
1695
Suez

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1895 – 1896 –

Suez. Left 26th. Dec. Dhow fitted up with cabins & 18 men. no reefs in sails always change when wanted primitive method for extracting bilge water – all hands to hoist sail no idea of a jack or any modern improvement. at mouth of gulf of Suez coral reefs on all sides. Dhows wend their way in amongst them preferring it to open sea & anchor at night. Sharks in quantities & fish abundant. Lovely line of serrated mountains all down this coast, not a green thing to be seen anywhere.

Kossein little castle, once a thriving place. port of Kenech on the Nile whence travellers came before Suez canal. A P&O store now used as a camel stable & rows of disused & falling houses waiting in hopes of a railway soon. Two mosques with pretty architecture of their own courses of dark red stone from Kenech & white limestone from Kossein done into diaper & fretwork patterns. Columns similarly decorated quaint & picturesque. Round melon shaped tombs of Abadeh Sheikhs & mud houses with endless dove cotes mostly made out of broken old amphorae & built into walls. Very few dhows now found here

but several dug outs from Singapore, used by Red Sea ports in large numbers for putty wood on Steamers & steamer loads of them ready made are brought from Java. curious migration of boats!. Kossei 14 years ago was a great starting place for pilgrims to Mecca but now other ways are easier. Kossei Kadeem North 5 miles.

All along this coast are Mersa or little inlets of sea Umbarrak Shuna & others sheltered entirely by coral reefs outside & with narrow entrance where Dhows can find shelter harbours of ancient traders. Anchor for night at Mersa Eghela with a valley with some green running up & at point lives a hermit sheikh of Ababdi tribe he has been here in his hovel of stones for years & Bedouins from time to time bring him presents of water & food.

New years eve our crew go & burn incense there. Our captain says prayers on shore & the tom tom man mimics him.

Captain somewhat of a botanist tells us how the wood of tuldum ting yellow flower on

green stalks is tied in bits on arm & round neck to make people see far. another composite herb is hung up in houses to bring good luck & he forthwith hangs a bit on the bow of the Tyseer. he knows what camels eat what is good fire wood & other small points of botanical lore -

Cape Bernas is a long promontory with arid rocky hills of ironstone & silicate blending curiously together about 25 miles long & ending in a long spit of sand. at the extreme end of which dwells a sheikh hermit of the Ababdeh tribe to whose stores our crew contributed some bread & a few candles - Fine panorama of pointed mountains from Berenice downwards.

Ruins of B. close on coast by a lagoon which has been nearly silted up & not 2 feet of water over bar. Small Egyptian temple with lose calcareous stone in centre & almost effaced hieroglyphics, around are mounds representing madrepore houses

so that one can still see the streets &c. but finds therein of the most trivial character. Desert all around with mounds of tamarisk trees & a few mimosa. at foot of mountains are two late forts. Long madrepore house built on cement foundation.

Abab deh inhabs are slow to help us. wild bedouns with shocks of hair well greased & curls by the side. after much palavering they bring us 2 camel loads of water & 2 sheep. they are under Bisher Gehran at Assouan & fear to take us to any ruins in immediate vicinity. Cold nights thermometer down to 46 F. on surface we find beads, copper nails, good bits of glass, emeralds, cornelian, crystal, &c. Town is distinctly a small & poor one & cannot have had over 1000 inhabitants altogether the most wretched place imaginable - bew gazelle about no other animals.

Red Sea Sambucas have 4 sails & no reefs. giving themselves infinite trouble. Time regulated by 5 prayers. "We shall start tomorrow at "God is great" & anchor at "mugheret." Silly little distyctes as they haul up sail. Fish is great interest on the way. 2 kinds of sharks. hair very good eating & Niffo with spots. turtles sighted & Bedouns bring large shell fish such as when published adorn English lodging houses when boiled the fish comes out & inasmuch as it resembles a camel's foot the natives call it gemel in taste it is like Lobster with a dash of oyster about it but as tough as pinwire _ Eat small dandelion & sorrel which grows in desert _

Interesting navigating among" coral shoals in & out dangerous enough with strong N. wind behind us. & sail full spread 3 men in bows looking out for rocks indicate course by raising hand. Lovely emerald green where sea covers shoals of sand _ & Prussian blue where rocks underneath

