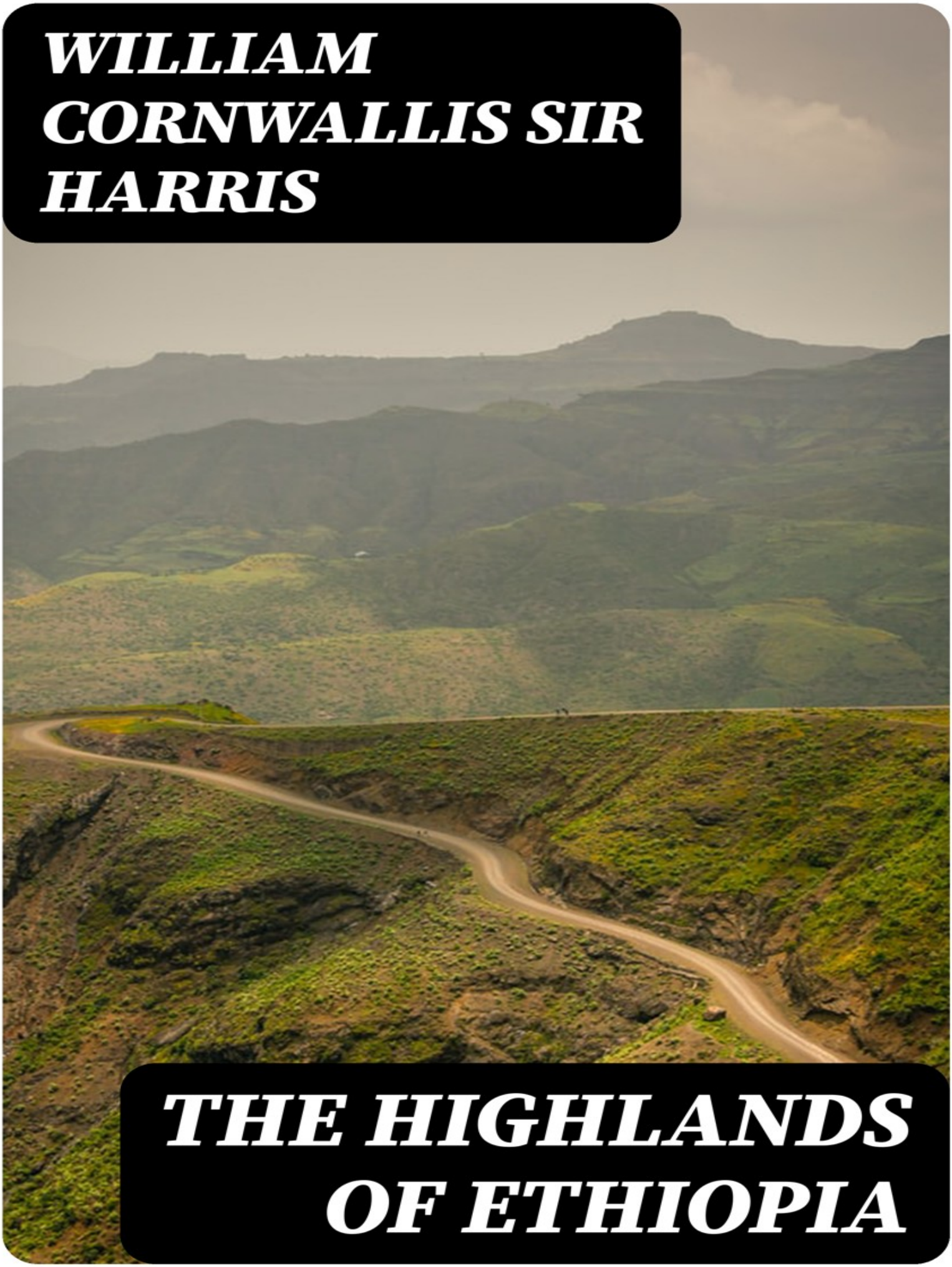

WILLIAM CORNWALLIS SIR HARRIS

THE HIGHLANDS OF ETHIOPIA


WILLIAM CORNWALLIS SIR HARRIS
THE HIGHLANDS OF ETHIOPIA

William Cornwallis Sir Harris

The Highlands of Ethiopia

EAN 8596547013495

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

Table of Contents

Introduction
Volume One—Chapter One.
Volume One—Chapter Two.
Volume One—Chapter Three.
Volume One—Chapter Four.
Volume One—Chapter Five.
Volume One—Chapter Six.
Volume One—Chapter Seven.
Volume One—Chapter Eight.
Volume One—Chapter Nine.
Volume One—Chapter Ten.
Volume One—Chapter Eleven.
Volume One—Chapter Twelve.
Volume One—Chapter Thirteen.
Volume One—Chapter Fourteen.
Volume One—Chapter Fifteen.
Volume One—Chapter Sixteen.
Volume One—Chapter Seventeen.
Volume One—Chapter Eighteen.
Volume One—Chapter Nineteen.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty One.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Two.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Three.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Four.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Five.

