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VOYAGES AND TRAVELS  
TO  
INDIA, CEYLON, THE RED SEA,  
ABYSSINIA, AND EGYPT,  
IN  
THE YEARS 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, AND 1806.

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BY  
GEORGE, VISCOUNT VALENTIA.

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*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

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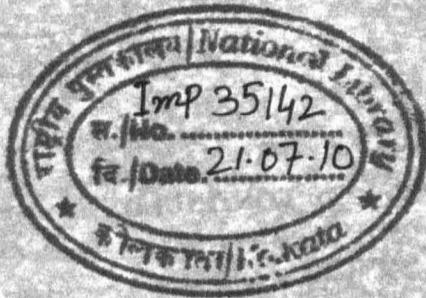
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## CONTENTS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Departure from Dixan.—Journey thence to Abha.—Agowma.—Chelicut.—Arrival at Antalow.—First Interview with the Ras.—Transactions at Antalow. page 1

### CHAPTER II.

#### MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Continuation of Transactions at Antalow.—Departure of Mr. Salt on a Tour to Axum.—Arrival at Muculla.—Visit to the Church there.—Arrival at Kasunko.—Arrival at the House of Barrainbarras Toklu at Gullybudda.—Visit to Fit Aurari Yasous.—Arrival at Adowa.—Residence there.—Introduction to Fasilydas, son of Yasous, formerly King of Abyssinia.—Arrival at Axum. p. 47

### CHAPTER III.

#### MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Account of Axum.—The Obelisk,—the Church,—the Priests,—the King's Chair.—An Ethiopic Inscription, and conjectural Explanation of it.—A Greek Inscription.—General State of the Ruins.—Observations on Mr. Bruce's Account of Axum.—Departure from Axum.—Arrival at Adowa.—Visit to Ozoro Tishai.—Return to Antalow.—Captain Rudland's Account of his Proceedings during Mr. Salt's absence. p. 85

### CHAPTER IV.

#### MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Account of the Review of the Troops of Tigré, &c. by the Ras.—Description of a Brinde Feast.—Arrival of Basha Abdallah at Antalow.—Political Conferences with him and the Ras.—Determination of Nathaniel Pearce to remain with the Ras, who promises to provide for him.—Preparations for Mr. Salt's return to Massowah.—Character of the Ras Wellela Selassé.—His attachment to the English.—Some Observations on the Manners and Dispositions of the Abyssinians.—Information respecting the Sources of the Nile, and present State of Gondar.—History of the Revolutions in Abyssinia since the Time of Mr. Bruce. p. 129

## CHAPTER V.

## MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Departure from Antalaw.—Arrival at Axum.—Greek Inscription.—Observations on it, and the Inscription preserved by Cosmas Indicopleustes.—Departure from Axum.—Journey to Adowa.—Difficulties in arranging for the Journey to Massowah.—Visit to Gusmatie Ischias, Son of Ras Michael.—Conversation with him respecting Bruce.—Other Communications on the same Subject.—Account of the Serawé.—Arrival at Dixan. - - - - - p. 169

## CHAPTER VI.

## MR. SALT'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Favourable Reception at Dixan.—Account of the different Grains cultivated in Abyssinia. Journey from Dixan to the Passes of Taranta.—Conversations with Shum Ummar, a Chief of the Hazorta.—Some Account of that Tribe.—Arrival at Arkeko.—Reception on board the Panther.—Dissertation on the History of Abyssinia.—Character of the Inhabitants. - - - - - p. 225

## CHAPTER VII.

Observations upon the probable result of Mr. Salt's Visit to Abyssinia.—Views of Bonaparté respecting the Red Sea.—Means of obviating them.—Present State of Abyssinia.—Advantages which she may derive from a Connection with England.—Exports from Abyssinia.—Probable Increase of Trade with the Interior of Africa.—Accounts from Pearce since Mr. Salt's departure.—Death of Mr. Carter.—Proceedings in England, and Mr. Salt's departure for Abyssinia.—Observations on Mr. Bruce's Map of Abyssinia and Chart of the Red Sea. - - - - - p. 259

## CHAPTER VIII.

Departure from Massowah.—Danger of the Panther during a heavy Gale from the North.—Narrow escape from Shipwreck, with the loss of all the Anchors, on Lightning Shoal.—Return to Massowah.—Disputes with the Ascari.—Hostilities with the Inhabitants of Arkeko.—Voyage to Jidda.—Transactions there. - - - - - p. 289

## CHAPTER IX.

Observations on Jidda.—Its ancient and present State.—Condition of the Slaves there.—Decline of the Family of Mohammed.—Account of the Harbour of Jidda, its Trade, and Number of vessels employed between it and Egypt.—Departure from Jidda.—Voyage to Suez.—Transactions there.—Arrival of Schech Chedid and the Caravan from Cairo.—Anecdotes of him.—Present State of Suez and its Trade.—Observations on the Passage of the Children of Israel through the Red Sea. - - - - - p. 323

## CONTENTS.

iii

### CHAPTER X.

Departure from Suez.—Passage across the Desert.—Arrival at Cairo.—Visit to the Pacha.—Visit to the Citadel.—Description of it.—Visit to the Pyramids.—Observations on them.—Taher Pacha.—Visit of leave to the Pacha. - p. 361

### CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Grand Cairo.—Arrival at Rosetta.—Conference with Carlo Rosetti.—Voyage to Alexandria.—Reception there.—Visit to the Governor.—Journey along the Coast to Rosetta.—Preparations for a Tour in the Delta.—Berimbal.—Voyage on the Lake Bourlos.—Boltine.—Transactions there.—Arrival at Damietta.—Account of Antiquities found there.—Observations on Mr. Savary's Account of ancient Damietta.—Visit to the Governor.—Description of the Lake Menzalé, and the Ruins of Thouna.—Visit to Matarieh.—Account of the Schech.—Return to Damietta.—Voyage to Mansoura.—Journey to Timai in the Desert.—Description of the Ruins there.—Journey from Mansoura to Bahbeite.—Remains of the Temple of Isis there.—Journey across the Delta by Mahallet-el-Kebeer to Foua.—Dispute with the Albanians there, and its consequences.—Arrival at Rosetta.—Observations on the Delta.—Return to Alexandria. - p. 395

### CHAPTER XII.

Observations on Alexandria, and the Ruins now remaining.—The Site of the Palace of the Ptolemies.—Conjectures respecting the Serapeum.—Dioclesian's Pillar.—Strictures on Sebastiani's Account of his Visit to Egypt.—Observations on the State of the Country.—Departure from Alexandria.—Description of the Bay of Finica in Caramania.—Arrival at Malta.—Quarantine.—Government.—Departure for Gibraltar.—Transactions there.—Voyage to England.—Arrival at Spithead. - p. 451

### APPENDIX.

- I. Report made to the French Consul by Colonel Sebastiani, extracted from the *Moniteur* of the 30th of January 1803. - p. 495
- II. Extract from *Le Courier de L'Egypte*, No. 21. 25 Frimaire, 7 Année de la République. - p. 504
- III. Extract from *Le Courier de L'Egypte*, No. 23. 9 Nivose, 7 Année de la République. - p. 505



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## CHAPTER I.

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THE KING'S SEAT AT ANUM.

## CHAPTER I.

“ AUGUST 14, 1805. ALTHOUGH at day light I urged our people to make all expedition, it was nine o'clock before the baggage was properly arranged, when we left Dixan on our way to Antalow. We had the satisfaction of finding our mules not inferior to those that brought us to Dixan.

“ We passed the church to our right, and then proceeded over a rocky hill, at the foot of which were some small vallies, and beyond them a village called Hadawe. We had scarcely passed this latter place, when we were followed by some of its inhabitants, who much wished us to halt there; among these was one of the Bahar-

negash's sons, named Socinius, whose urgent anxiety to prevail upon us, evidently shewed how much he was interested in our detention. We however pressed forward, passing over the plain of Zarai, which strongly reminded me of the Vale of Evesham in Worcestershire. The whole was in a high state of cultivation, and disposed in ridges for the convenience of irrigating the land. A little farther on, we passed a clear brook running down the middle of the valley, on the bank of which a party of travellers were resting themselves. We also saw here an Abou Gumba, and many Guinea fowls. Hence we began to wind round the side of the mountain, which makes a very conspicuous object in the view from Dixan; and soon came in sight of another village on our left, called Adishud, on a very lofty hill, that would form a good situation for a fort. Immediately in front of us, at about the distance of three miles, was the village of Adioolta, placed as conspicuously as the one beforementioned. A large Daroo tree stands in the middle of the plain, near which we were not a little surprised at meeting with a band of musicians, who immediately ran forward before us, blowing their trumpets and beating their drums, so as to make a most discordant concert. There being some appearance of rain, our guides conducted us towards Adioolta, where we were met by another Baharnegash, for so they call every head man of a town. We were not received by him with much civility, and he appeared very unwilling that we should enter his territory. In a short time however he relaxed, and at length shewed us to his house; but our treatment there was so unsatisfactory, that, when our baggage approached, we were glad to hasten away.