Stop at Sujat island a long spit of sand about 3 miles in length, never more than 4 ft. above sea just inside reefs cast up cinders from ships & bottle cases of trawl wh. ospreys use for nests. 2 sorts of plants on this isl^d. at one end the remains of a Sheikhs tomb & his grave. turtle holes in sand. no water terrible place to be cast up on —

Halaib. native Halei small Egyptian military station with an excellent harbour were not so difficult to get in to we stick outside one night. White fort with iron door & iron ladder tiny windows. surrounded by black huts for soldiers & a few Bishareen huts — Soldiers at top of fort looks very tin like surrounded by barbed wire altogether a toy place. lovely range of Elba mountains behind. serrated & pointed in exquisite degree. 7000 ft. close to coast & takes all sorts of colours in different lights — Egyptian gov^r. put here to look after Bishareen Old chief who has killed ~~with~~ 100 men comes to see us black robe & leather band bound ~~tightly~~ round his forehead

grey hair & beard latter slightly tinged with hennah
his son to accompany us. Very green just now
all round Halcit owing to recent rains. Tiny
mosque by shore made of matting with 2 flags. quite
a deserted sort of spot frequented much by pearl
fishers from opposite coast who combine that of
slave trading with the other. boat in harbour
taken 2 years ago from one of them full of slaves.
Excursion to lower range of mountains
Pass Bishari camp. huts of matting on poles
Bedon couple sleep on mat with wooden bowl
of sour milk. lovely green pasturage. use
wooden pillows. Large old shields of Skinh
swords with thick ends. some supposed
be crusaders swords. curly wigs very
friendly & glad of pinches of Tobacco old lady
almost kisses me. Outlying mounds
enter wadi Gehennah & from twin
hill Shellal get lovely view of tumbled
ranges up to blue precipitous range
of Elba. Cutter = Katira –

Chief of Bishari & his son come with us —
Suakin Kadeem 12 miles North of Halei
was evidently once an island or a peninsula
slightly raised above the plain. & about 12
miles from the foot of Mt Elba. nothing apparent
except demolished madrepore houses, mounds
3 cemeteries & 3 reservoirs. about 25 ft. long
built of madrepore vaulted & constructed to
retain rain water, evidently a good deal of
water about still much more near coast than
inland. towels generally huge blocks of
madrepore sunk deep into ground opened
several but found nothing in them except bones
Chinois growing in large quantities in reservoirs.
beautiful varieties of glass beads, glass seals
& bracelets, coins & oddments on surface :-
Bedoues about. fear of Mahdist tribes on Elba
they have no water but drink milk, eat
a small cactus very bitter as a medicine
found growing in tufts of grass called gummi
Deratis in Arab L. Shobe in Bishari

Soldier who conducted us. frightened of our going up hill. screamed & when we did not return by same way rushed up sword drawn. fear of Mahdi tribes --

Khemsin. terrible dust storm followed by equally cold north wind. coldest winter known on Red Sea -

Bishari Bedouns things for weddings. tall head dress (wadda). ~~camel~~ skin for camels neck on wh bride rides. Courses much used. thing for hanging up food in tent -

Bedouns eat locusts. of wh. there are quantities when they have developed into the flying stage they pop them into the ashes & roast them They eat ~~small~~ red gourds growing like vines in mimosa bright red like tomatos & call them gourod.

Green parasite used for ornament to stick in their frizzy hair Eat tradescantia Plots of mountain herbs

Shellalt central one of group 4900 ft.
separated from Shindoeh by Wadi Shellal
Goye with stream of rain water. water here
4 months of year. strong military
position in case of war with Soudan
very rocky with caves & vegetation all over it
Bisharis of Achmed Orab tribe camp
around it. take us up to some wretched
foundations of houses & tell us that
bad men live up further. Batran
of the tribe an intelligent active
young fellow. very attached to English
too lazy to dig wells & irrigate or else
fertility possible —
N of Shellalt. is a double mountain
one part of it. is called Shinde & the other
Shindohè. wickier & less covered with
vegetation, a considerable amount of granite,
diorite, & moss near top where it is live
water brackish with a precipitate of lime
not nearly so pleasing a mountain as
Shellalt. 3 peaks Shillalt. Sortuba & Riader

Edible things near Shelalh by Bishari

1. Cactus (Shobe). medicinal –
2. Tradescantia. –
3. Chicory. –
4. pods of queer plant. (medicinal) –
5. Nutty balloon plant (madder) –
6. Berries like amants of solanum –
7. Fruit of gourd – red –
8. green seeds (nutty) –
9. small composita w Berenice – ~~etc~~
10 Leaves of blackthorn –

Leaves of mimosa used for polishing leather of swords.

