiscences and stories. At this time Sir George resided close to my house in Ealing, and he called on me to obtain particulars of those stories, or to ascertain how and where to procure them.

Sir George was aware that there were several versions of the Somali Coast stories in existence, all of which were based on a solid foundation of fact. I considered it imprudent and inadvisable, however, to publish them at that juncture, as the names and episodes related therein were likely to give offence to the French, and specially so if they were traced to me, as I should be regarded as their author, writing with the authority and personal knowledge of a late Representative of H.B.M.'s Government at Zeila. I promised Sir George Birdwood, nevertheless, that when the objections to their publication had ceased to exist I would personally record them so that they might be preserved from total oblivion and obscurity.

As I am now engaged in writing reminiscences of my time in Somaliland (August 1884 to January 1893), I have related these stories. Yet I do not do so authoritatively, as there were several versions of these tales, each of which had a very solid foundation of fact, though some are exaggerated and embroidered. It must not be concluded that Major Hunter, Colonel Stace and I played all the monkey tricks attributed to us. One of us, it is true, was necessarily in some degree always connected with the origin of these



cases, and I dare say at times our actions and policy gave rise to some of these stories.

The Somalis attributed all ruses to Major Hunter, whom they called "Al Durain" (the Fox) and "Saheb-alhilat" (the Master of Tricks). I became known as "Sahebho al Asud" (his friend, the Lion); but I think that the appellation of Asud was chiefly applied to me because my seal, which was affixed to every document signed by me, bore my crest, a "lion rampant". Incidentally, my crest motto was *Noli irretari lionem*—"Do not rouse the lion"; which my friends considered a very appropriate one, on account of my generally peaceful methods and disposition. As I have already mentioned in the foregoing pages, my official maxim was to the effect that if a Political Officer used force, he had failed as a Political Officer. The success of one in that position should always be attained by diplomatic tact and skill.

My chiefs were aware that in a case of necessity I would, and could, fight it out. Indeed, General Hogg frequently turned me into a soldier by placing me in military command of regular and local troops, and officially reported me as being possessed of much "soldierlike instinct". Major Hunter recorded that my personal courage and good service in occupying and holding Berbera with thirty policemen should be recognized by Government. Consequently I often asked myself whether I was in Somaliland more of a soldier than a political, though attired in the "Blue and Gold" uniform of the Imperial Service.

THE END



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