Volume One—Chapter Twenty Six.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Seven.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Eight.
Volume One—Chapter Twenty Nine.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty One.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Two.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Three.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Four.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Five.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Six.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Seven.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Eight.
Volume One—Chapter Thirty Nine.
Volume One—Chapter Forty.
Volume One—Chapter Forty One.
Volume One—Chapter Forty Two.
Volume One—Chapter Forty Three.
Volume One—Chapter Forty Four.
Volume One—Chapter Forty Five.
Volume One—Chapter Forty Six.
Volume Two—Chapter One.
Volume Two—Chapter Two.
Volume Two—Chapter Three.
Volume Two—Chapter Four.
Volume Two—Chapter Five.
Volume Two—Chapter Six.
Volume Two—Chapter Seven.
Volume Two—Chapter Eight.

Volume Two—Chapter Nine.
Volume Two—Chapter Ten.
Volume Two—Chapter Eleven.
Volume Two—Chapter Twelve.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Fourteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Fifteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Sixteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Seventeen.
Volume Two—Chapter Eighteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Nineteen.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty One.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Two.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Three.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Four.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Five.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Six.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Seven.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Eight.
Volume Two—Chapter Twenty Nine.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty One.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Two.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Three.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Four.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Five.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Six.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Seven.

Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Eight.
Volume Two—Chapter Thirty Nine.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty One.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty Two.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty Three.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty Four.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty Five.
Volume Two—Chapter Forty Six.
Volume Three—Chapter One.
Volume Three—Chapter Two.
Volume Three—Chapter Three.
Volume Three—Chapter Four.
Volume Three—Chapter Five.
Volume Three—Chapter Six.
Volume Three—Chapter Seven.
Volume Three—Chapter Eight.
Volume Three—Chapter Nine.
Volume Three—Chapter Ten.
Volume Three—Chapter Eleven.
Volume Three—Chapter Twelve.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Fourteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Fifteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Sixteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Seventeen.
Volume Three—Chapter Eighteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Nineteen.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty.

Volume Three—Chapter Twenty One.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Two.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Three.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Four.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Five.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Six.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Seven.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Eight.
Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Nine.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty One.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Two.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Three.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Four.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Five.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Six.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Seven.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Eight.
Volume Three—Chapter Thirty Nine.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty One.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty Two.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty Three.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty Four.
Volume Three—Chapter Forty Five.

Introduction

Table of Contents

In putting forward a second edition of my “Highlands of Ethiopia,” I have two very different duties to perform: first, to thank the press for the extremely liberal and generous manner in which it has received my work; secondly, to reply to certain objections which have been made by one or two periodicals, happily not of the first eminence, against both me and my travels. So numerous, however, are the publications that have evinced a favourable, I might almost say a friendly, disposition towards me, that I am unable to specify them. They will, therefore, I trust, accept in general terms my thanks to them one and all.

Their very flattering testimonies have induced me to revise carefully what I have written, in order, if possible, to render it worthy of their warm praise, and to justify their predilection in my behalf. On the other hand, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*. I have consequently turned to account even the animadversions of my enemies—for enemies unhappily I have, and those, too, of the most implacable and malignant character—mean persons to whom I have shown kindness, which they have apparently no means of repaying but by inveterate aversion. This circumstance I ought not perhaps to regret, except on their account. The parts we play are suitable to our respective characters; and I should even now abstain from prejudicing them in the estimation of the public, if I did not apprehend that my forbearance might be misconstrued.