11 Sorrel.

small yellow flower messenbrantheum leaf

~~Ex~~ wh. flocks flourish – common everywhere

*

Height of Shellalh 4100. Shindeh 4500
Riadh. 4800. Sorturba highest of all.
White vultures with yellow beaks crowd
round tent when an antelope or gazelle was killed
Remains of houses up valley otherwise
Wadi Shellalh is a cul de sac. mountains
preventing entrance into Soudan for camels
by this way.
Village on way from Shellalh consisting
of ½ dozen mat huts. round on sticks
not allowed in. woman weaving primitive
cloth at door. woman in dirt coloured
raiment beads and cowries tied to hair &
brass & silver nose rings. small children with
waistbands of long agate & cornelian beads & cowrie
& anglements.
Achmed Orab tribe divided into many parts
the head man called Baltran we have
with us & Walad Abou Ali Tiout —
all talk Bishari together
Mountains of Elba group. Elba

to north Shindeh 2nd Shindoodeh 3d
Shellalh, & - n Sorturba
over wh. various branches of these tribes
have jurisdiction no settled abode seldom
more than 6 huts together moveable at
will. pipes of yarsure black coral
Ahmed Arab tribe can produce
300 grown up men besides women &
children territory extends from
Ababdeh just below Ras Barnas to
Sorturba where Amaran tribe begins
their chief is called Batran instead of
Sheikh, & the present one's name is
Mohamed Ali Tiont. The Egyptian
authority is represented by a mamour
named Ismael Effendi & a few soldiers
Arab names in English. Bateel batello boat
Katira = cutter, cable = habl. -
Sailor dance & sing principal
feature of former is remarkable
power of moving posterior. member

in question being made to sway to & fro
quiver & show an activity to which
European tails are strangers —
Khor Shinab Bishareen name.
Arabic Bish bish is a good instance
of the many little harbours on this coast
entered between coral reefs by a narrow
passage. blowing a heavy northern
gale we had 3 sails torn in getting
in & had to stay a whole day Feb 2
whilst the sailors repaired the damage
Red Sea sambucas not intended for rough
weather & their sails of very poor material
Khor Shinab runs sinuously inland
for about 2 miles & is never more than
half a mile wide just an estuary in the
middle of a coral reef the flat ground
around it being all madrepore for miles &
covered with shells which have not been
inhabited for thousands of years.
very little verdure about here & mountains
about 3 miles away bare & arid —

Khor Shinab a well known resort for slave trading small boats can hide up its creeks & steamers find it difficult to get in -

Monticules de prières -

Shepherds & flocks with shield & spear

Leave Mohamed Ghoul Feb 6th. in charge of Mohamed Ali Debalobe for Wadi Hadai of Keilab tribe Grand departure & mansion accompanies us to tower of Asafra Old Kufic tomb & instructs people to treat us well.

Very dry country 1st camp at Haddi. water like porter - & full of tap poles - land around covered with mimosa & an undergrowth of yellow flower with thick leaves wh Cattle Eat - very rich milk preferable to water.

Feb. 7th 4 hours to a waterless & nameless spot. at foot of arid brown mountains with reddish streaks as of iron. dreariness of scenery & monotony of vegetation very marked here & there large tombs of a bygone race which the present inhabs. know nothing of. Debalbe has his wife with him. She sticks up a mat to the windward & sleeps behind it. his sword has silver embossed handle & half moons as mark -

Feb 8th 20 miles or so of barren country in & out of one valley into another; Gumales is a large watercourse dry. but up a khor good water was obtained.

