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THE STORY OF EXPLORATION

EDITED BY

J. SCOTT KELTIE, LL.D., SEC. R.G.S.

THE NILE QUEST

BY

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.



SPEKE (from a Drawing by the Author). *[Frontispiece]*

THE NILE QUEST

A RECORD OF
THE EXPLORATION OF THE
NILE AND ITS BASIN

BY
SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.
(PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN SOCIETY)

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS AND
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS*

WITH MAPS BY J. G. BARTHOLOMEW



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THE STORY OF EXPLORATION

PROBABLY few of the stories that tell of the achievements due to the curiosity of humanity have a wider or more lasting interest than that which is concerned with the exploration of the lands and seas, which give feature to the face of the earth. It is a long story, and would be longer still, if the men in the remote past had left any record of their wanderings. Even as it is, in the scanty and perplexing records left behind them by ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Hebrews, and even Chinese, the story begins more than three thousand years ago and, so far as the pioneer work of exploration is concerned, may be taken to have practically concluded with the end of the nineteenth century. It seems, therefore, an opportune time to recount the leading episodes in this long record of incessant human effort, in a manner which will appeal to, and interest, all intelligent readers.

In the series of volumes, which will be issued under the general title "The Story of Exploration," it will be sought to make the narrative circle round the personality of the men who had the leading share in carrying on the adventurous work.

Beginning with the earliest journeys of which we have any record, the story will be carried down stage

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by stage to the present day, and it is believed that, when complete, it will form what may be called a biographical history of exploration. While the work of geographical research in all parts of the globe will be seriously and adequately treated, the adventures incident to such research, which add human interest to it, will have due prominence given to them. In all cases it will be sought to obtain the co-operation of men who are recognized as authorities on the particular subjects with which they deal. Each volume will be profusely illustrated, the illustrations being selected for their appropriateness to the text, while every assistance will be given to the reader by means of carefully executed maps.

J. SCOTT KELTIE.

PREFATORY NOTE

WHEN the author of this book was composing his recent work on the Uganda Protectorate, he was led through the history of its discovery into the general consideration of Nile exploration, since it was in the search for the Nile sources that the territories now forming the Uganda Protectorate were laid bare to the gaze of the civilised world. But as anything like a detailed review of the exploration of the Nile basin by the Caucasian race would have unduly extended a book dealing more particularly with Uganda, he gladly took advantage of the suggestion made by Dr. Scott Keltie (Editor of this series) that these studies should be applied to the present volume, which is one of a series on the history of great geographical discoveries.

It is not for the author to say that his book on the Nile Quest will prove interesting; but he has striven to make it as accurate as possible, and he hopes it may be permanently useful as a faithful record of the names and achievements of those who solved the greatest geographical secret, after the discovery of America, which remained for the Caucasian's consideration.

H. H. JOHNSTON.

LONDON, 1903.

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THE NILE QUEST

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN OF NILE EXPLORATION

THE first men who entered Egypt and travelled up the valley of the Nile came, almost unquestionably, from the east, and were part of those radiations from the central focus of humanity, India. It is possible that the first men who entered the valley of the Nile from this direction may have been of so primitive, simian, and undetermined a type — so “Neanderthaloid” — as not to belong definitely to any one of the three main species of humanity. At that distant time, however (let us say at the end of the Pleistocene period or beginning of the Quaternary Epoch), there was undoubtedly a land connection over the south as well as over the north end of the Red Sea, joining Arabia to Ethiopia as well as to Egypt; and across this bridge came many types of Asiatic mammals, also man, — possibly in the form of a low Negroid, a type represented to-day (much changed and modified, of course) by the Congo Pygmies and South African Bushmen. As regards the history of humanity, however, the valley of the

Nile has been divided into two very distinct parts. The southern half of its basin — in common with all Africa south of the Sahara and the fifteenth degree of north latitude — was peopled from the east, through southern Arabia, and by the Negro species in the main. Egypt proper and the adjoining regions of Arabia once lay within the domain of the Negroid Pygmies, but these indigenes were overwhelmed at a relatively early period by more or less “negrified” branches of the Caucasian stock coming from the direction of Syria or from Libya. Before the dawn of the historical epoch — say nine thousand years ago — an element in the population of Lower Egypt certainly showed Bushmen affinities. These steatopygous Bushmen were perhaps Proto-negroes, who may have branched off from the Nigritic stock when first that species reached the Mediterranean regions. This Bushman element in Egypt was for some time distinct, prior to the historical period, as the characteristic type of the servile class. Following on these dwarfish people came races bearing some slight resemblance to the Dravidians of India or the Brahuis of Baluchistan, — a somewhat Australoid stock which has left traces in Elam and around the shores of the Persian Gulf. Then came an aquiline type of nearly pure Caucasian stock, usually known by Egyptologists as the “Khafra” race. This probably arrived from Syria or Cyprus. But the men of the northern half of the Nile basin who fathered the principal, dominating type of ancient and modern Egyptian emigrated seem-

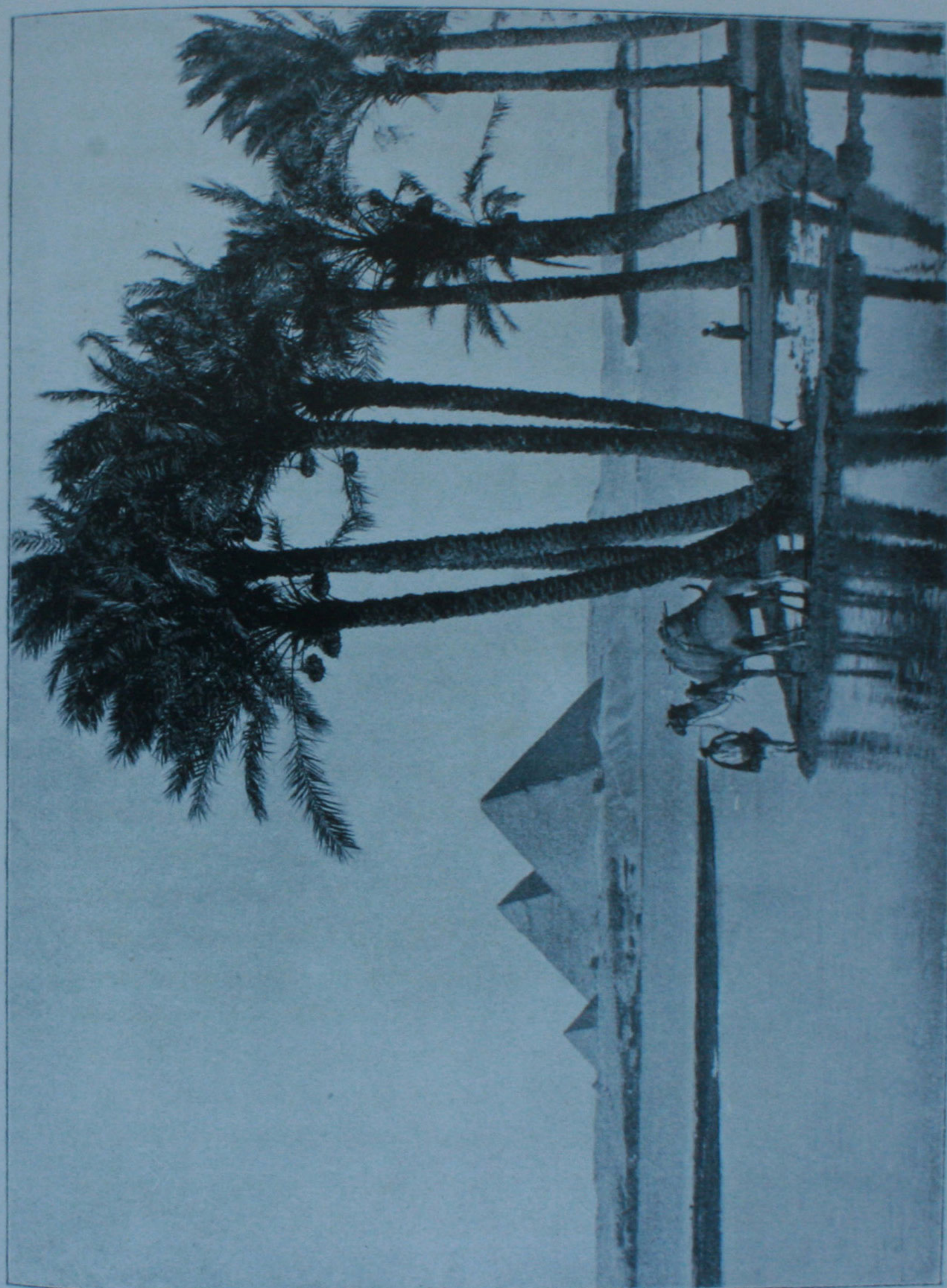
ingly from the direction of Galaland, Somaliland, or Abyssinia. In these countries, or originally perhaps in southern Arabia, there was formed a handsome race mainly of Caucasian stock, but which had mingled somewhat considerably with the Proto-negroes and Dravidians in Arabia and in northeast Africa, and so had acquired darker skins, and hair with more or less tendency to curl. The men of this race, like the modern Somali or Gala, and the inhabitants of southern Arabia, grew thin and wedge-shaped beards. Their lips were full, their noses straight and finely shaped. Their degenerate descendants continue to exist with but little altered facial type in the Danākīl, Somali, and Gala of the present day; but in the northern half of the Nile valley they became in time the main stock of the Egyptian population. They also, it would seem, profoundly modified Negro Africa; for while on the one hand they started out by a series of race movements and conquests from the direction of Abyssinia to invade and mould Egypt, on the other (though more faint-heartedly) they advanced in a southwesterly direction to influence Negro Africa. They have formed aristocracies in the countries round the head-waters of the White Nile. Their influence on the Negro races has been widespread, permeating, even though faintly, in a handsome physical type and remarkable form of language, to Zululand on the south and perhaps westward across the continent to the Congo, the Cross River, and the Atlantic coast. This Hamitic race (as it is called