“ The inhabitants of this place are all, nominally, Christians, and

they acknowledge no authority except that of their head man. The village and its vicinity exhibited every appearance of neatness and plenty, and the valley below was well cropped, especially with Indian corn, which is usually more forward, in this climate, than any other grain. The people manufacture a particular kind of coarse cloth, from the wool and hair of their sheep and goats; they first spin the materials into small ropes, instead of threads, and these, when sewed together, make a covering like a quilt. The woman of the house retained great remains of beauty, and had two fine children in her arms, plump and healthy. We descended thence through the cultivated grounds nearly in a southerly direction, leaving on our right a lofty hill not unlike that of Riacotta, in the Baramaal country. A material alteration now began to take place in the vegetation; the kolqual became less frequent, and the whole face of the country was again covered with acacias, the verdure of which, and the freshness of the turf, composed a scene very like some of our forests in England. We passed another very large Daroo tree, growing by the side of a brook, the wide spreading branches of which covered a space of at least three hundred feet in circumference. Our guides were very unwilling that we should take up our quarters under it for the night, lest we should be seriously incommoded by the expected overflowing of the brook; and indeed its roots, bared to a great extent, by former torrents, shewed that this apprehension was by no means without foundation. In consequence we proceeded two miles farther, to the village of Bakauko, where we halted, having been overtaken by the rain just before we reached it. Our lodging was a place that in England would scarcely have served for a cow-shed; but the civility of the people,

who brought us goats, and plenty of milk and honey, made it more comfortable than a better place would have proved with less hospitality. The rain continued very heavy till evening.

“ August 15.—That part of our baggage, which for want of a sufficient number of mules we were obliged to have conveyed by men, arrived in the morning under the care of our friend Guebra Michael. We were yesterday joined by a female Hadjee, or pilgrim, who had spent three years at Mecca, and was on her return to the distant country of the Galla. It was, I suppose, on account of the sanctity acquired by this long pilgrimage, that one of our chiefs, who was himself a Hadjee, treated her with much respect, and shared his coffee with her.

“ The Baharnegash of Dixan arrived at nine o'clock to take his leave; he informed us that he should make haste to the presence of the Ras, where he expected to arrive in three days, and would send on for more mules for our accommodation. He told us that he dared not accompany us farther, having had a skirmish sometime back with a neighbouring tribe, in which many of the opposite party had fallen; he, however, left his son Guebra Michael to proceed with us two days journey on our way. We paid, by the advice of our guides, six dollars to the people of the house where we lodged, and were by no means pleased to find that they were extremely dissatisfied with so ample a recompense. At half past ten we were on our way, and having passed on the left the village of Maroko, built on a hill of moderate height, we found ourselves in a plain interspersed with hillocks. Here Captain Rudland shot a goose, and an Abou Gumba; the former, through the idleness of our people, escaped; the latter we carried on to Asceriáh.

The country was in a good state of cultivation, and many villages appeared on the hills around; Murgah was on our right, Maudoo-bah opposite to it on our left; and beyond, on a much loftier hill, was the Hadowé mentioned by Bruce.

“ Soon after we made our way through a grove of wild olive trees, and afterwards along the edge of a tremendous precipice, looking directly down into a gulley, in which were small pools of water, but no running stream. We then descended, and passed along the bed of the torrent for some distance; a shower of rain overtook us, but it was over before we had ascended the hill on which stands the village of Asceriáh. At this place we were received with great coolness by the inhabitants; they offered us no shelter but that which a tree afforded, and we were for some time apprehensive that this would be our only accommodation for the night. At length, however, an old man received us into his house, which was a better one, and more abounding in family conveniences, than any which we had seen before. I took here a view of the mountains, which are extremely wild in their forms; and a sketch of the Abou Gumba, of which Bruce has given a very correct representation.

“ August 16.—We were awakened at a very early hour in the morning by Negada Moosa, who seemed anxious to hurry us away from this inhospitable place; I call it so, from the difficulty that we found in procuring even water for our consumption. One man only, superior to his neighbours in civility, brought us a small portion of milk. We soon left our baggage behind, but had not got far before we were overtaken by a party of men, one of whom, we were given to understand, was the chief of the place that we had

quitted. He employed all his eloquence to prevail on us to return, which however we resisted, both on account of the inhospitable treatment we had experienced, and because we were well assured that his present importunity arose only from his fears of Ras Welleta Selassé, and not from a real desire to atone for his former neglect.

“The mountain of Geshen was far on our left hand, when we made a rapid descent northward into the fine plain of Tushaloo, which is fully six miles in length, and about two in breadth. The village of Addagé, belonging to Kantiba Socinius, overlooks it from a rising ground on the right, as Nissom and Menju do on the left. It is interspersed with Tombo trees, which in appearance are not unlike the mulberry tree. To the north was pointed out to us the district of the Sewarré, and the villages of Adowmo and Diggé; opposite to the last is another called Ambullah. From Asceriáh we had been going nearly north-west, on account of the impassable mountains to the south; but we now turned off over a rising ground to the south, and, passing Bat’ha, soon reached Abha, the residence of the Baharnegash Subhart. We were very cordially received by the old man in a small house, built under the brow of a projecting rock, that completely sheltered it from the inclemencies of the weather. He was seated on a couch surrounded by his attendants, and almost enveloped in a long white mantle with a red border and fringe. He was small in person, with a face deeply marked with the furrows of age. We found here that much more attention was paid to form than at Dixan. The mode of salutation in use is to present the hand, and afterwards kiss the back of it twice; no person is permitted to go into the presence of the Baharnegash

without uncovering to the waist, nor is he addressed by any one except in a whisper, with the mouth covered and applied close to his ear. Soon after we had been seated, he gave us plenty of hydromel, and seemed to think that we did not make sufficiently free, though some of our party were so complaisant, as to drink two brulies\* full; he also treated us with cakes covered with curds. He told me that he was originally much attached to Ras Michael Suhul, and supplied him with a large tribute in kind, but having had some disturbance with a neighbouring tribe, the Ras came with an army and burned down the whole of his town. It had been afterwards rebuilt by him, but was destroyed a second time, and for a similar reason, by Ras Welleta Selassé, about eight years ago: he farther mentioned, that he was at Gondar before the war broke out between Ras Michael Suhul and Waragna Fasil, and that his brother was present at the battle of Damot, fought between those parties. He was very urgent that we should spend the ensuing day with him, it being one of their fast days, promising, on our compliance, to see us safe on our way to the Ras. Guebra Eyut, a boy belonging to the Ras, having mentioned to our servants that the hope of obtaining a handsome present was the only reason for the Baharnegash's pressing our stay, and that he knew the Ras was most anxious for our arrival at Antalow, I sent for Hadjee Hamed and Negada Moosa, and after some conversation resolved to follow their advice, which was to take my departure the next morning; when I informed the Baharnegash of my intention, he remonstrated much against it, but with politeness, and promised to send his son to attend us.

\* Venetian glass decanters holding about a pint.

“ I walked up to the church in the evening, which is partly excavated out of the side of the rock: the road to it is winding and steep, and so difficult of access, that I fear it has but few visitors; unless the inhabitants of the place are more devout than they appear to be. The view from it amply repaid us for our trouble, as we thereby gained a distinct prospect of the valley which we had passed in the morning, beyond which was a fine range of rugged rocks and mountains, rising behind each other at a great distance, until they were lost in the clouds. The opposite side of the hill was thickly covered with houses, rocks, and trees, and formed so very interesting and characteristic a scene, that I sat down on a rock to sketch it, but had not time enough, before the evening came on, to do it justice.

“ Our fare this day was abundant, having been provided by this “ nobleman,” as Bruce terms one of his predecessors, with five sheep and plenty of maise, of a much superior quality to what we met with at Dixan. Maise is a liquor made of honey, fermented with barley, and strengthened with a bitter root called taddo; it is called hydromel by Bruce, and mead by Poncet: the latter has accurately described the process of making it. (Vide note page 218 in Lockman’s translation, published at London 1743.) Mussulmauns as well as Christians seemed to enjoy this beverage, and some of the former found it necessary to sleep away the rapid effects of it on their senses.