The points of attack selected by my adversaries are not many in number. Ultimately, indeed, they resolve themselves into three: first, my style of composition, which they say is gorgeous and inflated, and therefore obscure; second, the inaccuracy of several of my details; and third, the absence of much new information, which it seems the public had a right to expect from me. On the subject of the first accusation it will not perhaps be requisite that I should say much. To any one who cannot understand what I write I must necessarily appear obscure; but it may sometimes, I think, be a question with which of us the fault lies. That my composition is generally intelligible may not unfairly, I think, be inferred from the number of persons who have understood and praised it; since it can scarcely be imagined that the majority of reviewers would warmly recommend to the public that in which they could discern no meaning. Besides, on the subject of style there is a great diversity of opinion, some thinking that very extraordinary scenes and objects should be delineated in forcible language, while others advocate a tame and formal phraseology which they would see employed on all occasions whatsoever. I may observe, moreover, that “style,” as Gibbon remarks, “is the image of character,” and it is quite possible that my fancy may have a natural aptitude to take fire at the prospect of unusual scenes and strange manners. Still I am far from defending obstinately my own idiosyncracies, and yet farther from setting them up as a rule to others. In describing what I saw, and endeavouring to explain what I felt, I may very possibly have used expressions too poetical and ornate; but the public will, I am convinced, do me the

justice to believe that, in acting thus, my object was exactly to delineate, and not to delude. I called in to my aid the language which seemed to me best calculated to reflect upon the minds of others, those grand and stupendous objects of nature which had made so deep and lasting an impression on my own. At all events, I am not conscious of having had in this any sinister purpose to serve.

It is a far more serious charge, that I have presented the public with a false account of the Embassy to Shoa; that I have altered or suppressed facts; that I have been unjust to my predecessors and companions; and that I have at once misrepresented the country and its inhabitants. It has been already observed, that my accusers are few in number. Probably they do not exceed three individuals, two who affect to speak from their own knowledge, and one whom they have taken under their patronage as their cat’s-paw. It may seem somewhat humiliating to answer such persons at all. I feel that it is so. But if dirt be cast at me, I must endeavour to shield myself from it, without enquiring whether the hands of the throwers be naturally filthy or not. That is their own affair. Mine is to avoid the pollution aimed at me. This must be my apology for entering into the explanations I am about to give.

When I undertook to lay before the public an account of my travels in Abyssinia, I had to choose between the inartificial and somewhat tedious form of a journal, and that of a more elaborate history, in which the exact order of dates should not be observed. I preferred the latter; whether wisely or unwisely remains to be seen, though hitherto public opinion seems to declare itself in favour of my choice.

Having come to this determination, it was necessary that I should act in all things consistently with it. As I had abandoned the journal, it was no way incumbent on me to observe the laws which govern that form of composition. My business, as it appeared to me, was to produce a work with some pretensions to a literary character; that is, one in which the order of time is not regarded as a primary element, the principal object being the grouping of events and circumstances so as to produce a complete picture. I perfectly understood that I was to add nothing and to invent nothing, but that I was at liberty to throw aside all trivial details, and dwell only on such points as seemed calculated to place in their proper light the labours of the mission, with the institutions, customs, and type of civilisation found among the people to whom we had been sent. In conformity with this theory I wrote. One of the first consequences, however, of the view I had taken of my subject, was the sacrifice of all minute personal adventures, which scarcely appeared in any way compatible with my plan. I abandoned likewise the use of the first personal pronoun, and always spoke of myself and my companions collectively, thereby perhaps doing some little injustice to my own exertions, but certainly not arrogating to myself any credit properly due to others. Among my friends there are those who object to this manner of writing, and I submit my judgment to theirs. In this Second Edition, therefore, I have reconstructed the narrative so far as was necessary in order to convert the third person into the first. To the charge that I have not observed the strict chronology of a journal, I have already pleaded guilty. It seemed to me far better to arrange

together under one head whatever belonged properly to one topic. For example, when recording the medical services rendered to the people of Shoa, high or low, I have not inserted in my work each individual instance as it occurred, but have placed the whole before the reader in a separate chapter. So likewise in other cases, that which appeared to elucidate the matter in hand, was introduced into what I thought its proper place, because there it might both receive and reflect light, whereas in any other part, perhaps, of the work, it might have been without significance, if not altogether absurd. Not being infallible, I may possibly have misinterpreted the laws of rhetoric which I adopted as my guide: of this let the public be judge. I have aimed, at all events, at drawing a correct outline of Shoa and the surrounding countries, as far as my materials would permit, and should I have sometimes fallen into error, I claim that indulgence which is always readily extended to authors similarly circumstanced. While in Abyssinia, my official position very greatly interfered with my predilections as a traveller. I could not move hither and thither freely. To enlarge the circle of science was not the principal object of my mission; but at the same time it must not be forgotten that I enjoyed some advantages which a traveller visiting the country under other auspices would scarcely have commanded. In drawing up my work, however, the character in which I travelled was of considerable disservice to me. Much of the information that I collected, it was not permitted me to impart, which I say, not by way of complaint against the regulations of the service in which I have the honour to be engaged,—on the contrary, I think it

most just and proper that such should be the case—but that the reader, when he feels a deficiency in political or commercial information, may know that it has not been withheld through any negligence or disrespect of the public on my part.