Reddish hills & dull green mimosa rather monotonous & rather a relief when we came to a sandy valley almost desert with Euphorbia trees - For whole 20 miles we never met a soul but now & again we came across large tombs of departed - present tombs seem much the same small

round piles of stones with an outer circle, a cluster of these together

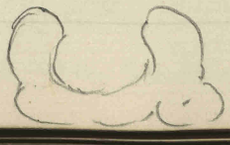
Feb 9th - Up Wadi Iroquis with high schistous mountains on either side then some 6 miles of a very narrow pass called Toddin with a gentle slope nearly 2000 ft. pass into Soudan 6 1/2 hours - Easy approach & almost only one over outer range.

Out of grass (mesembrianthem) you can squeeze almost a handful of water probable water supply for most of the animals living here -

—

Debalobes: family graves little circular path -

Feb 10th Reach Hadai very desert spot -



Feb 11th. ride to mining village
Gabait Hagar Hadai.
Wadi Gabait road goes to
Durowrba. Mt. with view over Wadi Heaet
ruins of mining village for a mile
up valley 1000s of stones for
grinding quartz by stream -
place at top of hill to guide people
going. probably signs set all along road.
Water. Keilab huts with sail clothes
Keilab & Kombab together muster
over 1000 men -
huts very neat inside passage all round
were they keep pots & baskets. inside
is square with mat walls & mat floor
sleeping apartment one side entirely hung with
ornamented meat safes. camel trappings
& dancing hats -
Gold washed by stream.
brown basaltic hills with veins of quartz
in it which was evidently used for gold

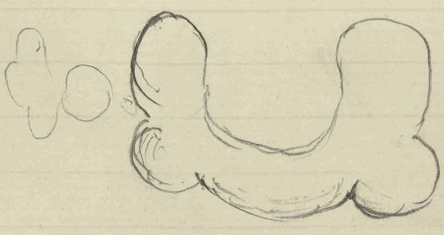
small square houses of miners run for about a mile up valley. big mimosas in flower & much more fertile than our Wadi. Traces of scoriae & burnt quartz & many fragments of quartz with red veins in it undoubtedly a gold mine. Mills for grinding made beautiful by a wheel out of rough blocks of basalt raised hole in middle into which upper grindstone was fixed, handle for turning fixed into this upper stone. houses dotted about all over the place –

Debalobe has great objection to show us his village which is quite close & to which he goes every night –

Are the stone buildings on way to mine signs to guide people to it?

Some on tops of hills where road turns & one large circular one on very top curious likeness to Zimbabwe formation

near our camp



The dry stone circles. the houses of miners the gold industry look very like a connection between these miners & those at Zimbabwe The big towers at entrance to valley evidently intended as an indication to mariners where to stop. Absence of epigraphy.

modern graves a continuation of same idea.

white tower still faintly seen from Mohamedly hour in former years sea line probably further back & it must then have been a conspicuous object -

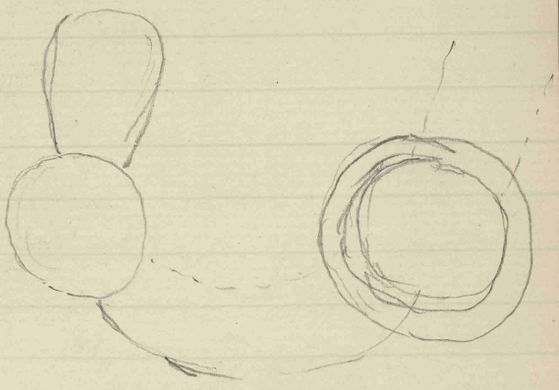
Feb 12th Rest at camp near water -

on hill above is circular ruin with door to East. built of rough basaltic stone

almost exactly like that on the Lundi river.



in Mashonaland. perhaps a fort or look out. Large round building on same hill with big stones & depression in the centre look as if they had been erected to hold flagstaffs or some wooden thing to indicate the direction.