August 17. — Early in the morning the Baharnegash brought me a cow and some honey, hinting his expectation of my making him a present in return: this I evaded on the plea, that, as I was going to the Ras, I was not furnished with presents for any other

person, but, that if he wished to be paid for what we had received, I must refer him to Hamed Chamie, to whom I had entrusted every arrangement of this nature. I was advised by the Ras's people to give him thirty dollars, being assured by them, at the same time, that this would be the last expense of the kind, there being no person between this place and Antalow, who would think of making any demand upon us. As the Baharnegash had really been very friendly, I ordered Hamed Chamie to give him twenty dollars, which, to my surprise, was received with great satisfaction. I now gave orders for the mules to be loaded, when the Baharnegash came up, with a very serious air, and informed me that he had intelligence of a large body of armed men, three thousand in number, who had assembled in order to intercept us, and that unless he were with us we should run great risk of being plundered; he again therefore begged that we would stay till the morrow. I told him, in return, that we were not easily alarmed, being well provided with fire-arms in case of molestation, and, if we were overpowered by numbers, the aggressors would be answerable with their lives to the Ras, who, I had no doubt, would take exemplary vengeance on them; more words, therefore, on the subject were useless, since I was determined to proceed immediately in spite of every obstacle. This put an end to the scheme which had been planned for our detention; in which I have every reason to believe that Negada Moosa, if not Hadjee Hamed, was concerned.

At half past eight we left Abha, and waited on the first rising ground about half an hour till all our baggage came up. We were at first somewhat surprised at seeing great numbers of the villagers with goats, calves, and other cattle closely following, or passing by

us, on the same road that we were travelling, but on turning round an angle of the mountain on our left the whole was explained; for we there found a large concourse of people assembled from all the neighbouring villages to barter the produce of their different hills. It being a new and interesting sight to us, we rode up and took a circuit round the market. Among other wares we observed in it iron, wrought and unwrought, for ploughshares and other purposes, cattle of all kinds, horses, skins, cotton, ghee, and butter; the latter in round balls, and as white as in England; also baskets of chillies, and of a red pod found on the neighbouring hills which the inhabitants eat when ripe. This market is held weekly. The women whom we saw here were generally tall and well shaped, and many of them handsome. Notwithstanding the number of persons that had already assembled, which could not be less than three hundred, we afterwards met on our road as many straggling parties, with merchandise, as would probably double the throng.

The plain through which we were travelling was about two miles in breadth, and the road passed close to the abrupt descent of the mountains on the left, between various isolated rocks, among which was one in the form of a tower, of vast bulk and height. We passed on our left the village of Guragubbo, and on our right that of Muzembah. About three miles farther the soil became of a more sandy nature, which produced several species of *Ixia*.

The Baharnegash soon after overtook us, and rode on before us, till we ascended an eminence at the bottom of a semicircular ridge of mountains, over which there is but one pass by which it is possible to ascend; here we waited for nearly an hour before all our mules arrived. In steepness and ruggedness this hill

may be compared to Taranta, though its height is considerably inferior.

When we had arrived nearly at the top of the pass, the Baharnegash led us out of the road, up a scarcely accessible ascent to a projecting rock, and it was not till we had toiled up with infinite difficulty, that we found our conductor had brought us thither for the idle purpose of gaining a shelter from the impending rain. With great labour we got our mules back again into the road, and began to descend the hill, which we found much more difficult than the ascent; soon afterwards we were overtaken by the rain, but after traversing two more hills of moderate size, we reached a miserable village, where we took shelter. As soon as the weather had become fair again we recommenced our march, and travelled about three miles farther, nearly in a S.E. direction, to the ruinous village of Recaito, where, after having experienced much difficulty in procuring a shed, we halted for the night. The thermometer was 68°. The distance from Abha to Recaito we computed to be from ten to twelve miles.

“ August 18.—We procured a little supper last night, and eggs and milk this morning, in exchange for a few beads, but we found the damsels very keen in making bargains. The woman of the house was sufficiently civil, but the rest of the inhabitants appeared little disposed to accommodate us, and we discovered in the morning, that they had neglected to procure food for our attendants, so that we had to wait a considerable time till it was prepared.

“ All the villages in this district bear strong marks of the ravages committed by the Ras's army, or some other military devastation, for the greater part of them are at present mere heaps of

ruins, and, as the Baharnegash told me, the people have no inclination to rebuild them.

“ In quitting Recaito we went first to the eastward, and afterwards proceeding due south, ascended a lofty and extremely steep pass, on the top of which ran a stream of water that oozed through its porous channel, and dripped on the rocks below. The whole side of the mountain was covered with Acacia-trees, among which grew the Serge, the Tabbib, and other sweet-scented plants and shrubs, besides many beautiful flowers, of which I collected specimens. About half way up we turned again in an eastern direction, and on reaching the summit, found a level and extensive flat, which, though moist and swampy from numerous springs, appeared to be very capable of cultivation, and, if it were properly drained, well fitted for corn.

“ I collected here three species of bulbous plants, and a few specimens of iron ore, which lay scattered in great plenty on several of the hills that we passed. After resting an hour by the side of one of the springs, we proceeded, with all our baggage, along the edge of the flat to the village of Hadjaian; thence, after winding round to the southward, and crossing a small stream, the banks of which were shaded by the Laham, a tree much resembling the Mango in its growth, we ascended a hill, on the west of which stands the village of Shihah.

“ The Baharnegash behaved with much politeness during the whole of this day's journey; he even dismounted, and offered me his own mule, which was far superior to that on which I rode; but he afterwards hinted to Captain Rudland, that a little more money would be acceptable. A tolerably good house was prepared for us;

but we were much incommoded by smoke, being obliged to cook in our sleeping-room. It is, probably, this smoke which injures the sight of the inhabitants, for we observed that even the children were many of them nearly blind, and almost every woman advanced in years had lost one, and many of them both their eyes.

“ We were roused about two o'clock in the morning by the Baharnegash, who called out most vociferously that an enemy was at hand. It was some time before we could get a light, during which our own party had armed, and was prepared for the expected attack. A rumbling noise or sound like that of a drum, or tom-tom, from the hill in our rear, confirmed us in the belief that some danger was at hand. A light being brought, we found the whole of the Baharnegash's attendants ready armed, with lighted matchlocks, spears, and shields; and a most “ warlike ” figure they made. Captain Rudland in the mean time had gone out to reconnoitre, and discovered that what had been mistaken for the beating of a drum, was nothing more than the noise made by an old woman in grinding her corn, which here, as well as in Arabia and India, is always done in the night. The alarm however continuing, we at length learned from Hamed Chamie, that two brothers, Agoos and Subagadis, with their army, were coming to take possession of the town, and that the whole country was in a state of uproar; we were informed at the same time, that the only danger to ourselves was the risk of being accidentally molested during the confusion of a nocturnal attack, for it was by no means their intention to do us any voluntary injury.

“ In the mean time, Hadjee Hamed and Negada Moosa prepared themselves to go out and meet them, should the news be true. Spies had been already sent, who returned one after another with

intelligence, and we at last were informed that one of them had been detained on the road by the chiefs, who, on hearing that we were in the town, declared their intention of deferring the attack till we should have passed on to the Ras. With some difficulty we prevailed on the Baharnegash to retire, and then putting some ghee in our lamp, we lay down with our fire-arms at hand, and slept till day-break. Hadjee Hamed, at his own request, slept at the door of our room during the remainder of the night.

“ August 19.—We had another call to arms before our baggage was ready, upon which, we ascended, with the Baharnegash, a hill close by the house where we lodged, and which commanded a view of the country around. On this, as a strong post, the villagers had all assembled, to the number of thirty or forty, with their spears and shields, ready to defend it. Here and there we saw women and children driving in their cattle, and armed men on horseback on the look out, but no enemies made their appearance, except a few stragglers on the eminences at a distance. After some time we were finally told, that it was a false alarm, upon which we returned to our house, and prepared for our departure. As we were quitting the village, the Baharnegash and his son took leave of us, finding they could not get any more presents, and not choosing any longer to encounter the dangers and fatigue of the march.

“ The alarm had not extended far, as we found the inhabitants of the next village very peaceably at work in their fields. We crossed a plain, through which ran a brook shaded with shrubs, and bordered with many kinds of plants of exquisite beauty; afterwards, descending a rugged steep we entered a valley of rich pasture land, the grass of which was so plentifully mixed with

white and red clover, yellow crowfoot, and dandelion, that it had the exact appearance of an English meadow in spring. The cattle feeding upon it were all in high condition. Captain Rudland shot a bird resembling the lapwing, and a little farther on, a couple of fine wild ducks. At the end of this valley was another steep pass, which brought us in sight of a plain surrounded with woody hills and towering rocks, very similar, in general character, to some of the finer valleys in Derbyshire. We halted at a village called Calaut, in the centre of the vale, intending to pass the night there; but, after having waited some time, and finding there was no house prepared, nor any probability of our procuring one, I ordered the tent to be pitched under the shade of a large Daroo tree, and left the village, not very well pleased with the want of hospitality in its inhabitants. We afterwards accepted an invitation to the house of a Mussulmaun, named Hadjee Abdallah, in the lower town, who was a friend of Negada Moosa. This man treated us with much attention, prepared bread for us, and brought us milk, which, with the two wild ducks, made up our repast for the day. The thermometer was 70°.

“ August 20.—In the morning we were given to understand that it was impossible to procure people for the conveyance of that part of our baggage which was not carried by the mules, the Chief of the village having absented himself, in order to evade the orders sent by the Ras for providing us with every thing necessary for our accommodation. We were obliged, therefore, to remain another day.