I now come to consider more in detail the objections which have been urged against my travels. Some of these, it will at once be perceived, are so loose and indefinite as to be wholly incapable of being answered. For example, it is said, I have made no addition to the information already existing respecting the southern provinces of Abyssinia. How can I reply to this? Must I reprint all the works which had been previously published, and point out the additions I have made? The process, it will be acknowledged, is an unusual one. Besides, the scientific world has not hitherto been averse to look at several views of the same country, to compare them for itself, and to derive from the very comparison both pleasure and information. Some additions, moreover, to geographical science I undoubtedly have made, and there are those who have not been ashamed to borrow them. I have ascertained, for example, that the Gochob does not flow into the Nile, as it is made to do in a map which I have seen, constructed by one of the reviewer’s greatest authorities. The inquiries I instituted render it probable that the Gochob is the same river with the Juba. And, above all, the longitude of Ankóber was, under my directions, and by a laborious series of operations, correctly determined. The importance of this to travellers who may not possess the ability or the means of resolving it themselves, I need scarcely point out. Previously, every

position in the maps of Southern Abyssinia was calculated from a false position, and therefore of necessity wrong. But I shall not here enter upon an inventory of my humble services to science. I could wish they were more numerous, but such as they are I trust they will be found not wholly without their value.

In “ethnography,” or rather perhaps “ethnology,” the critic discovers my ideas to be all wrong; and he accounts for the circumstance by supposing in me some innate aversion to the “savage.” I certainly dislike that particular variety of our species whether at home or abroad, but it does not necessarily follow that I have been therefore guilty of misrepresentation. These things, nevertheless, I leave to be determined by public opinion, which, so far as I can perceive, is little, if at all, influenced by the bitter and self-interested censures of my enemies.

When I determined on making some reply to the “slashing” Aristarchus who has assailed my work—I would say publicly, but that the thing is so obscure that few persons have even heard of it—my design was to attempt something like order, that I might not by a multiplicity of disjointed remarks confound the memory of my readers. But the impossibility of following any rational plan soon became apparent. The reviewer with whom I have to deal is a man who scorns all order and regularity. His only rule is that of *hysteron proteron*, or putting the cart before the horse. Not possibly that he considers such a method of writing best in itself, but that by introducing perfect anarchy into his critique, and returning a dozen times to each objection urged, my faults might in appearance be so multiplied that

they would suffice to fill a whole encyclopaedia. Now if in my reply I followed any other than his fragmentary system, I might perhaps seem to many not to answer all his objections, whereas my intention is to demolish every one of them. I resolved therefore to begin *ab ovo*, and giving quarter to no impertinence or absurdity by the way, to clear the ground completely, and leave a perfect *rase campagne* behind me. That in so doing I shall not prove tedious, is more than I can hope. My adversary is insipidity personified. But if the controversy be unamusing, it shall, at least as far as I can render it so, be brief.

The critic whose vagaries I have undertaken to expose, though affecting not to be hypercritical, first dwells with a puerile pertinacity on the title of my book, which he pronounces to be a misnomer, because, forsooth, the territories of Shoa are not high lands, but a high land! Possibly he figures to himself the whole of Abyssinia as one single vast plateau, whose surface presents neither elevation nor depression, otherwise the reader will see no reason why it should be spoken of in the singular.

In describing the contents of the second volume, my reviewer speaks of “a slaving expedition among the Galla, *in which the Embassy*,” he affirms, “*took part*.” The assertion, however, is incorrect, not to apply to it a harsher epithet; for the spectator who looks on a play can with no propriety be said to take part in the acting of it. The mission was sent to Sáhela Selássie, not to the city of Ankóber. It was consequently my business to attend the king, to watch his movements, and study his character, just as the Embassy under Sir John McNeil attended the Shah of Persia to Herát,

though instead of taking part in the siege, he laboured earnestly to put a stop to it.

The contents of the third volume are next wilfully misrepresented, the critic desiring to make it appear that a very small portion indeed has reference to the country or people of Abyssinia, though at least two-thirds treat expressly of those subjects, whilst the remainder is strictly connected with them.