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for want of a better word), which made its first home — and retains as its last — the highlands of Abyssinia and the plateaux and arid coastlands of Afar, Somaliland, and the Gala countries, has been the mainstay of Ancient Egypt, and also, together with its not distantly related Libyan brethren, the main human agent in saving the Negro from slipping back into the life of the anthropoid ape.

The valley of the Lower Nile, however, attracted many invasions from Europe and Asia, and from Libya (northwest Africa), where the dominant race was mainly of Iberian stock.¹ Dynasties rose and fell, often coincident with the invasion of Egypt by one race of conquerors after another. All these races (with the exception perhaps of the Hittites) belonged to various types of the Caucasian species. The Hittites possibly may have introduced a slight element of the Mongolian. In the earliest historical period Egypt and the lower valley of the Nile does not seem to have been markedly severed in its interracial relations from the far greater portion of the Nile basin which lies to the south of the fifteenth degree of north latitude. Egyptians penetrated no doubt without much difficulty up the Nile valley into and among the Negro tribes of the Central Sudan and Equatoria. The Ancient Egyptians may have had — must have had — a certain proportion of Negro or Negroid in their composition; beside the drop of Negro blood in their Hamitic

¹ A superior type of dark-haired white man allied with Circassian and Persian, and perhaps a direct development from the Dravidian.



[Face page 4

THE NILE AND THE PYRAMIDS

ancestors, they must have absorbed the earlier Negroid population of their country and have imported and intermarried with Negro slaves. But they were fully Caucasian in the vivid interest they took in nature, and in their desire to depict all the striking forms of life around them, especially when such forms had anything of novelty. Prof. Flinders Petrie has, I believe, recently discovered a vase of immeasurable antiquity of the "Pre-Dynastic" period in Lower Egypt which is incised with a delineation of the Kudu antelope.¹ Other and later relics would seem to show that the Egyptians were acquainted with the chimpanzee of the Bahr-al-Ghazal regions, the Pygmies who once inhabited the western part of the Upper Nile basin, and many forms of the Tropical African fauna. But after these early historical times there appears to have come about a severance of relations between Egypt and the Upper Nile, though an overland route to the Land of Punt (Somaliland) either through Abyssinia or to the west of that elevated region nearly always existed unclosed to traffic. It is noteworthy that the Ancient Egyptians themselves do not appear ever to have penetrated up the main stream of the Nile much above its junction with the Bahr-al-Ghazal, no doubt owing to the obstruction of the sudd. Their traders may have trav-

¹ The Kudu, which is a tragelaph rather than an antelope, exists at the present day in the eastern part of the Egyptian Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Nile, and its remains are found fossil in Algeria. It may therefore have extended even within the historical period to near the shores of the Mediterranean.

elled into many parts of the Bahr-al-Ghazal region, and possibly even westward in the direction of Lake Chad, — westward, it may be, even across the western Sudan to the Niger, — yet there is not the slightest indication of their ever having journeyed up the main White Nile to the snow-mountains and the equatorial lakes. But they traded for thousands of years with the men of Punt (Somaliland) by sea and by land; and there is evidence to show that the peoples of Somaliland and Galaland (who had by repeated prehistoric invasions permeated the Upper Nile basin and left aristocracies behind them) traded anciently — say, in pre-Islamic times — southwestward to Lake Rudolf, and round Lake Rudolf to the present Turkana country, the neighbourhood of Mount Elgon, and even to the northeastern shores of the Victoria Nyanza.

The Ancient Egyptians seem to have known the main Nile as far as Khartum, and the Blue Nile up to its source in Lake Tsana. They exercised intermittently some kind of rule over the northern and western escarpment of Abyssinia, and are said to have sent criminals and political exiles to die of cold on the snowy heights of the Samien range. But they appear to have displayed little knowledge or curiosity concerning the ultimate source of the *White Nile*. No doubt the vast marshes and obstructions of the sudd which characterised the course of the Nile above its confluence with the Bahr-al-Ghazal, the generally hopeless nature of this country with its utter absence

of anything like high land, of minerals, or of a trading population, discouraged the practical-minded Egyptians from pursuing their researches in that direction. The Nile itself they called *Hapi*, which was also the name of the Nile God. It was sometimes spoken of as *Pi Yuma*, or "the River."¹ Its valley they called Atr, Atur, Aur (Modern Coptic = *Eiōr*).²

Several foreign dynasties ruled over Ancient Egypt, — Arabian and Libyan, — and for centuries at a time the energies of Egypt were mainly concentrated on domestic work under these foreign task-masters or insurrections to expel the hated rulers. The original civilisation of Egypt rose rapidly to a great and wonderful height at a period which may be as remote, historically, as about seven thousand years ago. The main source of their civilisation seems to have been the introduction into the country of copper implements instead of and in addition to those of improved stone and flint manufacture. A wonderful development of pictorial art occurred concurrently with this brilliant rise in civilisation, and this early Egyptian art is of a realistic character from which all subsequent Egyptian pictorial or sculptured art has been a degeneration. At this time they easily

¹ This word is the origin of the Arabised *Fayūm*, a name given to the remains of a curious Nile reservoir, or backwater-lake, to the west of the Nile, in the Libyan Desert.