“ In the course of the day, Tigra Moka Welleta Samuel, Chief of the villages of Debra Muttai, came down from his hill with a present

of a sheep and milk, and also engaged to supply us with people at an early hour on the following morning. He made an excuse for appearing in a squalid dress, by informing me that he was in mourning for his brother. His shirt was blackened with dirt, and was to be worn eighty days. In confirmation of this, Hadjee Hamed informed me that all the Christians in Abyssinia mourn in the same way, and also tear the skin off their temples, to shew their affection for the deceased.

“ From this worthy man, who seemed more shrewd and sensible than any we had yet met with, I procured some information, which, when joined with what I had before obtained, pretty clearly explained the present state of this part of the country. This man's father, Woldo Kemellet, was chief of the district of Agowma, in extent three days march across, in which are the villages of Seraxo, Gullimuckidah, Akran, Duccakallah, Calaut, and many others. This territory, in the time of Michael Suhul, yielded to him, as Ras, much tribute in gold, matchlocks, and cattle; but after Ras Welleta Selassé came into power, Woldo Kemellet was forcibly driven out of his country by Shum Woldo, a celebrated warrior, the friend and favourite of the present Ras, who styled him brother, though there was no relationship by blood between them. Since this revolution, the district has only paid to the Ras annually two hundred skins of honey, two hundred sheep, fifty cows, and ten matchlocks, being a trifling tribute in comparison to what it before yielded. As a compensation to the family of Woldo, the Ras gave to Welleta Samuel the villages of Debra Muttai, with the surrounding land, to be held free of all tribute.

“ It is now three years since a battle was fought between Shum

Woldo and Baharnegash Yasous of Dixan, near Bakauko. Yasous came up, with all the dependents he could muster, to attack the former. Their forces, if such they could be called, were said to have amounted to five thousand men on each side. In the action Yasous was victorious, having killed one hundred and fifty of the opposite party, and carried off a band of musicians belonging to Shum Woldo.

“ The district of Agowma has since fallen, by the death of Woldo, into the hands of his four sons, Thadoo, Guebra-Gurroo, Subagadis, and Aggoos, who for some time were in intimate alliance with each other, and conquered many of the villages around, but at length quarrelled about the distribution of their new acquisitions. The Ras favours Thadoo and Guebra-Gurroo, who have been for some time in his presence. The latter of the two is however considered as a cipher, being a man of weak capacity. In the mean time Subagadis and Aggoos are making use of the absence of their competitors to get all they can into their own possession; it is supposed however that Thadoo will soon arrive with assistance from the Ras to stop their farther progress, as he has already sent orders to the people of Shiha to make a vigorous defence till he comes to their succour.

“ About ten in the morning Hadjee Abdallah was sent for by Aggoos, who, I was given to understand, was the chief of Calaut; and shortly afterwards, having made proper enquiries, he did us the honour of a visit, attended by a large train of warriors, of whom a few were armed with matchlocks, and the rest with spears and shields. He appeared to be little more than twenty years of age, handsome in person, but fierce and rude in his manners; he briefly told us, that he was absent when we arrived, otherwise we should

have met with a better reception, but that he had now brought us a couple of bullocks; he also mentioned, that on hearing we were travelling this way, he had deferred his intended attack on Shihah. He then rose up, and went away with as little ceremony as he came, and in the evening we received from him some milk and sixty-five cakes of teff bread two feet in diameter, as also twenty-five of the same kind from Welleta Samuel.

“ August 21.—Though we rose at a very early hour this morning, it was eleven o'clock before all was ready for our departure: in the midst of our preparation we were joined by the young chief Aggoos: he contented himself with looking on in silence, till all our mules were loaded, and then by blows and threats, very speedily made his people take up the remainder of our baggage.

“ Almost the whole of this part of the country consists of rocky hills and cultivated valleys, through which our road wound in a general direction from south-east to south-west. About six miles from Calaut, we passed Gullimuckida and Ersubhah on our right hand. We had scarcely gone two miles farther, when we were overtaken by the young warrior Aggoos, attended by two of his fighting men on horseback. He stopped to speak to Hadjee Hamed; but his impatient spirit could not brook travelling at the slow rate we were going; accordingly, in a few minutes, he galloped away, and we soon lost sight of him behind the hills in our front. A messenger on horseback soon after met us to gain intelligence of our approach, and with him our friend Negada Moosa rode forward to get all things in readiness for our reception. The country was very rich in pasturage, and we saw vast herds of cattle feeding in the different valleys, also a few horses, of a small breed, but which

were however capable of much work. We alarmed two jackalls on the plain grubbing up roots, but they fled so swiftly up the hills that Captain Rudland could not approach within gun-shot of them. About three o'clock we arrived at Genáter, the capital of the district of Agowma. It is a village, consisting chiefly of conical huts, overlooked by a high rock, steep on every side, and on the top of which is an area about one hundred feet in diameter, occupied partially by a citadel. Here we were met by Subagadis, the elder of the four sons of Shum Woldo. He uncovered himself with great humility on approaching, and saluted us by kissing our hands; he then led us into his state room, which was not unlike a hall in some of our old English mansions, being lofty, and supported by round posts in the centre. Here he treated us with an excellent fowl-curry, wheaten loaves cooked in steam, and plenty of maise; he also presented me with three bullocks, four pots and two skins of honey, as he expressed it, by the Ras's order. All this time his brother Aggoos had been standing behind him, not being allowed, as it should seem, to sit in his presence. We spent this day very pleasantly, being treated with great hospitality by the master of the mansion, who was in his manners by far the most polished Abyssinian we had yet seen. He had a mild expression in his countenance, his features were regular, his hair was short and curly, but not woolly, and his limbs, though small, were well formed. The thermometer was 66°.

“ August 22.—In the morning I made a present of a looking-glass, some beads, and a few cloves, to the lady of the house, who was of a much lighter complexion than any we had before met with, and was distantly related to the Ras. These trifles were received with much

satisfaction, and, for the first time, we found ourselves among people who were above begging. In the course of the day, Subagadis took an opportunity of speaking to me about the unfortunate dissensions in his family. The Ras, he said, had ordered his father's country to be equally divided between himself and his brother Thadoo; but the latter, dissatisfied with his share, had ever since been continually plundering all his villages, as well as many others belonging to the neighbouring chiefs. He observed, very properly, that a country thus divided could never prosper; and he hoped, as he was the elder brother, that I would use all my interest with the Ras, to have him reinstated in the whole of his father's possessions; begging, at the same time, that I would speak to the Ras as soon as possible on the subject, as the present was the month for the annual settlement of the provinces. He also wished me to represent to the Ras, that, although his order for supplying us with provision and other necessaries at the villages through which we passed, had been regularly transmitted to Thadoo's people, yet no preparations had been made. In answer to this, I told him, that I was only a stranger going to the Ras, and that therefore my interest could not be considerable; that it was not my business to meddle with state affairs; but that, as he had treated us with great hospitality, I would certainly do him all the service in my power. I then presented him with a piece of muslin, with which he was greatly pleased, saying, that I had been much more liberal than he had any reason to expect; and, taking me by the hand, declared that he should ever think of me as a friend. In return, I only begged of him, that if he should ever meet with Englishmen again, he would exercise towards them the same kindness that he had shewn to us.

" We were entertained in the morning by the sight of an Abyssinian banquet, at which, although new guests were continually relieving those who were satisfied, we counted ninety-five persons feeding at the same time in the hall. It might frighten many a man to go into the midst of such a throng cutting away at the raw meat with their long drawn knives, and handing it about in large pieces, from the higher to those of inferior rank. Sometimes, if it chanced to be a coarse piece, it was observed to go through six or seven gradations. At the farther end of the hall sat Subagadis and his wife, with her female attendants, behind a half drawn curtain. On our entering the hall we were invited to take a seat among them, with which we willingly complied. The lady, whom we could now more particularly attend to, was young and pretty, and both gentle and agreeable in her manners; she asked me for a pair of ear-rings (which I had before been erroneously given to understand the Abyssinian ladies did not wear); I sent accordingly for a pair of some that I had procured at Mocha, and presented them to her.

" During our stay, Captain Rudland shot two eagles, which I suppose to be the male and female. The people, having never before-seen a bird killed when flying, were much delighted on the occasion. We left Genáter about ten o'clock, travelling at a slow rate. On our way we passed two priests dressed in light scarlet garments; one of them carried in his hand a bell, the other a large and curiously ornamented key. The first eight miles lay in a southward direction, through a fine grazing country; then winding round the hills, we ascended a high pass, the top of which divides the district of Shum Woldo from that of Ayto Welleta Michael. We were desired to wait on this hill, as Ayto Welleta Michael,

chief of the village of Takota, whom we were going to visit, was out on a warlike expedition against Sahána, a town belonging to Thadoo. In a few minutes we saw him coming down a hill to the east, with, I suppose, at least one thousand followers, horse and foot, thronging round their Chief in most unmilitary confusion, like the attendants of an Eastern prince on a visit of ceremony. A few were armed with matchlocks, and the rest with spears and shields. When they came abreast of us, they divided off into two parties, one of which consisted of Welleta Michael's own troops, and the other of his auxiliaries, led by Ayto Guebra, and the chiefs of some distant villages. Welleta Michael himself proceeded to Takota.