Feb. 13 start for Wadi Gabait at village
see into house again. things for putting on
camels when women ride. frankincense
thing. bell, & tufts of fluffy stuff –
Stoppage on way from many
hostile tribe. scene ~~of~~ arrival.
stormy time of it –
Ruins extend for fully one mile & up
all collateral valleys hundreds of crushers –
evidently they followed the quartz veins in
the rock, & crushed it. specs of gold in
sand. small Greek inscription on big
boulder rock above stream ΟΓΙΙΧΛΟΙΕΧ
Ο ΕΠΟΥΟΟΙΕΟΥ
Feb 14. stay at Goldmine
Feb 15. Misguided by report of mines go to
a hill about 1/2 a mile off where there
are old cuttings in the quartz. blocks
of quartz ready to be broken up & holes
dug for obtaining it but no houses.

See laid out on levelled circles quantity of senna which they dry & sell in bags to Suez &c – an industry of Wadi Gabait. Rude drawings of a parrot & gazelle on rocks probably done by workmen –

~~Feb~~ Passed through a long dreary place covered with dark shale ~~with~~ like colliery heaps with a trickle of green only between them

Message from Mamoor about Demonstrs Debalobe's loyalty suspected –

Draka Cost!

Feb. 17. Shortish hot day. partly through desert valleys with everything dried up. Clumps of grass as black as if they had been burnt & not seen rain for years.. All valleys in direction of Erba seem desert with sand. Except Feb 18th – Gumateo a big valley wh seems to go all along at the back of the range winding amongst and hills of about 500 to 1000 ft above it. it seems great nursery for camels which feed here on arack. ie

tooth brush plant. red flower. vetches &
coarse thorny things wh. grow in sand
Reach wide valley with lovely view over
Erba. & its peak called Emery wh. is its
highest point
Shellal and Sellala mean a cascade -
garnets in rocks. North side of Erba
seems very arid but marvellously peaked
& pointed like a a great wall to Soudan
shutting it off from Red Sea. Dervishes
reported in this neighbourhood, Govt.
order not to go more than a day in land.
Feb. 19th Interesting ride round South East
of Mt. Erba. very fine views over jagged
peaks. Narrow & lovely descent down
Wadi Kour. get off camels for a while
Stones thrown down at us from above
evidently a common practice as Shieks
refuse to let us encamp under the rocks
but in the middle of the valley that we
might be out of harm's way.

Wadi Kour begins to show signs of more cultivation as we descend towards Sellala tamarisks in quantities & donkeys nursery some escape to hills & are the wild donkeys of the district.

Lovely gorge with water a deep natural reservoir rushes & very fine bulbs.

Our men busy decorating their hair before reaching Sellala. Mutton fat is beaten in the hands till it becomes like lard. then operator dabs it on to the curly wig of his patient. Those with long white curls all round their head close white as snow consider themselves far the finest

Pass several groups of huts in Wadi Kour evidently an approach to the world.

Feb 28th. Leave Erba behind & go S.E. through fantastic mountains & then along sandy desert to Sellala

A deep well on caravan roads into Soudan near which Ali Hamed

Shiekh of one of the branches of the Kounbad tribe has his head quarters. It is an arid wretched spot with a few mimosa bushes & desert plants. Dirty mats in well. Some 6 cabins in wh. tribe dwell. Women with gold nose rings & earrings & plaited hair. Some of them not bad looking



Mohammed Ali Hamed & his children. Old father a wicked old slave dealer. We sit in valley & have things brought. Camels things in wh. to hang food necklaces &c &c —

From Sellala Feb 21. visit at Ali Hamed's suggestion some works about 8 miles away on wh were widely drawn representations of animals in 2 periods oldest period quite dark & almost obliterated later ones whitish. Amongst oldest ones one recognised Elephants camels giraffes

& gazelle. but nothing in ability equal to
bushmen drawings — Trot all the way.
When they kill a gazelle they eat of the
flesh raw — like Abyssinians —
Old ale Hamed of Sellala has a large territory
all Molagrueb the Md behind & is closely
allied with Shiek Hasan. Wagdab of Erba
Elba & Erba same names also 4 or 5
Sellalas which means water — Wind & sand
Feb 22nd. Leave Sellala by monstrous wood
for Elba between 2 mountains in pass one
& towers (Ashara) wh. have been whitewashed
small Persian like domes at top. they
have 4 windows & one is hexagonal they
have no door. They cannot be tombs, or forts
so presumably must be signal towers to
guide people, whitewashed they show for a
long way off as does a third at the
entrance of the Wadi Ambaya —
wh. runs into the heart of Erba —
These cannot be seen from the Sea —