² The Biblical *Yeôr*. The Hebrews also called the Nile *Shikhor*, or the "Black." The earliest Greek name for the river and country is *Aiguptos* (the origin of "Egypt"). Later the name *Neilos* (Nile) was given to the river. This became the later Arab and European *Nilus*, *Nil*, *Nile*, etc. The origin of the Greek names *Aiguptos* and *Neilos* is unknown, but *Neilos* may be derived from the Persian word *nil* = blue.

impressed the Negroes of the south and the Libyans of the west with their power, and it was no doubt a matter of ease for Egyptian expeditions to penetrate into the Sudan from the countries of Abyssinia and Galaland. Gold and precious or gaudy stones were sought for in the east and southeast. Ivory, slaves, gums, perfumes, and strange beasts were obtained from the south and southwest. But no doubt Ancient Egyptians in their extensions of political or commercial influence introduced amongst the Negro tribes the knowledge of working metals. They also gave to them all those domestic animals and cultivated plants now existing in Tropical Africa which are not of a far later American or Indian origin (that is, introduced by the Portuguese and Arabs). By instructing the Negroes in this indirect manner in the arts of civilisation, and by spreading among them, no doubt, the use of metal weapons (which were probably as good as those used by the Egyptians themselves), there came a time when — to use a term once much employed by the European pioneer — the black men became “saucy” and objected to be harried, bullied, assessed, and exploited by the lordly Egyptian. The Negro race at this time, too, was becoming infiltrated by the same splendid stock — the Hamites — as had so largely composed the ruling population of Egypt. Here and there, no doubt, Negro tribes submitted willingly to be governed by Hamitic princes (as has been the case in Uganda and Unyoro), and, thus ruled, offered sharp opposition to Egyptian encroach-

ments. Egyptian interest, therefore, in the sources of the Nile died away, especially as in the revival of native Egyptian power and in the expulsion of foreign dynasties the thoughts of Egypt were all bent on the conquest and retention of Syria, Asia Minor, and Cyprus. These lands were more desirable in their eyes than the appalling wastes of the Sahara, the sun-smitten Sudan, the cold mountains of Abyssinia, or the fetid marshes of the Nile Negroes.

Almost older than the civilisation of Egypt was that of Mesopotamia, the reflex action of which on the Hamites of western Arabia and Abyssinia and on the inhabitants of the Nile Delta may have provoked the civilisation of Egypt. Empires rose, declined, fell, and were revived in the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and their influence over Arabia and Syria produced in those countries a stirring of commerce and invention and a desire for distant enterprise. The Phœnicians, who were originally an Arab people of the Persian Gulf, forced their way across the barren wastes of northern Arabia to the coasts of Syria, leaving behind, however, colonies of bold navigators at the northern end of the Persian Gulf. The Phœnicians, by the building of more seaworthy boats, and probably by the development of sails, soon traversed the Mediterranean in all directions, passed out through the Straits of Gibraltar, and even found their way to Britain long before Julius Cæsar. Their most noteworthy action in connection with Africa perhaps was the founding of Utica in 1100 B.C. and

Carthage in 820 B.C., these settlements being made at no great distance from each other in that projection of North Africa which constitutes the modern state of Tunis. The Carthaginian successors of the Phœnicians carried on the work of discovery along the north and west coasts of Africa until, in the memorable voyage of Hanno, they had penetrated as far south in that direction as the existing colony of Sierra Leone. The Phœnicians as bold navigators were enlisted in the service of one of the last Egyptian sovereigns of a real Egyptian dynasty, — Neku, son of Psametik I., who succeeded to the throne of Egypt in 611 B.C. Evidently by this time the overland routes to the regions of the Upper Nile and even to Somaliland had been closed by hostilities with the Ethiopians and Negroes. A Phœnician expedition was directed to sail down the Red Sea and along the coast to the Land of Punt and the unknown territory beyond. According to tradition, this expedition sailed round the whole continent of Africa and passed through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean, reaching Egypt from that direction.

Egypt, in her several thousand years of history, had been many times conquered by foreign races or the leaders of foreign armies, and had sometimes endured the domination of strangers for five hundred years at a time, though Egyptian art, tradition, and religion either survived concurrently alongside the habits and customs of the less civilised rulers, or ended by Egyptianising the stranger. But there was

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to come a time when the independence of Egypt was to disappear, when the Egyptian language was to cease to be dominant, when, in fact, the Egypt of the Pharaohs and the Pyramids, of the Hieroglyph and the Mummy, of Ra and Aphis, Osiris, Isis, and Horus was to disappear — perhaps for ever; for the potent race that had so long held aloft a brightly-lighted lamp of civilisation has been so changed and degraded by the infusion of Persian, Arab, Greek, Italian, Negro, Circassian, Turkish, French, and Maltese blood, so often decimated by wars, famines, and diseases, and renewed with the tainted blood of mercenary armies, that, though the residuum of the population may still offer great facial resemblances to the vanished Egyptian type, the majesty of demeanour, the brilliant mental endowments of the old race have gone, and the rulers of Egypt to-day under the indifferent English are the descendants of Slavs and Turks, Arabs, Armenians, and Circassians.

A ruler of Egypt, a usurper named Aahmes, had been raised to the kingship over Egypt by a soldier's mutiny. He had legitimised his position by marrying a granddaughter of Psametik I. Carrying out a series of successful expeditions, he once more opened a way to the commerce of Nubia and the Upper Nile. He intervened in the affairs of Asia Minor to support a small state there against encroachments by the Persian conqueror Cyrus. The son of Cyrus the Great, whom we know as Cambyses, but whose real name was probably in Persian Kambujiya, resolved

to punish Egypt for this interference. Aahmes, whom the Greeks called Amasis, died before he could resist the invasion, and his son, Psametik III., lost his throne and the independence of Egypt in the battle of Pelusium. Cambyzes became the conqueror, and was crowned the legitimate King of Egypt. He seems to have been an erratic and cruel conqueror, but, like Nero, somewhat fantastically interested in science and exploration. He sent one great expedition into the Libyan Desert which was never heard of again, and is supposed to have perished in the sand; and he led a great army himself up the Nile with some vague intention of conquering the Ethiopians. His soldiers, however, had marched only a small distance into the desert when their commissariat failed, and many perished, while others became cannibals in their mad hunger. This disaster put a stop to any further efforts on the part of the Persian Overlords of Egypt. For nearly two hundred years Persia maintained her hold over Egypt, though for brief intervals native dynasties arose in this part and that part and flickered for a time in a state of semi-independence. Then happened one of the great events in the history of Egypt and of the development of Africa, — an event which may be paralleled by the descent on Egypt of Napoleon Bonaparte two thousand one hundred and thirty-one years later: Alexander the Great, continuing his war against the Persian Empire, attacked that power in Egypt and won the day. Alexander left in charge in Egypt one of his

DAWN OF EXPLORATION 13

generals (who was perhaps also his illegitimate half-brother), Ptolemy. After his death Ptolemy refused to acknowledge the claims of Alexander's posthumous son, and made himself King of Egypt. He thus founded a Greek dynasty in that country which lasted till the advent of the Cæsars and expired in the person of the world-famed Cleopatra.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEKS INTEREST EUROPE IN THE NILE QUESTION

THE second division of the Caucasian species of man (the Iberian being the first) was the Aryan, — a race of golden-haired, pink and white complexioned people, with eyes that are blue, gray, or violet.¹ The Aryans first came into Greece as barbarians and destroyers, but were soon conquered by the preceding Iberian Mykenæan civilisation, on which they built up that Hellenic art and knowledge which are the foundations of European civilisation at the present day. This Hellenic spirit first made itself felt in Africa through the Greek colonies of the Cyrenaica. Greece, when it became conscious of a world beyond its peninsulas and islands, was strongly drawn towards Africa. The power of Egypt long withstood attempts at Greek colonisation, though in quite early days Hellenic or Hellenised Europeans were employed by the rulers of Egypt as mercenary soldiers. Therefore, following the line of least resistance, Greece planted her first African colonies between Egypt on the east and the settlements of the

¹ Needless to say, in all cases the iris of these eyes is actually gray; but the gray almost verges on blue in some instances, while the absence or presence of a dark rim round the eyes gives or withholds the violet tinge to the gray.