“ Guebra Welleta Selassé, a messenger from Antalow, had met us on the hill with a grey mule belonging to the Ras, which he had sent for my own riding. This man we dispatched to the Chief of Takota, to inform him of our approach: but he returned with so unsatisfactory an answer, that it was judged prudent to proceed about four miles farther, to a village belonging to Ayto Guebra, where we at length procured a small though tolerably comfortable room for the Ras's mule and ourselves for the night.

“ August 23.—Last night we were presented by the Chief of the village with a bullock and two sheep, a part of one of which was made into a country curry, with bread and maise, for our supper. I was informed this morning, that the present dissensions between Thadoo and Ayto Welleta Michael, arose from the plundering dispositions of the people subject to the former, who had been constantly in the habit of coming openly in the day time, and carrying away the cattle belonging to the latter. In order to put a stop to this, Ayto Welleta Michael assembled all his friends and followers,

and marched to the village of Sahána, where most of these depre-  
dators live, to demand satisfaction. Nothing however was settled  
yesterday, nor was any blood spilt on the occasion; and though it  
is supposed that matters will be accommodated (to enforce which  
Ayto Welleta Michael to day again marches out to Sahána), it is  
the opinion of my informant, that the cattle will not be returned,  
as the parties aggrieved stand much in awe of Thadoo, who is very  
powerful when his forces are collected.

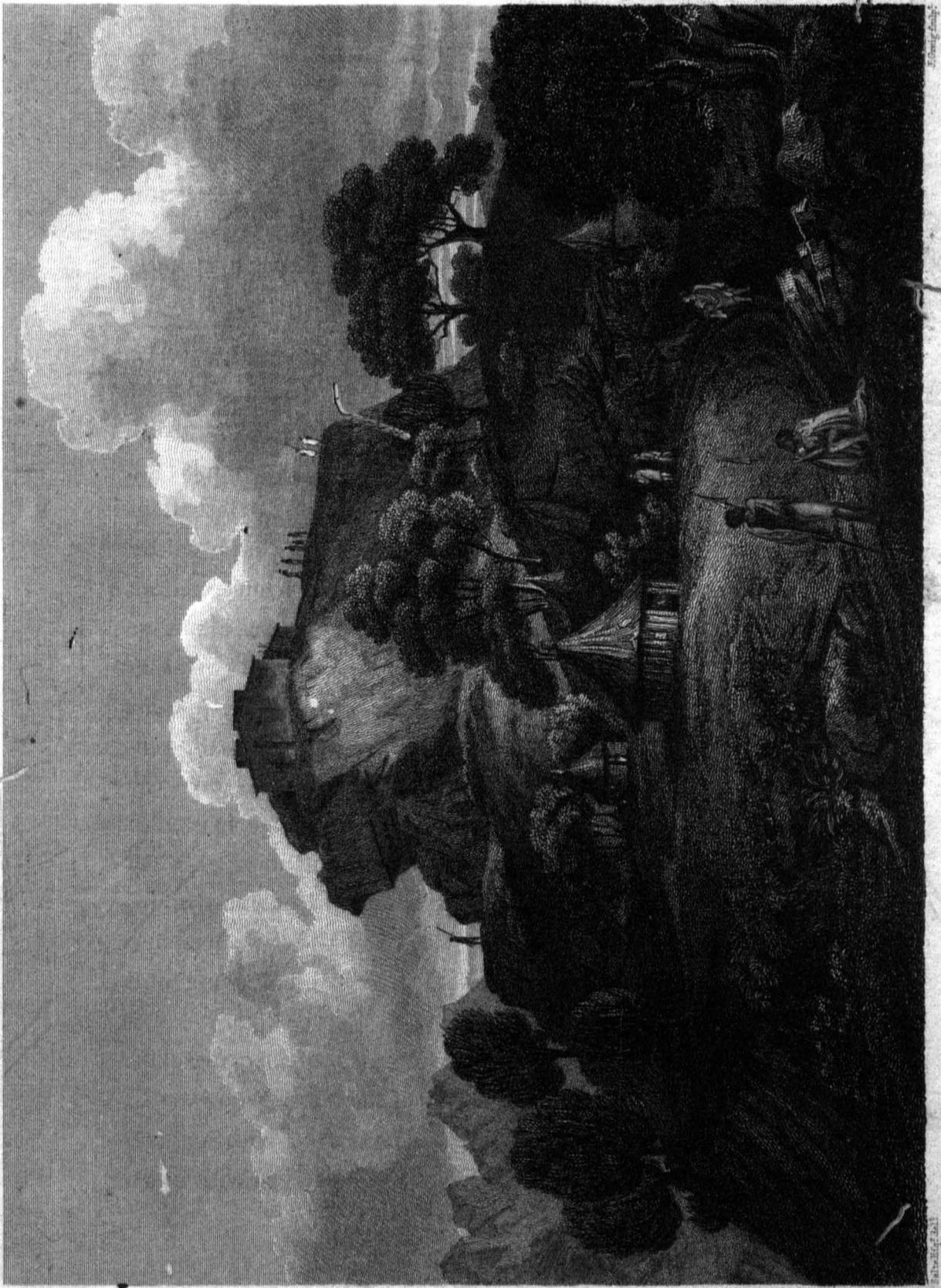
“ We left this place about nine A. M. attended by the Chief of  
the village, but had not travelled above two miles, before we were  
desired by our guides to halt at the bottom of a hill on one side of  
the plain of Ayaddah, on which are the twelve villages of Amba  
Manut. After a long consultation between Negada Moosa and Gue-  
bra Selaissé on one side, and the Chiefs of the villages above who  
had come down to meet us, on the other, the former endeavoured  
to prevail on us to stop for the rest of the day. This I refused: upon  
which the Chiefs surrounded us, and with most earnest and humble  
supplications (placing at the same time stones upon their heads and  
necks), endeavoured to persuade us that their lives would not be  
safe if we did not comply. After many fruitless endeavours to get  
away quietly, by remonstrating with our two guides upon the ab-  
surdity of this detention, I was at last actually compelled to force  
my way through the throng, and gallop off to my companions, who  
had gone on a little way before; but all my endeavours to prevent  
so serious a loss of time were to little purpose; for, after going about  
two miles farther, we arrived at another village, when the rain came  
on so violently, that we were not sorry to take up our abode for the  
night, in a good house prepared for our reception.

" We were treated with much attention by the master of the mansion; but our food, &c. was all brought over from the village where we had been first pressed to stop.

" I had seen in coming in, a plant very like the Ensete of Bruce; on examination in the evening it proved to be a new species of Musa. It grows from thirty to forty feet high; the trunk or stem is bare (when the first leaves have withered away), about fifteen feet from the ground; here about twelve leaves branch out, incasing each other at their base, as in the plantain. The mid-rib of each leaf is bare for about two feet and a half before the spreading part of the leaf commences, and is at the back of a bright red colour. The leaf is about four feet across at the broadest part, about twenty feet long, and pointed at the end. The fruit springs from the centre or body of the plant, and is protected when young by four or five small, but strong leaves, which firmly embrace the whole cluster. The parts of the flower are very similar to the plantain, as in appearance is the fruit, but it differs decidedly from it in being filled with hard irregular-shaped seeds, each of the size of a hazel nut; the form of the plant may be learned from the drawing of the mountains of Adowé, where it again occurred.\* The thermometer was 64.

" August 24.—The lady of the house, who was sister-in-law to the wife of Subagadis, paid us a visit in the morning; she was far inferior to the latter both in personal charms and in manners. I presented her with a looking-glass and some beads; but she was dissatisfied with them; nevertheless, on our going, she took them away. The Chiefs also of the villages that we had passed the day

\* This Musa is growing in the conservatory of Lord Valentia.