But it is not merely in the third volume that the critic is unable to discover any information respecting Shoa. He takes courage as he proceeds, advances from particulars to generals, and contends that the book contains no information at all in any part of it, that no account is given of the geography of the country, no sketch of its history, in short no account of it in any way whatsoever. Afterwards, indeed, an exception is made in favour of religion. Taking no interest in this, however, he treats it as a twice-told tale with which he was previously familiar. Considering the modes of thinking prevalent in the quarter, it may, without much uncharitableness, be permitted one to doubt this. Not to insist, however, on a point which may be disagreeable to the reviewer, I hasten to compliment him on his sagacity, which, through the table of contents, has made the discovery, that the political history of Abyssinia for the last thirty years is not given. I acknowledge the omission, and may perhaps have been to blame for suffering any consideration connected with the size of the volumes to weigh with me in such a matter. The historical sketch in question, however, was actually written, though the critic would probably not have derived from it any more

satisfaction than from the rest of the book. He objected to its absence because it was not there. Had I introduced it, he would have said it was a twice-told tale, and absolutely good for nothing.

My adversary now and then qualifies, as he proceeds, his absolute affirmations. Having again and again maintained that there is no account, “historical or otherwise,” given of the country, he afterwards admits his error, but says the account is “confused and unintelligible.” I think it was Mr Coleridge who made the remark, when persons complained that they could not understand his work, that it was their fault, since all he had to do was to bring the book, and that it was their duty to bring the understanding. I make the same reply to the critic. Other people understand my account of Abyssinia; and if he really does not, I am sorry for him, but can offer him no assistance. However, there is an old proverb, I believe, which says, “There are none so blind as those who won’t see.”

The argument by which I am proved to have read Mr Salt, though I make no allusion to him, is curious; but I either profited by my reading, or I did not. If I profited, the consequences must be visible in my work; if I derived nothing from Mr Salt, then my work can contain no proof that I did. But it does, according to the critic, contain such proof; *ergo*, I have profited by Mr Salt’s labours. It would have been well, however, if the critic had pointed out where and how much; for until he does so, my word will probably be thought as good as his, especially as he is anonymous, and I am not. One proof of my careless reading of Mr Salt is, I own, very remarkable. It seems, had I been well versed in

his production, I should have known that Oubié is “still alive and ruler of Tigré;” Mr Salt having, of course, been careful to relate that circumstance. It so happens, however, that at the period I was engaged in writing my work, Oubié was a prisoner, and another prince seated on his throne—a fact, I believe, not preserved in Salt.

Next comes on the tapis the orthography of Ethiopia; *apropos* of which, the critic takes occasion to call in question my classical acquirements. I was not, however, aware that, by preferring one orthography to another, I was laying claim to profound erudition, or setting myself up for “an authority among scholars.” On the contrary, I followed those who appeared to me very sufficient guides. Gibbon and Dr Johnson,—authors who may perhaps, even by the reviewer himself, be permitted to claim a humble niche among our classics. But they wrote, it may be said, in the last century. I therefore refer to a perfectly new publication, on a classical subject, if not the work of a classic,—I mean Mr Saint John’s “History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece,” in which the orthography I have adopted is likewise made use of. If then I have been affected, I have at all events indulged my affectation in very good company. But the reviewer does not stop here. He thinks the orthography involves a mystery, and he goes about the unveiling of it in a very mysterious way. It is a proof he thinks that I am indebted to Mr Krapf for what little proficiency I may have made in the art of spelling; nay more, that I have derived from that gentleman all my knowledge of Abyssinia of every kind!

Before I make any other remark on this part of the subject, I will take occasion to compliment myself on my

simplicity; for if I had desired to conceal my obligations to Dr Krapf, and have been conscious of any which I have not frankly stated, I should have been careful to spell Ethiopia *classically*, that is, as the reviewer does, in order to conceal the source from which I had drawn. I should thus clearly have put him on a very wrong scent, since a single letter suffices to lead him by the nose. But the most curious view of this question remains yet to be taken. Dr Krapf, he says, possesses the most complete knowledge of Abyssinia, its geography, language, and literature. He then goes on to maintain that Dr Krapf imparted his knowledge to me, and I that same knowledge to the public. But, no! the reviewer stops short here, and affirms that I envied the public the possession of Dr Krapf's knowledge, and withheld it all; since he everywhere asserts that there is no information whatever in my book. Verily, I have been taking a lesson from that ancient Briton who is represented as having plundered a naked Scotchman:

"ApaintedvestPrinceVortigernhadon,
WhichfromanakedPicthisgrandsirewon!"