Phœnicians (Carthage) on the west. Due west of the narrow coast belt of Egypt is a remarkable projection of North Africa into the Mediterranean,—the modern Barka, the ancient Cyrenaica. This projection has been, several times in geological history, a series of islands in a larger Mediterranean, or it has grown into a bridge connecting Greece with Africa. The land now rises to heights of three thousand feet, and there is a sufficiency of rainfall in ordinary seasons to nourish a vegetation not much less rich than that of southern Italy. South of the Cyrenaica lies the Sahara Desert in its most aggravated form of well-nigh impassable sand dunes. No Greek expedition that we know of ever succeeded in crossing the Sahara from Cyrenaica and reaching the Sudan; but Greek influence and inquiries were dimly felt in Phazania (Fezzan) to the southwest, and the existence and prosperity of these Greek colonies in North Africa aroused the interest of the Greeks in matters of African exploration. In about 457 B.C. Herodotus (a native of Halicarnassus, a Hellenised state in Asia Minor under Persian rule) visited Egypt, which from 650 B.C. onwards had been more or less thrown open to Greek enterprise by Psametik I. Herodotus himself travelled up the Nile as far as the First Cataract, and collected with some industry information from Egyptians and travelled Greeks as to the regions which lay beyond. From these he learned that the origin of the Nile was unknown, but that the river might come from the far west, from the region where we now know Lake Chad

to be; that there was a civilised city of Ethiopians in the great bend of the Nile at Meroe (Merāwi of to-day), and that beyond this nothing certain was known of the Nile course. Aristotle — the great Greek philosopher, who was born in northern Greece in 384 B. C. — wrote on African discovery and recorded the news that to the southwest of the Nile were Pygmy races who frequently warred with the “cranes” (? ostriches).

In B. C. 276 was born at Cyrene, in North Africa, Eratosthenes, a Greek geographer, who was made Librarian at Alexandria. From the information he collected and collated (supplied, no doubt, by Greek traders) he, first of all known geographers, sketched out with fair accuracy the course of the Nile and its two great Abyssinian affluents as far south as the modern Khartum. He hinted at the lake sources and first mentioned the Nubians.

It was the conquest of Egypt from Persian domination by Alexander the Great which really did more to extend Greek commerce and civilisation and the use of the Greek language over eastern Africa and western Asia than has even been done at a far later date in other parts of the world for German commerce, knowledge, and the German language by the unification of Germany under Bismarck, William I., and William II. Greek explorers visited the Nile as far south as the junction of the Astapus (Blue Nile), and Greek settlements were made on the island of Sokotra, and possibly at other points near the mouth of the

Red Sea. Greek traders even visited the East African coast as far as Pangani, opposite Zanzibar. The Greeks revealed India to Europe, and the commerce which sprung up there through Greek agencies on the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea gave unwilling navigators, in those days before steam force, some acquaintance with the eastern coast of Africa as far south as Zanzibar.

Yet the Greeks in all these regions were (as subsequently happened with the Portuguese) but the followers of the Arabs and Phœnicians. Some impulse, kindred in origin, no doubt, to the evolution of the Phœnicians, had created an ancient civilisation in southern and western Arabia which perhaps reached its climax in the lofty, well-watered, and fertile country of Yaman. Much of southern Arabia, however, several thousand years ago, was less arid than at the present day. The rainfall was greater, and the already civilised inhabitants industriously preserved the precious water by dams for purposes of irrigation. This civilisation may be briefly styled Himyaritic or Sabæan, — perhaps the last name is the more comprehensive. These Sabæan Arabs of south and southwest Arabia, separately or in conjunction with their Phœnician cousins, pursued their search for metals down the east coast of Africa, along which they made settlements which are probably the sites of most of the modern emporiums of commerce on the same coast. They had reached the mouth of the Zambezi and ascended that river, and had penetrated as far south as,

let us say, Delagoa Bay. It was perhaps their exploration of the Zambezi which led them to discover alluvial gold in the vicinity of that river, though they afterwards found a shorter route to the gold fields by way of Sofala. In this way they forestalled by some twenty-five hundred years modern Rhodesian enterprise, and gold was worked in the regions to the south of the Lower Zambezi and a little to the north of that river by Arabs or people of allied language and race almost continuously from an approximate period of three thousand years ago down to the arrival of the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century of this era. In the days before the appalling religious disunion brought about by the conflicts between Christianity and Islam there was no bitter feeling against the European on the part of the Arab, and Greek adventurers and traders appear to have penetrated freely up the Nile, and to have worked cordially with the Sabæan Arabs whom they found established at various points between India on the one hand and Zanzibar and the Red Sea on the other. The Greek colony on the island of Sokotra no doubt traded industriously with the opposite coast of Somaliland.

Rome displaced Greece in Egypt in the same way that Greece had displaced Persia, and that Persia had closed the five thousand years of fighting between Libyan, Gala, Arab, and Nubian. In 168 B. C. Rome extended her protection over Egypt. In 30 B. C. Egypt became a Roman province. When the Romans really

took over the administration of the land, they too, like the Galas, Persians, and Greeks before them, and the French, Turks, and English after them, began to be interested in the quest for the Nile sources. Each newly-arrived race of Caucasian conquerors in Egypt has felt the same interest. But much of the exploring and recording work under Roman rule was done by Greeks. Strabo, a native of Amasia in Pontus, on the southern shore of the Black Sea, who was born somewhere about 50 B. C., became, when quite a young man, a geographer of the Roman world. He accompanied in B. C. 24 Ælius Gallus, the Roman Governor of Egypt, on a journey up the Nile as far as Philæ (beyond Assuan and the First Cataract). Pliny the Elder, writing some fifty years after the birth of Christ, shows us that just before and just after that event Greek explorers (mainly from Asia Minor) had been busy on the Nile above the First Cataract and perhaps south of Khartum. These were Bion, Dalion, and Simonides. Aristocreon and Basilis are also mentioned as authorities on Nile exploration, but not necessarily explorers themselves. Simonides, above mentioned, lived for five years in Meroe. Dalion is thought to have penetrated up the river some distance beyond Khartum. The "Meroe" which is so constantly mentioned by Greek and Roman writers from Herodotus to Ptolemy, was a name given originally to an important and flourishing city on the south or left bank of the Nile in Dongola, — the modern Merāwi. This place was also known

as Napata (Egyptian, Nepet), and was the residence of Ethiopian (Abyssinian, Gala, Nubian) kings. Later the name Meroe was also applied to a place on the right bank of the Nile about one hundred miles south of that river's confluence with the Atbara. This is probably where the Greek Simonides stayed and beyond which Dalion travelled. Finally, the term Meroe was applied to the "Island" (peninsula) formed by the Atbara, the Blue Nile, and the White Nile, a region formerly of great fertility.

The Emperor Nero, though the Beast of the Apocalypse, had a certain genial interest in geography. He despatched — or caused to be despatched — an expedition under two centurions in about the year 66 A.D., to discover, if possible, the source or sources of the White Nile. Before dealing with Egypt the Romans had taken over control of the old Greek colonies of the Cyrenaica and on the coast of Tripoli. This had led (A.D. 19) to their having extensive relations with the Berber kingdom of Fezzan, with whom and with the Tawareq people of Garama to the south they maintained friendly relations. Through this friendly co-operation a Roman expedition under Septimus Flaccus had in the year 50 A.D. (perhaps) reached to some trans-Saharan place like Bilma. Much later, about 150 A.D., another expedition under Julius Maternus joined forces with the friendly Berber King of Garama, and actually travelled to the vicinity of Lake Chad, or, as some think, to the oasis of Air or Asben farther to the west. It was a country which they called Agi-

symba, and abounded in rhinoceroses. From this expedition the Romans derived some inkling of the possibilities, beyond the sandy wastes and sun-smitten rocks of the Sahara Desert, of a fertile Sudan, populated with an excellent material for slaves. But a hundred years earlier they had realised the enormous difficulties which attended any enterprise (in the days before camels were used in Africa) across the Sahara Desert, and this gave them an added desire to follow up the Nile and ascertain its practicability as a waterway into Negro Africa.

Nero's two centurions were passed on by Roman prefects to friendly Nubian chiefs, one of whom ruled the principality of Meroe along the main Nile between Atbara and the Blue Nile confluence. Furnished with boats which they later exchanged for dug-out canoes, they appear to have ascended the Nile above Fashoda, and possibly above the confluence between the Bahr-al-Ghazal and the Kir or White Nile. At any rate they got far enough south to come in contact with the Great Marsh which extends from the vicinity of Fashoda to the frontiers of the Uganda Protectorate. Their passage was stopped by the accumulation of water vegetation which we now know as the "sudd." Some writers on ancient geography believe that the two centurions penetrated as far south as the sixth degree of north latitude, or the verge of the Bari country. At any rate they got well into the land of the naked Nile Negroes. Their discouraging reports seem to have put an end to any further Roman enterprise in the matter.