...EN AFTER THE CAPITAL OF AGOWMA.

before paid us a morning visit, and presented us with a bullock and other articles. About nine we left the village, and pursued our journey, in a southward direction, over a more rocky country than we had lately passed through, and in consequence saw more of the kolquall. In the neighbourhood however of the villages, to the right, were many small patches of pasture ground. The hills beyond presented many strange and uncouth forms, and sheep of all shades, from white to black, were grazing on the sides of them. After a ride of about five miles, in the course of which we passed several small villages, each containing one principal house, surrounded with a stone wall, we mounted up a hill to a larger village, the residence of Ayto Guebra. We were welcomed by this chief, who is married to a niece of Ras Welleta Selassé, with much hospitality. Tecla Hammaintout, the husband of his lady's sister, and some other friends, were also assembled to receive us. Few words passed at our introduction. Maise, curry, and immense piles of bread, being laid before us, we were given to understand, that to eat and drink heartily, was the best compliment that we could pay them; and indeed they plied us so fast with the maise, and that of so good and strong a quality, that I found it absolutely necessary to rise and depart in a hurry, lest all our servants, to whom they had been as liberal as to ourselves, should be incapable of proceeding. On coming out of the banquetting room, we were ushered rather unexpectedly into the lady's apartment, who received us very cordially, and paid her compliments in a very easy and polite way. She was by no means handsome, yet there was something very pleasing in the expression of her face. I made an excuse for not being able to make her a present, as all the baggage was gone on. She

received my apology with great good manners, saying at the same time, that her only wish, in trying to prevail upon us to stay, was to have the pleasure of our company; but as the end of this would have been only a general drinking-bout, we resisted even the entreaties of the lady, and taking leave of her, mounted our mules, and rode on some miles with good speed to the mansion of Debib, Chief of Negashé. It had been the intention of our guides, however, that we should have taken up our quarters at a village much nearer to the one we had last quitted, so that when we arrived, the Chief was unprepared for our reception, and had to get out his holiday clothes: he received us however, very kindly, though we were at first unable to enter into any conversation, having left our interpreter behind with the baggage. A second feast was soon prepared for us, and four hundred cakes of bread of the usual size were given to our people, together with bullocks, honey, ghee, &c.

“ August 25.—The master of the house rode on with us this morning, as had been the general custom since we left Abha. He sat his horse firmly and gracefully, like most of his countrymen of rank, who make by no means an unhandsome figure on horseback, with their white dresses, and black sheep skins thrown loosely across the left shoulder. They wear nothing on their heads, but consider it as a mark of dignity to cover the lower part of their face with the loose part of their dress; and are generally attended by eight or ten followers, with matchlocks and spears. 1

“ About five miles on the road, after ascending and descending some steep mountains, we were taken to visit a church or convent cut out of the solid rock, called Abuhásubha. This place is situated on the side of a rock which commands a view of a large and beautiful

plain, thinly set with daroo and wild date trees. In front of the excavation is a thatched and two storied entrance, built in a style much resembling that of the Portuguese. From this three doors lead into an oblong square room (A), the dimensions of which are about fifty feet by thirty, supported by two rows of columns, each consisting of four pillars and two pilasters; the former are about three feet in diameter, and from their plainness and proportions, resemble those of the Tuscan order. Beyond is a room (B), answering in some degree to the chancel of modern churches; it is divided from the larger excavation by two square pillars, and has a dome-shaped ceiling about forty feet high, of very excellent workmanship. In this room are contained the baptismal font, and the various articles used in the ceremonies of the church, which are concealed from view by a curtain suspended between the two pillars at the entrance. On each side is a smaller room (C), communicating by a door and window with the larger excavation. The ceiling in front of the centre room in the larger excavation, is hollowed out into a kind of dome about thirty feet high, curiously painted and carved; and in front of the side rooms it is also adorned in the same manner, but without the dome. The floor is flagged with square stones, and the walls are carved and ornamented with crosses, paintings, and inscriptions in the Ethiopic character, which, I was informed, entirely consist of sentences taken from Scripture. The most conspicuous of the paintings are representations of Christ, the Apostles, and Saint George combating the dragon: the white horse of the latter is both well designed and executed. We were allowed by the priests to examine every part of this singular temple, which is damp; and full of bats and insects, particularly the side cells, in each

of which is a tomb. One of the most curious circumstances in this excavation is, that water continually issues from one of the pillars, which deposits a ferruginous sediment, that seems not in any degree to have corroded the stone. On the outside are several tombs excavated in the sides of the rock, and only covered over by loose stones. The priests who attended us were all neatly dressed in white, with light turbans or rather wrappers round their heads. I gave them two dollars for their attentions to us, with which they were well satisfied.

“ The rock out of which this temple is excavated is of a very hard consistence, so that much labour must have been bestowed on the work. We observed nothing from which we could form any opinion as to the period when it was undertaken. It is certainly more antient than the time of the residence of the Portuguese in Abyssinia, and is probably one of those that were formed at the command of the Emperor Lalibala, by workmen sent for, for that purpose, from Egypt.\*

“ Resuming our journey, we passed through a luxuriant copse, and observed growing on the rocky sides of the pathway several beautiful species of Filices, of which I procured specimens. We then mounted successively many high and rugged hills, our road turning at times to every point of the compass, till after a most laborious and fatiguing day, we reached our halting place for the night, at the top of one of the loftiest hills. It was some time before we were joined by our attendants, with the baggage, who had gone by another route, in the course of which they had visited a mosque held extremely sacred by the Mussulmauns. We had a miserable hut to

\* Vide Ludolf. Lib. ii. ch. 5.

sleep in, where we were under the necessity of crowding all together. The man of the house, however, who was a servant of the Ras, treated us with great attention, and on bringing the maise, presented me with a neatly turned horn, the peculiar manufacture of Abyssinia, which was the more acceptable from the obliging manner in which it was given. Curry and other provisions were prepared, and a cow was offered for our acceptance. The thermometer was 68°. The length of our days journey we computed to be from fourteen to sixteen miles.

“ August 26.—We were on the road at an early hour in the morning, and after travelling about five miles, met a Chief on the road, who told us that the Ras had appointed a village about two miles farther on, for our resting place on the ensuing night; as thence we might easily reach Antalow in the course of the following day. On our arrival, however, we found no preparations made for our reception; and, in consequence, much altercation passed between our guides and the Chief of the place, who, frightened by their violence, came to throw himself on the ground before my mule, with a stone on his neck. As I evidently saw that our stay was not wished for, and as it was of importance to lose as little time as possible, I determined to proceed.

“ After travelling about six miles farther over a mountainous country, we came to the town of Derhah. This place, from the hill by which we approached it, appeared of far more consequence than any that we had before seen, being surrounded by a wall and wide fosse, and most of the houses being built of stone. There is no resident chief at Derhah, as it is under the immediate command of the Ras, who has appointed six head-men to rule over it. They paid

me a visit, but seemed to think so much of supplying our wants, that I at last was obliged to tell them that we did not come as beggars into their country; and if the Ras had not issued orders concerning us, we would willingly pay for whatever they might supply. On this they departed. The people of the house were, however, very kind, and prepared for us bread, maise, and a curry of mutton.

“ About seven in the evening we received a message from our friend Subagadis, informing us that he had arrived in the town, but had not been able to procure a house for the night; that he should, however, remain in the neighbourhood, and would be ready to accompany us at an early hour in the morning on our way to Antalow. Mr. Carter, at my desire, immediately went out to him, to offer such accommodation for the night as our small house would afford, which, after several refusals, on account of the inhabitants, of whose conduct he meant to complain to the Ras, he accepted. The supper, of which our guest partook very heartily, was served up in true Abyssinian style. We were much pleased at this opportunity of shewing to him our gratitude for the hospitable treatment which we had experienced at Genáter, the capital of his district of Agowma. The thermometer was 70°. Our journey was from twelve to fourteen miles.

“ August 27.—About six o'clock we left Derhah, in company with Subagadis and his attendants, and travelled about ten miles over grazing plains and high rocky hills. The soil of the plains was of a black colour, extremely rich, and full twelve feet deep, as we ascertained by the broken banks of a stream which runs meandering through it; the hills also would admit of cultivation, if the

large stones with which they are incumbered were removed ; but this the inhabitants are too idle or ignorant to undertake, even on the flat land ; so that it is with the greatest difficulty that they are able to plough it. After descending a steep pass, from which we had a full view of the hill of Antalow, we arrived at the village of Chelicut, where we were accommodated in a house belonging to the Ras, built on a beautiful spot close to the borders of a stream. We were at this place treated with more than usual ceremony and respect, and were informed that the Ras had ordered the greatest attention to be paid to our wishes. In the afternoon we were taken out to visit the church, attended by a multitude of priests, all handsomely clothed in white. On entering the first gate-way, they requested us to take off our shoes and hats, with which we immediately complied. I was somewhat surprized to see that the Mussulmauns were permitted to enter into the first circular ayenue. A sufficiently accurate idea of the whole building may be formed, by imagining three concentric circular walls covered with a thatched roof, surmounted by a ball and cross. The spaces between the two outer walls were open avenues ; the space included within the central one forms the body of the church. The walls were coated with whitish-red plaister, ornamented with gilding, and covered with representations of Noah and the Ark, Christ and the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the martyrdom of the saints, many extravagant designs taken from the prophecies, and St. George fighting the dragon. This latter saint seems to be the national favourite, and every where makes a most conspicuous figure upon his white horse. The colouring of all these figures was very gaudy, but some of them, particularly one picture of the Virgin Mary, the face of which

was covered with glass to preserve it, was executed in a style superior to the generality of eastern paintings. The Infant Christ was placed in one instance in the left hand of his mother, and in another in her right.