quite a peculiar feature of the district
same in construction as the smaller
one in Wadi Hadai. ∴ probably something
to do with goldmine in Wadi Gabait –
Two skeletons in one ~~grave~~ tower crawled in
died one lying in it almost decayed clothes
curled up in last agonies had been there
6 years the other much longer.
Gourds used for keeping ~~moths~~ insect
from clothes.
Wadi Ambaya long valley running
straight in to Mt Erba well filled
with inhals also in these huts seem to
mimic the surrounding boulders hard
to tell from them – Lovely gorge at end
valley full of locusts –
climbing up one comes to a stream with deep
green pools overhanging rocks & trees
well nigh as fantastic spot as could be
imagined. People live up here with their

flocks. black handsome men with swords
shield leaping lightly from rock to rock
No cultivated land anywhere to be seen on
our whole journey we never saw an acre
under cultivation.
Bigger & lesser shiebbs Hamed also head
of all Kombabs Dabalohe of all Kilabs
Ibex head plenty of them in Erba -
Uninteresting journey from Erbat to
Kokut. a long lower spur -
encamp amongst rocks terribly difficult
in pitching tents. Curious gorge runs
right into the mountain with water in
deep pools. when one comes to a chasm
& thinks it is ended you ascend by
the side & go on more & more until
in centre of mountain is a wide open
valley with pools of water in wh. the ibex
come down to drink at night -
Sheikh Hasan's property & lots of
people dwelling up in its recesses

only camels accustomed to it can climb —

Feb 28th

Up Kokut to native huts. woman making butter in a skin tied to a tree when they have plenty of skins full they take it to Mohamed Ghoul & buy grain but as a rule they eat nothing, but kid & milk tiny tents with sticks. children have for toys a shield & wooden spear

Old woman mother of Shiekh Hasan

A pool of water just under —

Long flutes with 4 notes one of which belongs to each hut — Soft weird music suited to occasion rather like bagpipes.

soldiers & Bedou play mangola same as tavola with holes in sand. 2 rows of 6 holes & 4 counters of camels dung in each.

Mohamed Ghoul

Dabalobe & Keilab much the largest & richest of the tribes about –

Ali Hamed's mother aged 135 lives in a little hut in Mohamed Ghoul wizened but not so old as some we saw in mountains

Lady's camel saddles with framework on which to hang clothes & ornaments

Good well of Hasan's Tokwar best in neighbourhood of M-G

Ibex horns used for making walking sticks & hair pins

Mamoor occupies his hours in doing it. cover horn with grease then put it into hot water or fire to melt it & then soften it

Hair pins adorned with 6 or 7 bands of filigree silver look very well

Black stone pipe & purse

Ebony camel stick

Mamoor Mohamed of Mohamed Ghoul is a Soudanese himself of a tribe between Berber & Khartoum therefore knows well about dervishes. He & his secretary are dapper little men dressed in Karki each with scars tribal marks on either check lives in a mat hut, fort not inhabited Delayed by South wind sea, nearly washes away pier & invades native enclosures on its side..

Curious absence of cocks & hens in this part & no trace of cultivation

At Suakim alarm for our safety worse danger by sea than land bottom scraped in Mersa Daroor & sanebuc laid up at Suakim

Shiekh Morgani religious head of Soudan recognized in all districts where Mahdism is not rampant.

A young man of 16 or 17 very self possessed

speaks admirably 3 tribal scars on either cheek did much for us by writing to shickles in district through lib. we passed.
Dabalobe spend sometime in hospital at Suakin -

Sunday, Feb 24.

1st day near Hadi 950 at 12
2nd day water Wadi Kokkut 1175 –

Shiekh Sayed Tahir Ashraf-
Haiet his town -
Mersa Ed. near Darvor.
Wadi Haiet begins in Bowartie
Hageen 2 hours. -
Oso is place where most antiques
are found -
Mogarra Mts. bigger than Erba beyond
Wadi Haiet ... cultivated -
mus to north of Elba ... Called Agul
where water comes out = at Bishari Elba
To Pasha knows him well. & S.T. is
one of the best & most trusted spies
of the Egyptian Govt. among the
Dervishes -
Elba & Erba. change of l & r -