Greek traders in Egypt prospered greatly under the peace imposed by the Roman Empire. Their commerce with Arabia, East Africa, and India grew to a wonderful development in the first century after Christ. About 77 A.D. was published by a Greek of Alexandria the celebrated "Periplus of the Red Sea," a pilot's manual not unlike the modern Admiralty "sailing directions." This "Periplus" shows us that the Greeks by the middle of the first century knew the Zanzibar coast very well under the name of Azan or Azania.

Among these Greek merchants trading with India was one Diogenes, who, on returning from a voyage to India in about 50 A. D., landed on the East African coast at Rhaptum (Pangani or the mouth of the river Rufu?). Thence, he said, he "travelled inland for a twenty-five days' journey, and arrived in the vicinity of the two great lakes and the snowy range of mountains whence the Nile draws its twin sources." As nothing is recorded about his return journey, it is more probable that he merely conversed on the coast with Arab settlers and traders who told him that at a distance of twenty-five days' march in the interior began a series of great lakes from two of which were derived the twin sources of the White Nile; that farther to the south of the most western of these two lakes was a range of mountains of great altitude covered with snow and ice, and named for their brilliant appearance of white the Mountains of the Moon. The Nile, he was told, united its twin head-streams at a point to



[Face page 23.]
THE MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON: A GLIMPSE OF ONE OF RUWENZORI'S HIGHEST PEAKS,

the north of these two great lakes, and then flowed through marshes until it joined the River of Abyssinia (the Blue Nile), and so reached the regions of the known.

This story was told by Diogenes to a Syrian geographer called Marinus of Tyre, who published it in his geographical works in the first century of the Christian era. The writings of Marinus of Tyre disappeared, probably with the dispersal of the Alexandrian Library, but fortunately for us at the present day all that portion of them dealing with the sources of the Nile was quoted almost *in extenso* by another geographer, Claudius Ptolemæus, a Greek-Egyptian, born at Ptolemais in the Delta of the Nile, and resident at Alexandria (perhaps in connection with the celebrated Library). Ptolemy (as he is currently and incorrectly called) wrote in about the year 150 A. D., and therefore to Ptolemy is commonly attributed the first clearly expressed theory as to the main origin of the White Nile, the twin lakes (Victoria and Albert), and the great snowy range called the Mountains of the Moon (Ruwenzori).¹ Neither Marinus of Tyre nor Claudius Ptolemæus was the first person to hint at this origin of the Nile. Besides Eratosthenes and Pliny there are indications in various records of the two centuries before Christ that the idea of the White

¹ Ptolemy's original maps have disappeared, and we only know them through the well-nigh innumerable copies that were made by Greek monks between 600 and 900 A. D., by Arabs in the Islamic Renaissance, by Latin monks and pilgrims, by Venetian and Catalan sailors, and Flemish or German geographers. Latterly many of these copyists imported into Ptolemy's maps of the Nile much recent and modern information.

Nile issuing from two great lakes and passing through a vast marshy region before it reached Ethiopia was vaguely known. The idea had perhaps even reached the ears of Cambyses and of such of the earlier Ptolemies as may have cared for geographical speculations. The bearers of the news would undoubtedly have been men of the Gala (Abyssinian, Somali, Cushite) race, who at that distant period of time seem to have freely penetrated through the lands of the brutish and unarmed Negroes. No doubt many a Greek adventurer in passing along the east coast of Africa brought back tidings similar to those of Diogenes, but his grain fell among the rocks, and the only definite record of the existence of this theory as to the Nile's origin is the story of Diogenes preserved through the industry of Marinus of Tyre and Claudius Ptolemæus of Alexandria.

The recording of travellers' tales as to the twin lake sources of the main Nile stream and the existence of a great snowy range called the Mountains of the Moon was not the only contribution made by Claudius Ptolemæus to Nile geography. The Egyptian Greek indeed was a geographical giant compared with any of his predecessors, nor was the height of his knowledge concerning the geography of Europe, Asia, and Africa reached and passed until the fifteenth century of the present era, some twelve hundred years after his death. The results of the later Crusades, intercourse with the Arabs, and the journeys of Marco Polo and other enterprising Venetians had brought

in some cases confirmation of Ptolemy's theories, had corrected some of his errors, and had filled up gaps in his information. But as regards the geography of Africa more especially, Ptolemy remained ostensibly the great authority until the end of the fifteenth century, although, as already mentioned in a footnote, the latest editions of Ptolemy's maps (the latest ascribed to Ptolemy was published about 1485) show that the geographers at the closing part of the fifteenth century, consciously or unconsciously, touched up Ptolemy's work by later information received from Arabs, Italians, and Turks. Ptolemy discussed with much detail the whole course of the Nile so far as it lay to any extent within the regions of the known. He described the approximate outline of its course about as far as the present site of Berber, which district he describes as the Greater Primis, a name which Sir E. H. Bunbury takes to be identical with the locality of Primnis¹ rumoured by Strabo. Above this point Ptolemy applies the name of Meroe (so often attributed to settlements or districts in Dongola) to that great peninsula which is so nearly enclosed between the Atbara, the main and the Blue Niles. Ptolemy indeed, and most writers of earlier and later days, believed this district to be an actual island.² The junction of the Blue and the White

¹ Even to-day the local (unofficial) name of Berber or any of the districts round Berber is Ibrim.

² This mistake is hardly surprising, seeing that at Matama, in the country of Galabat, the most southern affluent of the Atbara approaches to within five miles of the most eastern affluent of the Blue Nile. See Chapter XXVI.

Niles is wrongly placed by Ptolemy in latitude 12° north, instead of $15^{\circ} 40'$, and from this point southwards Ptolemy's proposed latitudes of places on the White Nile became increasingly incorrect, so that by him the Nile system was carried a little too far to the south of the equator. South of the site of modern Khartum Ptolemy had but little information to go upon, other than the account of the Centurions' voyage; but from such suggestions as he could obtain, together with the story of Diogenes, he guessed that the twin sources of the White Nile joined their streams into one river at 2° north latitude. This junction described with the knowledge of later days would be equivalent to the exit of the Nile from Lake Albert, the real latitude of this point being $2^{\circ} 25'$ — an uncommonly good guess on Ptolemy's part. Ptolemy, however, imagined nothing quite like Lake Albert, but thought that the waters coming respectively from the two great equatorial lakes effected their junction at a point some two hundred and fifty miles north of the western lake source (Lake Albert); for he surmises that this lake lies approximately under the sixth degree of south latitude (its southernmost extremity is in $1^{\circ} 10'$ north of the equator). His hypothetical Lake Victoria lies under or extends to the seventh degree of south latitude, instead of no farther than about $3^{\circ} 30'$ south. Ptolemy, however, was careful to discriminate between the lake sources of the White Nile and the lake (Tsana) from which the Blue Nile issues in the highlands of Abyssinia. This



Mountains of the Moon

[Face page 26.]

THE COURSE OF THE NILE, ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY.
From the oldest version of Ptolemy's Map in existence, about 930 A.D., preserved
in Mount Athos Monastery.

sheet of water he calls definitely Coloe, and states that it is the source of the river Astapus (or Blue Nile). It is thought that Strabo also made allusion to Lake Tsana under the name of Psebo. It is probable that both Strabo and Ptolemy heard of this lake source of the Astapus or Blue Nile from Greek traders who had penetrated Abyssinia; for, during the first centuries after Christ, Axum (then called Auxuma) had become an important trading-centre which was reached from Adulis (Adulis being a port on the Red Sea not far from the modern Masawa). Ptolemy's location of Lake Tsana, however, like the equatorial lakes, is too far to the south. His sketch of the main course of the Atbara (Astaboras) on the one hand, and of the Blue Nile (Astapus) on the other, would not be very incorrect, but for the fact that he makes these streams unite somewhere in the latitude of Khartum and then separate again, their northern separation enclosing the island of Meroe. The Græcicised names of Astapos (Blue Nile) and Astaboras (Atbara) were recorded before the days of Ptolemy by Eratosthenes, but were not applied in the same definite way to the Blue Nile and the Atbara. Eratosthenes sometimes applies the name of Astapos to the main stream of the Nile and not specially to the Blue Nile. He also mentions that the main stream of the Nile is called Astasobas. It is evident that in these words we have corruptions of local names, possibly derived from Nubian, or it may be from Hamitic languages. Astaboras needs but little identification

with the Atbara. Astapus (Greek = Astapos) is not clearly recognizable under the modern Abyssinian name of the Blue Nile, — Abai. The second part of Astasobas certainly recalls the name Sobat, which besides being applied by the Sudanese Arabs to the Baro or Sobat is also sometimes given by them or by the Nile Negroes to the main course of the White Nile south of Khartum. Asta may have been some Ethiopian term meaning "river."