“ In the outer circle of the church was suspended a very handsome glass chandelier, presented to the Ras by the Sheriffe of Mecca. From the church we were taken to the store-room, to view the rich vestments and furniture of the officiating priests, which were of great beauty. Among other articles were eleven mitres of pure silver inlaid with gold, two dresses of black velvet richly studded with silver, a large silver drum hooped with gold, besides a rich Venetian cloth very handsomely embroidered. The priests seemed to have much pleasure in shewing us their wealth, and afterwards conducted us to the Ras's garden, which, though in a very wild state, and overgrown with grass, was enriched with many valuable fruit trees, as oranges, citrons, pomegranates, and bananas, most of which, from their names being evidently derived from Arabic, I supposed to have been originally brought from Arabia.

“ Chelicut is the residence of Azoro Mantwaub, one of the Ras's wives; she is a daughter of Ayto Ischias, and sister to the present king. She was extremely polite in her attentions to us, sent us many flattering messages, and provided our table with plenty of curry and maize. Notwithstanding the great attention paid to us, we had much difficulty in procuring provision and maize (though we at last accomplished it) for our friend Subagadis, who had not presumed to come near the Ras's house; nor did the villagers even dare to furnish him with a house, though the weather was very inclement, for fear of displeasing his brother Thadoo, who was said to be in great favour

with the Ras. At night, however, some of those who favoured his party, gave him a wretched hovel to shelter him from the rain. The thermometer was 64°. The length of our day's journey was about eight miles.

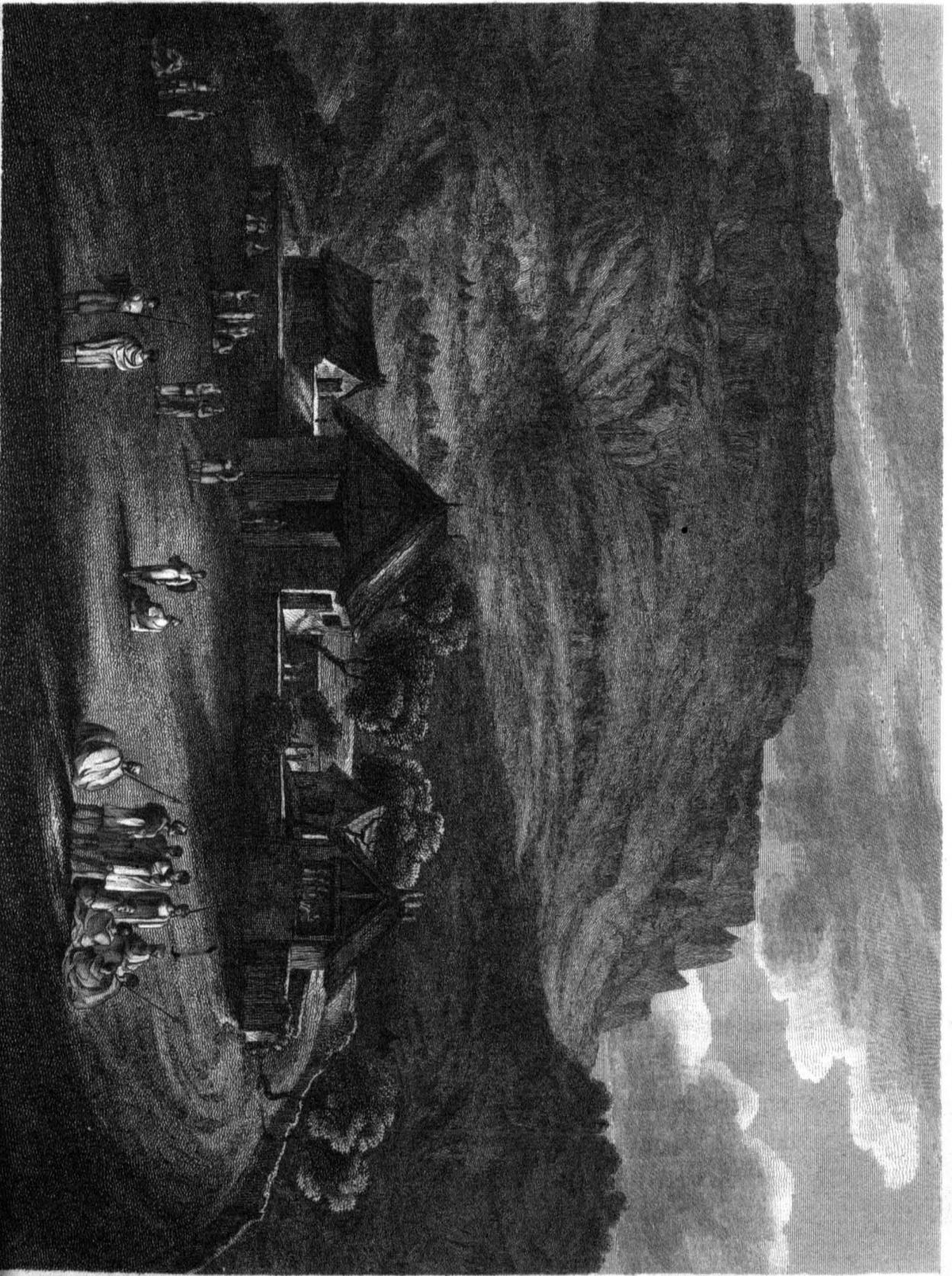
“ August 28.—Having prepared ourselves as well as circumstances would permit for going into the presence of the Ras, we left Chelicut at an early hour, and were joined by Subagadis on the opposite side of the brook which runs through the village. Between this place and Antalow is a lofty mountain, for the purpose of avoiding which, we continued to wind round the eastern and southern sides of it for nearly ten miles, over hills which skirt its base. The small vallies which we passed were wet and swampy with the last night's rain, which much impeded our progress. We passed a large village called Afgool, belonging to Ozoro Ambeah, another of the Ras's wives, the principal inhabitants of which came out to pay their compliments. At length, after our patience was nearly exhausted by mounting hill after hill, we came suddenly in sight of Antalow, distant from us about a mile. As we approached, our train increased very rapidly, and before we reached the Ras's residence, we had to pass through an assemblage of at least three thousand of the inhabitants.\* They pressed so hard to get near us as we ~~were~~ going through the first gate, over which were sitting some of the officers of state, that it was with great difficulty we could force a passage. We were not allowed to dismount from our mules till we had got into the entrance of the great hall, at the farther end of which was seated the Ras, on a couch with two

\* The great number present was, as we afterwards found, partly owing to its being market-day.

large pillows upon it covered with rich satin. On each side of him, seated on the floor, which was carpetted, were all his principal chiefs, and among others, our friend Baharnegash Yasous. On being ushered with much bustle into his presence, according to the custom of the country, we bowed, and then kissed the back of his hand, and he in return kissed ours; he then pointed to a vacant couch on his right, covered with a beautiful skin, on which we were immediately seated. After this the usual compliments passed, the Ras on his part expressing his pleasure at seeing us, and we on our part making a proper return, with additional compliments from Lord Valentia at Mocha. We were then given to understand that nothing more was to be said at this visit. In a few minutes after Captain Rudland was taken away to inspect the apartments allotted us, and on his return we withdrew, attended by a minister of the Ras, through whom we were to communicate all our wishes.

“The hurry, with which our first interview was conducted, did not permit us to make many observations concerning the persons present, and our attention was of course principally directed to the Ras. He is remarkably small in person, and delicately formed, quick in his manner, notwithstanding his age, which was said to be seventy-two, with a shrewd expression in his countenance, and considerable dignity in his deportment. Though he did not move from his couch, on which he partly reclined, yet our reception was considered to be particularly gracious, as, by kissing our hands, in return, he placed us on an equality with himself. We had previously been required to uncover our heads and prostrate ourselves before him; but this we most positively refused.

“We were furnished in the course of the day with abundance of



provisions, and were much pressed to eat and drink profusely, by way of doing honour to the house. In the evening we had several polite messages from the Ras, who sent for our fire-arms, and treated Pearce and Ibrahim who took them to him, with great attention, seating them on his couch, and giving them plenty of maize. He was highly delighted with the guns, and in return sent us a fishing net, acquainting us at the same time, that he seldom staid at home in the night, but took his pleasure in fishing and hunting. He sent us also a dish of stewed fish, which was thought very delicious by some of our party. We had a pretty good example of the Ras's watchfulness, for about twelve o'clock he sent us some clouted cream, and at four I was called up to receive the compliments of the morning.