Because, if I tell nothing new, and owe all I do tell to Dr Krapf, who also imparted to me all he knew, his knowledge must clearly have been very limited. I have acknowledged, however, and I repeat the acknowledgment, that Dr Krapf was of essential service to me in various ways; that he freely imparted to me the valuable information he possessed, and gave me to understand that I was at liberty to make use of it. I did make use of it, having previously however been careful to publish my obligations to him. In

fact, there is no man who would be more ready than Dr Krapf, were he now in England, to express his perfect satisfaction with what I have done. He has, indeed, expressed it publicly in his “Journal,” where he acknowledges himself to be under obligations to me; and the Church Missionary Society, in its preface, makes the same admission.

I am next blamed for not giving a connected history of the mission; the proper answer to which is, that I never undertook to give it. I have not entitled my book “the History of an Eighteen Months’ Residence in Shoa,” but have said that my observations were collected *during* an eighteen months’ residence there. They are not all my observations, nor have I arranged them chronologically; therefore, though the reviewer feels disappointed, he has no right to quarrel with me. He expected one thing—I published another; simply because I did not write for him, or such as he, but for the public. As it is, however, I am not sorry that he is “tantalised,” which he would not be if he possessed one-tenth of the knowledge to which he obliquely lays claim. On most points he is profoundly ignorant, and it suits my purpose to leave him so. Any information that I can impart, without prejudice to the public service, it is doubtless my duty to give; and accordingly, in this second edition, I have stated some facts not recorded in the first. In most cases, indeed, men publish a first edition as an *experiment*, to ascertain how far their views of what information the public needs are correct, that they may afterwards diligently, and to the best of their power, supply it.

The Mission, it is said, has been “a complete failure.” But how is this proved? By a scrap extracted from some anonymous correspondent to a newspaper, who writes, not from Angollála or Ankóber, but from Caïro, which is nearly as though a person residing in Saint Petersburgh were to write authoritatively to China respecting what is going on in Lisbon. But it does not follow that the Mission has been a failure, because some Cairo gossip chooses to say so, or because all the fruits of it have not yet been reaped. A treaty has been concluded, friendly relations have been established, and upon this basis commerce will proceed, slowly perhaps, but surely, to erect its structure. It will be for the next generation to determine whether or not the mission was “a complete failure.” A reviewer residing in the purlieus of High Holborn is not competent to do it.

On the subject of “German crowns,” the critic may, for aught I know, be a great authority; or, as he says on another matter, may know somebody that is. But the quarrel which he seeks to pick with me is so utterly puerile, that I will not engage in it. His positiveness, however, is as usual proportioned to his ignorance, for even on so infinitesimal a point as this he contrives to be wrong, since the marks are not *three*, as he supposes, but *seventeen*, on the coronet and shoulder-clasp. However, supposing I had here been wrong, would it therefore have been fair to infer that on every other point I must be wrong also? An usurer would be a better authority on the aspect of a gold coin than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yet in finance the Jew might not be a match for the Chancellor. Let it not, however, be supposed that I desire to compare myself with Mr Goulburn,

or the critic to a Jew; I merely mention these things by way of illustration. At any rate, my censor's blunder must be obvious to every one who has seen a German dollar, and to adopt his own phrase, "*Ex pede Herculem*."

On the practice observed by the Mohammadans in slaughtering animals, the reviewer displays a vast deal of erudition, and quotes the treatise of Mr Lane, on the "Manners of the Modern Egyptians." It happens, however, that there are variations in the practices of the Moslems; and he might as well have argued, that because there are pyramids in Egypt, there must also be pyramids in Abyssinia, as that because the Egyptians do not make use of certain words on particular occasions, therefore, the Danákil and the Somauli cannot possibly employ them. My narrative does not touch on the customs of Egypt, on which Mr Lane writes but on those of a different part of Africa, in which, so far as I can discover, that author has never been. What I relate, however, is matter of fact, and the critic only exhibits his profound ignorance of human nature by supposing that Mohammadanism is stereotyped in any part of the world, since there are as many differences in the customs of the Mohammadan nations, as in those of Christendom. For example,—the practice of "bundling," so common in Wales, does not, I believe, prevail in Egypt; but if our critic were to infer that it is, therefore, altogether anti-Islamite, he would be as completely wrong as he is in the present instance; for that which the Egyptian Mussulman detests, is the established custom in certain parts of Afghanistan. So, likewise, is the invocation of the name of God during the slaughter of animals. The Egyptians, it seems, invoke the

sacred name without coupling with it “the Compassionate, the Merciful,” which they think would sound like mockery; but what proof is the reviewer prepared to advance in his wisdom, that this rule is observed in India and every other part of the East?