The present writer is unable to understand why that able geographer, Mr. E. G. Ravenstein, has doubted the identification of Ruwenzori with Ptolemy's Mountains of the Moon. It must be obvious, when all facts are considered, that Ruwenzori was the principal germ of this idea. The Greek traders at Rhapta (Pangani) no doubt had some idea of the existence of Kilimanjaro, but it is doubtful whether either the single dome of Kilimanjaro or the gleaming pinnacle of Kenia would impress the imagination so strongly as the whole brilliant range of Ruwenzori's four or five snow-peaks and thirty miles of glaciation. On such occasions, as when this range is visible from a distance, and broadside on, the dark blue forested slopes merge into the morning mists of the lowlands, leaving the splendid phantasmagoria of cream-coloured snow and gray rock floating in the sky like an exaggerated lunar landscape. Ptolemy places this range, as he does his lakes, too far to the south, and associates it more with the modern country of Unyamwezi than with the region between the two lakes Albert and Victoria. But

no doubt then, as in Speke's day, Ruwenzori and Lake Albert were reached by Greek adventurers, by Sabæan Arabs, or by natives who served as intermediaries, by way of the established trade route through Unyamwezi. This word, which means "the Land of the Moon," appears to be rather old for a Bantu place name: Unyamwezi indeed seems in the history of Bantu migrations to have played an important part, and to have been one of those many sub-centres from which great dispersals of the Bantu races took place. Indeed the Zulus (who were probably the dreaded Mazimba or Bazimba spoken of by the Portuguese) seem to have halted in their cannibal days in Unyamwezi before they descended on South Africa in the sixteenth century. Ruwenzori is not, after all, such a very long journey to the northwest of Unyamwezi, and it is very possible that the returning travellers, having stated that they reached the Nile sources and these wonderful snow-mountains through the Land of the Moon thus caused this lunar name to be applied by Ptolemy to the Ruwenzori range.

Though not an explorer, Ptolemy stands (for his age) in the highest rank of Nile geographers; but he had to wait something like seventeen hundred and forty years before Sir Henry Stanley, by his discovery of the Semliki, the Ruwenzori snow-range, and the last problems of the Nile sources, did justice to that remarkable foreshadowing of the main features of the Nile system due to the genius of the Alexandrian geographer.

CHAPTER III

ABYSSINIANS AND JEWS

THE race of the Greek kings who ruled over Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great and until 30 B.C., and later, again, the Byzantine Emperors of Eastern Rome did much to implant Hellenic civilisation and the use of the Greek language in Egypt, and their influence extended over Abyssinia, where the kings of Ethiopian race (Gala dashed with Arab and Jew) admired and imitated them in much the same manner as the second Emperor of the French was admired and imitated by the lesser potentates of Germany. The history of Abyssinia — if it is to be written with regard to truth — is still obscure. This country of lofty mountains and temperate climate is bordered on the east by the land of Afar, an inhospitable desert inhabited by fierce Hamites (Danākil). On the south its mountains are connected by plateaux and ridges with the highlands of East Africa, but are separated by much arid and parched country from the regions of the modern Uganda protectorate. On the west the mountains of Abyssinia descend in terraces to the plains of the central Nile. Here the torrid climate is that of the Sudan, but the country is better watered by the rivers which rise in Abyssinia, and by a fairly

regular rainfall. On the extreme north the Abyssinian mountains almost overhang the coast of the Red Sea, and are no doubt visible in clear weather from the opposite Arabian shore. The mountains of Yaman are remarkably similar in many points to those of Abyssinia, and the people of Yaman when they were seized with a desire to emigrate in search of fresh homes were no doubt drawn to this distant land of mountains just visible in the west. Originally no doubt Abyssinia was peopled by the same dwarf Bushman race as that which formed the lowest stratum of all the African populations. Then a portion of the country came into the possession of the big black Negroes who still inhabit its western flanks. These again are superseded and partially absorbed by the superior race of the Hamites, the ancestors of the Gala, Somali, and Ancient Egyptian. This Hamite race of Caucasian stock with some Negroid intermixture forms the basis of the Abyssinian population at the present day. But in the early days of Sabæan enterprise — say four thousand to three thousand years ago — Abyssinia was conquered by Sabæan Arabs from Yaman. At many subsequent periods Abyssinia and Yaman (the Red Sea acting as no barrier) were governed by the same dynasty, and when Yaman came under Persian influence that influence also penetrated Abyssinia. In this manner Abyssinia early developed a trade with India, and even served as an emporium for the introduction of Indian wares into Egypt on the one hand and the remote parts of eastern equatorial Africa on

the other. The Queen of Saba (Sheba) is no doubt in many respects a legendary personage, but if she had any real historical existence she is another instance of an Arab ruler who governed both Abyssinia and Yaman. She may or may not have visited Solomon, but there is no doubt that in the time of that Jewish king some intercourse was kept up between the kingdom of Israel in its brief flicker of power and prosperity, and the coasts of the Red Sea and southern Arabia. After the smashing up of the Hebrew state by the Assyrians there are good reasons for assuming that a number of the dispersed Israelites migrated to Abyssinia, as no doubt they did to other parts of the Sabæan Empire. Jewish monotheism always had a certain fascination (in the days before Christianity and Islam) for the peoples of Arabia and of Mauritania. This influence was most felt after the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the subsequent dispersal of the Jews in all directions. Several princes in southwestern Arabia adopted the Jewish faith, more or less, and the Jewish settlers in Abyssinia also appear to have acted as missionaries in converting the savage, nominally Semitic, partly Gala rulers of Abyssinia to the principles of the Jewish faith, into which they wove Jewish legends, such as the glory and power of Solomon. A similar influence impressed on the Arab mind the Solomon of the legends. The real son of David was no doubt an unimportant Semitic prince who borrowed a little civilisation from his Phœnician, Egyptian, and Sabæan

neighbours. But the Greek influence emanating from Egypt displaced for a time the Persian and Jewish culture in Abyssinia. In the northern parts of that (then) collection of Arab and Gala kingdoms, Greek began to be used as a second language, the speech of the Court itself being a foreign tongue (Ge'ez), derived from the Himyaritic or some early south Semitic language.

Auxuma — the modern Auxum — in the kingdom or province of Tigre (northeastern Abyssinia) and near the more modern town of Adua, became an important trade centre, frequented by many Greek merchants, some of whom seem to have occasionally returned to their homes in Egypt by way of the Atbara and the Nile. Others forestalled the Portuguese by entering into trade relations or actually undertaking journeys which revealed to them the existence of Lake Tsana and the upper waters of the Blue Nile.

Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Byzantine Greek, who traded with India in the early part of the sixth century of our era, called at the port of Adulis (near Masawa) in 520 A.D. He discovered at this place a monument which contained two separate inscriptions. The monument was apparently one erected at the orders of Ptolemy III. (Philadelphus), who reigned in Egypt from 285 to 247 B.C. This Ptolemy led and sent expeditions which made a partial conquest of the coast regions of northern Abyssinia, and added to the Egyptian Empire of that day a good deal of

what now constitutes the modern Italian colony of Eritrea.¹

On the same monument some four hundred and seventy years later, in about 127 A.D., a Semitic Abyssinian king (possibly Ela-Auda) recorded in turn his own victories and extensions of rule. These conquests seem to have done much to carry the Abyssinian (Semitic as distinct from Hamitic) arms as far south as the ninth degree of north latitude. Other indications would show that from this time onwards to about the tenth century A.D. Abyssinian influence and conquests extended southward intermittently to the vicinity of Lake Rudolf (the northern end of that lake). Owing to these conquests, Christianity was carried as far south as the modern province of Kaffa, and northwestwards along the course of the Blue Nile to the site of the modern Khartum; for at one time Abyssinian suzerainty or rule extended almost to the verge of Kordofan on the west.²

The introduction of Islam among the Somalis, among some of the Gala tribes, and all round the north and west of Abyssinia in the centuries that followed the eleventh, checked any further spread of Christianity, and limited — even curtailed — the political aspirations of Abyssinia. In the sixteenth century a Muhammadan

¹ Ptolemy Philadelphus' chief inducement to establish stations in Abyssinia was to procure war elephants. Thus to these Egyptian Greeks and Ethiopians the African elephant did not appear too intractable.

² Dongola, the accepted name for the Nubian country north of Kordofan, appears at one time to have been inhabited by a race speaking a Hamitic rather than a Nubian language. Dongola (originally Dankala), or its plural, Danagla, may be etymologically connected with Danākil of the north Somali coast.

ruler — Muhammad Granye — arose in the Danakil country (Tajurra Bay), and practically smashed the Ethiopian Christian power in Abyssinia, which did not recover from the ravages of these Muhammadan (Arab and Somali) armies for a century or more. Soon after the wars of Muhammad Granye the heathen Galas¹ from the south and southwest entered Abyssinia in force, and it was a long time before the Semitic rulers of that country could bring them under control. The arrival of the Portuguese (to be described in the next chapter) gave a fillip to the power of the Christian Semites of Abyssinia, mainly through the introduction of guns and gunpowder. It is possible, indeed, that at different times after the commencement of the Christian era Abyssinian raiders may have ridden south on their slave, ivory, and cattle-hunting expeditions as far as the vicinity of Mount Elgon. At the present day their raiders come almost to the frontiers of Busoga, for there is no tsetse fly in all the district between Abyssinia and the Victoria Nyanza; therefore, as the Abyssinians have possessed horses for several thousand years, there has been little to stop their making rapid expeditions into the Land of the Blacks. In this way they may have raided and traded as far south as the Victoria Nyanza and as far west as the White Nile, bringing back with them for the edification of the Greeks stories of the Great

¹ Gala and Somali are almost convertible terms. But in this book Somali is used to indicate that section of the Gala peoples who have become Muhammadans, and Gala is reserved as a general term for the whole race or for its non-Islamite tribes.

Lakes and Snow-mountains, and assisting, perhaps, to distribute over the lands now comprised within the Uganda Protectorate those remarkable blue Egyptian beads of unknown antiquity which have been referred to by the present writer in his book, "The Uganda Protectorate," as being some slight indication of ancient trading relations between the countries of the Great Lakes and those under the dominion of Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

ISLAMITES AND ITALIANS

WHEN Egypt had become part of the Byzantine dominions, all interest in the Nile sources had died away, and men's minds were mainly centred on religious controversies of greater or less violence. Greek Christianity penetrated to Abyssinia and south of Abyssinia to countries not far from the north end of Lake Rudolf. Most of the Nubian kingdoms became nominally Christian, and Christianity was the religion of the people on the Nile banks as far south as the confluence of the Blue and White Niles. It is thought by the missionaries of the White Fathers' Mission to Uganda that the sign of the cross and the idea of baptism, with one or two other practices found in the old heathen religions of Unyoro and Uganda, may have reached those countries from Abyssinia. Greek and Arab Christians in the first six centuries of the Christian era certainly penetrated to the East African coast, but after the official adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire all mundane knowledge began to decay. Christianity inspired a contempt for science, and the only ideas of geography which floated about the world were connected with the wanderings of propagandists or

pilgrimages to the shrines of saints. Arab enterprise, moreover, in these sad centuries suffered a curious eclipse. Far to the south, in Zambezia, no doubt the invasion of the country by the earlier and later sections of the Bantu Negroes brought about the destruction of Sabæan power; and the somewhat degenerate successors of the Sabæans from the south coast of Arabia only occupied the coast emporiums dotted along the littoral from Somaliland to Sofala.

Then came one of the great landmarks of the world's history, a movement productive of a little good and some harm to civilisation. Christianity had first been organised as a socialistic religion, grafting on to the beautiful and indisputable precepts of its Founder the reaction of poor, ignorant, starved, and enslaved people against the unmoral philosophy, unequal wealth, and excessive materialism of the time. It then grew to be a somewhat dismal faith, taking no heed of the beauty of this world and of mundane opportunities for happiness; and above all it waged an active warfare with sexuality, not merely curbing immorality, but (wisely or unwisely) opposing polygamy and advocating celibacy. The Arab and the North African were not ripe for such a faith, and Judaism had already biassed them against the polytheistic tendencies of Greek Christianity. Muham-mad, the prophet of western Arabia, founded on a basis of phallic worship and animistic belief the third great Semitic religion — Islam. His teaching was a direct challenge to Christianity, and soon became

iconoclastic in every sense of the word. Though the Persian, Syrian, and Iberian elements of the Arab Empire for a time revived and perpetuated in somewhat grotesque aspect the science of Greece, the art of Persia, and the lore of India, the Muhammadan religion sealed most parts of Africa to European and Christian research. It is true, however, that the conquests of Islam enabled Arabs to penetrate further into the interior of tropical Africa than before, though from the dawn of civilisation they had been the most constant explorers of the eastern part of that continent.

The Arabs began to mention names connected with the Niger and the western Sudan to the geographers of Italy and Sicily. Under the impulse of Islamic, Persian, and Arab colonies the east coast of Africa and the north coast of Madagascar came partially under Muhammadan rule in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Arabs there carrying on almost continuously the commercial enterprise founded by their predecessors and brothers, the Phœnicians and Sabæans. Invasion after invasion crossed from Arabia, and passed over the lowlands surrounding Abyssinia to the central Sudan; or higher up, through Egypt, to Mauritania. But the Arabs who crossed the Nile in the latitudes of Khartum and Assuan made no attempts to follow the White Nile, the Blue Nile, or the Bahr-al-Ghazal to their sources,—left in fact all the Nile basin above the confluence of the Blue and White rivers absolutely untouched and unexplored. Egypt itself came under

Arab rule in 640 A.D., and subsequently formed an independent principality under the Fatimite Khalifs.

The Crusades brought French, Germans, and English, Aragonese and Flemings to the Delta of the Nile in more or less disastrous expeditions against the Saracen power, — a power which was fast becoming that of the Turk. A curious relic of these crusading days in the Nile Delta is or was (for the present writer is not aware if they still exist) several Spanish (originally Aragonese) monasteries, which were established with the consent of the Muhammadan rulers of Egypt in order to mitigate the woes of Christian captives and to arrange terms for their release.

Venice, however, — which had somewhat held aloof from the religious ardour of the Crusades in order to build up a great commerce with the Muhammadan East, — Venice became during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the great neutral go-between for the trade of India, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, and Syria with the Byzantine Empire and the rest of Europe. Venetians (in Arab dress, of course) ran less risk than other Europeans when travelling in Egypt in the days before the Portuguese discoveries. Through the Venetians Europe became acquainted with several strange African beasts which were brought from the Sudan for public exhibition in Muhammadan Egypt, and in this way European interest in the sources of the Nile was occasionally revived. It is remarkable to reflect that the name of Venice will



AN ARAB TRADER (MASKATI).

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probably never die out (as far as etymology is concerned) in the very heart of Africa. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and perhaps later, Venice manufactured in her arsenals improved types of guns. She also acted as an intermediary in exchanging muskets (manufactured elsewhere in Europe) with the Arabs and Turks, who at that time could not construct these firearms for themselves. Thus the Turks and Arabs became accustomed to call any improved type of musket a "Venetian" (Bunduqi).¹ In this way the name of the most beautiful city in the world has penetrated beyond the explorations of any European into the very heart of Africa, as it has also circulated through all the Muhammadan East.