“ August 29.—At about ten in the morning we were invited to breakfast with the Ras, and were received with the same distinction as yesterday, being seated on a sofa, while his minister was placed close by on the carpet. We were very plentifully fed by the Ras himself with eggs, fowl in curry, and balls of a mixed composition of wild celery, curds and ghee, after which we were offered brinde; but on our expressing a wish to have it dressed, the meat was afterwards brought grilled, and cut into small pieces by one of the attendants, ~~and~~ handed to our mouths by the Ras, much in the same way as boys in England feed young magpies. It is scarcely possible to describe the scene that was going on in the mean time in the hall, where the people were squabbling and almost fighting, with their drawn knives, for the raw meat that was handed about, and the teff bread that lay heaped up around the table; there were, however, some masters of the ceremony who carried long white sticks, with

which they frequently chastised those who were too hasty in seizing their portion.

“ We afterwards spent the day very quietly, as the time for receiving the presents from Lord Valentia was deferred till the morrow. The thermometer was 68° in our room, and frequent storms of rain occurred during the day.

“ August 30.—A copy of Lord Valentia’s letter, which I had ordered to be written in case the original should not have safely arrived, was delivered to the Ras in the morning at four o’clock, by Hamed Chamie, who also, as far as I had authorized him, entered into an explanation of the nature of my mission from his Lordship. About six o’clock I was sent for, and found the Ras alone, in the hall; I then delivered to him, in the name of Lord Valentia, the presents sent by his Lordship, which consisted of two entire pieces of broadcloth, one blue and the other red; a handsome watch, a telescope, some pieces of kincaub and satin, a dress of gold tissue, a gold ring and broach, and several pieces of muslin. These presents gave great satisfaction, more particularly those articles which were new to him, namely, the watch, telescope, and trinkets; and the kincaub and gold dress he repeatedly ordered to be opened out before him. On stating, in the name of his Lordship, the impossibility of procuring at Mocha such presents as he would have wished to send, he stopt me at once, by expressing his entire satisfaction with what he had received; and assured me, that his only regret arose from the impossibility of communicating in our own language, the friendship he felt for us, who, strangers as we were, had come so far from our parents, our friends, and our country, to visit him, while those who were near to him, and ought to be his friends, thought only of

making war upon him. He then asked me what were the wishes of Lord Valentia, and the objects for which I had come. In return, I informed him that Lord Valentia's sole motive in sending me, was an anxious desire to promote an intercourse of friendship between two such powerful countries as England and Abyssinia, the inhabitants of which were moreover of the same religion; and that if the Ras was inclined to form such a connection, to represent to him how much it might conduce to the interest of his country. That Abyssinia having hitherto been accustomed to receive all her imports at the third or fourth hand, an immoderate duty had been paid at every separate transfer; whereas an intercourse with the English, who are uncontrouled masters of the sea, would enable the Ras to supply himself at once with whatever commodities he might want, and of a quality far superior to any that had hitherto found their way into his country: that, in all this, Lord Valentia was actuated by no motives of personal advantage, having only in view the mutual benefit of England and Abyssinia, to which a free interchange of each other's produce would materially contribute. His Lordship, I added, was now proceeding to England, and would gladly take charge of any communication which the Government of Abyssinia might choose to make on the subject to the British Government.

“ After a silence of a few minutes, the Ras asked me, whether Massowah, or any other port in the neighbourhood, would be most convenient for English vessels to deliver their cargoes at. To this I replied, that I believed there was no harbour, but only anchorage at Beiloul, otherwise the vicinity of that place to his capital, would give it a decided advantage over Massowah. That there was indeed

a convenient port at this latter place, and a tolerable supply of fresh water; but both the town and adjacent territory were at present under the command of Nayib Edris, who seemed inclined rather to thwart than promote the interests of Abyssinia, as the interception of my letter to the Ras, (for the conveyance of which I had been obliged to pay thirty dollars) doubtless in consequence of orders from the Nayib, would sufficiently prove; and that moreover, I had been forced to give him five hundred dollars for liberty to pass through his territory, and for the promise of mules, &c. for our accommodation, which latter agreement had been scandalously violated. The Ras expressed much displeasure at this conduct of the chief of Massowah, and said that the former Nayib, Hannes, had always been a good friend of his, and that the present Nayib had given no cause for dissatisfaction, until about five years ago, when he had been obliged to send thither a military force to bring him to reason, and that he then should have cut off all communication between Massowah and Abyssinia, if the Nayib had not appeased him by the most humble supplications. He farther added, that there was a place on the coast belonging to himself called Buré, not more than four days journey from Antalow, well supplied with water and cattle; the inhabitants of which had often solicited permission to open a trade with the ships that were constantly passing within sight of them. That the road between Buré and Antalow was very practicable for kafilas, excepting one day's journey, in which no water was to be procured; and that if this place should be deemed sufficiently convenient, he would immediately turn the trade into that channel. In order that I might satisfy myself on the subject, he offered to send for one of the chiefs of the place, from whom I

might obtain any additional information that I chose; and when I represented to him that no verbal report would be so satisfactory, as sending one of the gentlemen who had accompanied me to make inquiries on the spot, he immediately assented to the proposal. He then said, that a hope was expressed in Lord Valentia's letter, that I might go to Gondar; but, though it was his anxious wish to comply with all our desires, it was at present impossible to secure the safety of our persons on the journey, he being on bad terms with Gusmatie Guxo, who had possession of Gondar. The Ras then entered into a detail of the circumstances out of which the present dispute between himself and his rival originated, and of this the following account, corrected in some particulars by Hadjée Hamed, who was well acquainted with the circumstances, is a correct abstract.

“ The differences arose at a very early period. Ras Welleta Selassé placed Welleta Solomon on the throne, after the abdication of his father Tecla Hamainout; but the new sovereign was soon opposed by the contrary party; afterwards the Ras raised Tecla Georgis to the supreme command. This appointment, however, was not more agreeable to the opponents of the Ras, than the former had been, who compelled Tecla Georgis three several times to fly for protection to Tigré, which was more immediately under the control of his patron. The presence of the Ras being required at his capital in Tigré, every exertion was made by the other party to raise Ayto Ischias, and afterwards his son Ayto Gualoo, members of another branch of the royal family, to the throne. At length, the Ras finding, as it should seem, his two favourites, Welleta Solomon and Tecla Georgis, unequal to maintain the royal authority, was

induced to give his sanction to the establishment of the crown on the head of Ayto Gualoo; and in order to bring over the king to his interest, in opposition to that of Guxo, he married Ozoro Mant-waub, the sister of his present majesty. Gusmatic Guxo, in the mean time, after successfully increasing his power and re-establishing his influence over all Amhara and Begemder, took advantage of Ras Welleta Selassé's absence from the capital about three years ago, to send an arrogant message to the king, recommending to him his daughter as a wife, if he had any thought of remaining at Gondar. The king, whatever were his inclinations, was under the necessity of complying with the proposition, and accordingly married the lady.

At this period, affairs seemed to wear a better face; both parties affected satisfaction at what had taken place, and all animosity was for a time suspended, the tie of kindred being now added to that of allegiance; but this calm was not of long duration. Two years had not elapsed, when, on the death of the late Abuna, Guxo broke violently into the house of the deceased, and plundered it of gold and valuables to the amount of five hundred wakeas of gold, which was considered not as the private property of the Abuna, but as belonging to his office of high priest, and was by custom to be expended in defraying the expenses of bringing his successor from Egypt.

Religion was too fair a pretence for war to be neglected by Ras Welleta Sellassé, who thereupon raised his forces, and being joined by Ras Gabriel, governor of the provinces of Samen and Waldubba, commenced his march towards Gondar. Guxo, unprepared for so immediate an attack, sent a deputation of priests to restore the

money, and thus conciliate the favour and prevent the approach of the offended Ras. In this they succeeded, the cause of war being done away by the restoration of the property; upon which the Ras having made an addition to the five hundred wakeas of gold, sent immediately a deputation for a successor to the deceased Abuna.

“Guxo’s pride, however, had received too severe a mortification to acquiesce in what had taken place, and being moreover supported by two of the chief priests, Eustachias and Tecla Haimanout, who had taken upon them all the power of the Abuna, was supposed at this time to be preparing war against Welleta Selassé and his allies. In order still farther to strengthen his party, he is said to have formed a league with Siban son of Kollassé of Michællis, who is at the head of the Edjow Galla, and is reported to be able to bring into the field thirty thousand cavalry, besides double that number of spearmen. This united force commenced its operations by an attack upon Ras Gabriel, in his province of Samen, and obliged him to fly to Ras Welleta Selassé for assistance. After gaining a promise from the latter, that he would join him without fail, as soon as it was possible to cross the Tacazza, he returned to defend his own province, and is at present besieged in the mountains of Goshen-hai.

“Ras Gabriel is said to have one thousand matchlocks in his army, with which he holds out against the united force of Amhara, Begemder, and the Galla. Ras Welleta Selassé, on the first news of Guxo’s preparations, sent off a man of rank to enquire into the cause of them; but his messenger was seized, put in irons, and imprisoned, by order of Guxo, and in consequence of this, the breach is now irreparable. The king is obliged to be a quiet spectator of