The Mohammadans, again, he says, never drink blood; and why? because it is forbidden them by the Korán. But stealing is no less peremptorily prohibited. Will he, therefore, argue, that there is no such thing as a Mohammadan thief? The question is not as to what is forbidden or ordained, but as to a simple matter of fact. I state what I saw with my own eyes. The critic, who was never in the country, who cannot possibly know what I saw or did not see, contradicts me. I leave it to the public to judge between us; asserting, however, that he is fully as ignorant of the people whose customs he so glibly writes about, as he is of the rules of common decency.

For verbal criticism I entertain no contempt, though I think that a strict application of its rules to a book of travels, is scarcely called for. However, let us see how the critic succeeds in his task. I relate that the Arabs call the cove *Mirsa good Ali*, the “source of the sea;” from which he immediately infers my utter ignorance of Arabic. The only thing, however, that is really clear from the remark he has made is, that he does not understand English when it happens to be in the slightest degree inverted. A Biblical critic. Dr Parr, if I remember rightly, objected to a passage in the English version of the Bible upon much the same grounds. “Thus,” says the Scripture, “he giveth his beloved sleep.” Now the doctor maintains “beloved” to be an epithet

bestowed on sleep, although the real sense is, that sleep is given to the “beloved.” Still, in my opinion, the meaning is so obvious, that it required some ingenuity to mistake it. In my own case, the meaning I think is equally obvious; at least, what I intended to say was, that the Adaïel bestow on Mirsa good Ali cove, the additional name of “the source of the sea.”

Upon the remarks on “mafeesh,” I scarcely know what to say; but if he were to ask me,—is there any point or sense in them? I should reply “*mafeesh*, there is none”—an idiom well understood in English. Let the critic try again at Richardson’s dictionary, and if he really can make out the Arabic characters, I think he will be able to discover a meaning which would come in very properly where I have placed it. “It is of no consequence,” exclaimed the young assassin, “none,” which is precisely the answer sometimes given to the insatiate “beggars” that we are told “surround the traveller” in certain countries, “there is no money in my pocket—none.” Nevertheless, as I have passed public examinations, and obtained certificates of superior proficiency in no more than four oriental tongues, I cannot be deemed so competent to offer an opinion on this subject as the reviewer and his accomplices.

With regard to the critiques on the Amháric expressions found in my work, it may be sufficient to say, that by his own confession “the reviewer does not understand one syllable of the language,” but hazards his remarks on the strength of knowing somebody who does. This appears to me a very poor qualification. It is as though I should set up as a critic in Sanscrit because I have shaken hands with

Professor Wilson. However, let us examine the notions of this man who is so learned by proxy. One of the greatest triumphs of his erudition is his explanation of the Amháric word “Shoolada,” which, strengthened by Salt, and others, he determines to signify exclusively a “rump-steak.” That it has this signification there can be no doubt, but if the critic be disposed to defer on this, as on other occasions, to Dr Krapf’s Amháric scholarship, he may yet, as he expresses it, “live and learn.” In a copy of manuscript notes in Dr Krapf’s handwriting, still in my possession, occurs the following passage, which I quote *verbatim et literatim*:—“In one point the Abyssinian practices agree remarkably with those of the Jews, we mean the practice mentioned in Genesis chapter xxxii, where we find that the Israelites did not eat the nerve, since Jacob had been lamed in consequence of his earnest supplication to the Almighty, before he met his brother Esau. This nerve is called in Amháric ‘Shoolada.’ I cannot determine how far the abstinence from this kind of meat is kept in the other parts of Abyssinia, but it is a fact in Shoa, that many people, particularly those of royal blood (called Negassian), do not eat it, as they believe that by eating it they would lose their teeth, the Shoolada being prohibited and unlawful food. Therefore, if anybody has lost his teeth, he is abused with the reproach of having eaten prohibited meat, as that of vultures, dogs, mules, donkeys, horses, and particularly of man, the meat of whom is said to prove particularly destructive for the teeth.”

From the above passage, if the reviewer be disposed to accept Dr Krapf for his teacher, he may clearly learn one or two particulars not hitherto comprehended within the wide

circle of his knowledge. For example, he will perceive that the idea of eating man's flesh is not yet entirely exploded from that part of Africa. On the contrary, the forbidden luxury would appear sometimes to be indulged in even by those who are one step at least, advanced before the polite Danákil, whom, at the sacrifice of my reputation for charity, I have denominated "vagabonds and savages."