¹ The Arabic and Turkish name for Venice is, or was, Bunduq. This was a clumsy rendering of the German Venedig, which again was a corruption of the Latin Veneticum. Although the Arab *q* (a very strong *k*) is almost unpronounceable by most Europeans, it is nevertheless constantly used by Arabs for translating the *k*-sound in European words.

CHAPTER V

A SUMMARY OF THE ANCIENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE NILE

THE next page in the history of the Nile Quest is marked by the coming of the Portuguese; but before we proceed to consider what effect this movement had on the revelation of Africa to the knowledge of the Caucasian species, let us sum up briefly the purport of the foregoing chapters:—

1. The lands through which the Nile flows were inhabited some ten thousand years ago—let us say at a guess—by Pygmies in the north, east, and southwest, and elsewhere by big black Negroes, these types being offshoots from the original Negro Asiatic stem.

At some such period as ten thousand years ago northeast Africa was repeatedly invaded from Arabia by a branch of the Caucasian race—the Hamites—which in Arabia had absorbed a certain proportion of early Negro and Dravidian¹ blood. About the same time in Egypt itself there were invasions of other Caucasian immigrants; some perhaps of the

¹ By "Dravidian" I mean that very early and little differentiated, dark-coloured Caucasian of India who is only a few degrees, physically, above the Australian race.

Dravidian stock still met with in Baluchistan and India, and others of Libyan (Iberian, Algerian) race. There had also been early minglings between the big black Negroes on the Central Nile and Hamite invaders which had resulted in further hybrids such as the Nubians or "Ethiopians." These Ethiopians constantly invaded and raided Egypt, thus mingling with the Caucasian Egyptians, but also at other times acted as middlemen between civilised Egypt and the utterly barbarous countries of the Bahr-al-Ghazal and the Sudan; they brought to Egypt knowledge of the Pygmies and such of the bigger beasts of Africa as had become extinct in Egypt before the arrival of intelligent man. Through these Nubians the Egyptians occasionally had glimmering ideas as to the sources of the White Nile.

2. The Egyptians kept up a fairly constant communication with Abyssinia and Somaliland by sea and overland. They had a fair knowledge of the geographical features of Abyssinia and of the origin and source of the Blue Nile. Moreover, through the ancestors of the Galas and Somalis they came slightly into contact with the peoples of Lake Rudolf and the Victoria Nyanza.

3. The Greeks, who began to travel in Egypt five hundred years before Christ, expressed some curiosity about the origin of the Nile, and communicated this inquiring spirit to the Romans. This resulted for a time in the knowledge of the White Nile as far south as Fashoda.

4. The Arabs of western and southern Arabia very early in the history of civilisation developed a culture scarcely inferior to that of the Egyptians, and entered into trading and colonising relations with Abyssinia and Somaliland, and with the East African coastlands as far south as the modern Rhodesia. From their settlements on the Zanzibar coast (such as Mombasa) they probably journeyed inland on trading expeditions, or else the natives, who came to trade with them at the coast, gave them geographical information. In one or other way they learnt the existence of great lakes and snow-mountains. These stories the Arabs passed on to inquiring Greeks as far back as two thousand years ago; and an account which was an uncommonly near guess at the truth was given to the reading world during the first two centuries after the birth of Christ by writers on geography like Marinus of Tyre and Claudius Ptolemæus of Alexandria.

5. This was the high-water mark of knowledge concerning the sources of the White Nile for something like eighteen hundred years. Information on the subject in the interval began to grow less rather than more. The stories of the Nile lakes were, however, revived after the Arab invasions of north-east Africa in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and were communicated to the European world of the Renaissance through the intermediary of the Saracen writers of Sicily, the theologians of Rome, and the merchants of Venice.

CHAPTER VI

PORTUGAL AND ABYSSINIA

PORTUGAL was created by the crusading spirit. The King of Castile, who had become the leading prince in the northern half of Spain, despatched a young Burgundian adventurer, Count Henry, to advance on the Douro from Galicia (in the northwest corner of the Spanish peninsula) and to drive the Moors into the sea,—either the Atlantic Ocean or the Straits of Gibraltar. Count Henry drove them at any rate half-way down that western coastland of the Spanish peninsula which we now call Portugal.¹ Lisbon was only eventually conquered from the Moors by the help of a large party of English volunteers who stopped to aid in this struggle with the Moslem while on their way to a Crusade in the Holy Land. Steadily, bit by bit, Count Henry and his successors, the kings of Portugal, drove the Moors southward into and out of the little province of Algarve, and then, flushed with continuous success, crossed the Straits, attacked them in Morocco, and

¹ At the time of these exploits Oporto, now the second town of Portugal, was of little account; the great port at the mouth of the Douro was called in Latin *Portus Calis*, or, in the local dialect, *Portugal*. This place, being the most important port in the district recovered from the Moors by Count Henry, gave its name to the little principality which he founded.

added a large part of the present Empire of Morocco to the possessions of the Portuguese Crown.¹ These brilliant successes awoke a great spirit of discovery in Portugal, — a spirit fomented and encouraged by that noble and far-sighted man, Prince Henry the Navigator, who had himself shared in the Morocco wars. Rapidly the limits of the Portuguese explorations extended. First they rounded Cape Bojador on the northwest coast of Africa. Then they reached Sierra Leone, the gold coast, Benin (where they powerfully affected native art and industry), the Niger Delta, the Cameroons, the Congo, Angola, and the Cape of Good Hope. Once having passed this promontory, whence they had once retired baffled, their great navigator, Vasco da Gama, carried on the exploration of the coasts of Africa eastward and northward to Mombasa and thence to India. Succeeding vessels explored the Red Sea, and the expeditions they conveyed attempted to get into touch with Abyssinia, where, according to the rumours brought home by crusaders

¹ Algarve is simply a Portuguese softening of the Arabic words *Al Gharb*, the Extreme West or place of sun-setting. At that time Morocco, across the Straits, was also called *Al Gharb* for the same reason. Therefore, after these conquests, the kings of Portugal styled themselves "Kings of the Algarves, on this side and on the other side of the sea." The after-triumphs of the Portuguese in the path of exploration, conquest, and colonisation were finally summed up in the grandiose titles of their monarchs, which endure to the present day, and which may well be allowed to endure with respect, seeing what the world's knowledge owes to the Portuguese navigators and conquistadores. The titles run, "*Rey de Portugal e dos Algarves, alem e aquem do Mar na Africa; Senhor da Guiné e da conquista e da navegacao d'Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia e India*" (King of Portugal and of the Algarves, on this side and on the other side of the Sea in Africa; Lord of Guinea, and of the conquest and navigation of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India).

and Italian merchants from Egypt, there lay a Christian country ruled by a pious monarch, John the Priest.¹ But before ever Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese, by contact with the Moors, had heard of Arab settlements on the East Coast of Africa, and of the insular character of the great continent. Their government, therefore, in 1486 despatched on a journey to Egypt, India, and eastern Africa Pero de Covilhã to spy out the land.

This was a very risky journey in those days when the jealousy of Venice was added to the fanaticism of the Moslems. But Pero de Covilhã fulfilled his mission. He visited Egypt, the Red Sea, and India. He then, on his return journey, touched at many of the Arab ports on the East African coast. Finally he disembarked at Masawa, and travelled to Abyssinia, the first intelligent European to enter that country for a very long period of time, — the first, in fact, since the Greek merchants and missionaries who traded and travelled under the Byzantine Empire. The King of Abyssinia was so delighted with the advent of this white man, yet so suspicious of his country's motives, that he was detained as an unwilling guest in Abyssinia for several years, and died when on his way home. But the Portuguese fleet came to Masawa in 1520 with an embassy which remained in the country of Abyssinia for six years. In this embassy were the priests Bermudez and Francisco Alvarez. Alvarez

¹ Prester John.