The critic's observations on the pronunciation of Amháric and Galla words are so elaborate a specie men of trifling, that it would be wholly lost labour to wade through them. Of the Galla language he knows nothing, and had the case been different, still I might be permitted to judge by my own ear in the case of a tongue absolutely unwritten. Those acquainted with the works of travellers in the East are aware that almost every one has adopted a peculiar system of orthography. All, therefore, but one, might, by a disingenuous critic, be accused of ignorance. But the reviewer goes on to inform the public that "the *vulgar* mistakes of English pronunciation—which are not participated in by Germans—are the wrong insertion or omission of the aspirate." This is designed as a death-blow to me for writing *Etagainya* without an initial A, which highly culpable omission he presently afterwards takes occasion to rectify. Under this charge of vulgarity it is some consolation to me to quote as my authority Isenberg's Amháric Dictionary, more especially since that gentleman *is* a German; but had he even been otherwise, I think his views on this subject of the aspirate might perhaps be preferred to those of any cockney.

The elaborate disquisition on *larva* and *boudak* (For *boudak* read *boudah*. It ought to have been translated *sorcerer*, but all artisans, blacksmiths especially, are regarded as *boudahs*. Vide Isenberg's Amháric Dictionary. For *larva* read *lava*.) proves the critic to be qualified for the reading of proof-sheets, which appears to be the highest praise he can justly lay claim to. He can detect a misprint in other men's works, and when his passions are unexcited, may possibly be able to correct it. But in the matters of ear or style, I would just as soon defer to the judgment of the great "Arqueem Nobba," whoever that may be, (Vide Anti-Slavery Reporter, November 29th, 1843, page 222. For the information of my readers, it may be proper to explain that "Arqueem nobba" is believed to be doing duty for "Hakim nabaroo," "You were the doctor") from whom he seems to have obtained so much of his Oriental learning. He well knows to whom I allude, if no one else does. I shall turn his weapons against himself, and take occasion to question the classical attainments of a reviewer who translates "*suum cuique*"—"be it for good or ill;" and shall direct the public indignation to the fact of his having aroused curiosity "without gratifying it," by the statement that I "studiously laboured to keep out of sight *a very* special service performed by the members of the Embassy." What was it? He must surely be thinking of *his reporters*, not of *my assistants*. Be this as it may, he will not attempt to screen himself behind the printer's devil, it being clear that no typical errors can be admissible in his forty pages of letter-press, if two are to be held inexcusable in my twelve hundred!

It will by this time, I think, be apparent that an extremely peculiar system of criticism has been adopted in reviewing my book. Here the diction is attacked, there the want of information; now we have complaints that information is given, but that it was obtained through the instrumentality of Dr Krapf; then the reviewer wanders into political and other considerations, and attacks my conduct as leader of the Mission. Occasionally he appears to be overwhelmed by a painful sympathy, an intense philanthropy, extreme sorrow for the dead, which betrays him into persevering rancour towards the living. In discussing, for example, the melancholy catastrophe at Goongoonteh, which, if credit be given me for the smallest particle of human feeling, I must be supposed to have regretted as much as any man, especially since Sergeant Walpole and Corporal Wilson were under my command, and both highly useful to me as soldiers and artisans, the critic suffers his compassion so powerfully to disturb his intellect, that he literally knows not what he says. He may, therefore, if such be his object, be thought extremely amiable by some people, but, upon the whole, I apprehend, he will appear to be infinitely more absurd: because, to obtain credit for a generous and expansive humanity, it is necessary, at least, to bear the semblance of an unwillingness to wound men’s reputations, living or dead. A genuine sympathy is always most active in proportion to the capacity of feeling possessed by the object of it. Thus we sympathise with our contemporaries more than with generations passed away; with Christians more than with Turks and Pagans; with Englishmen more than with Chinese; with our relations and friends more than with

persons whom we never saw. But my critic reverses this order of things. His benevolence clings to individuals whose names he never heard, and urges him to inflict injury at all events, and pain if he can, upon persons whose sensibilities, he supposes, lay them open to his attacks. In one publication it seems to be intimated that I killed the men myself, whilst in the other I am conjectured to have been standing sentry, and to have dropped asleep at my post. The former charge I shall leave the Government of my country to answer; for if I be guilty and still at large. Government has made itself my accomplice. Shall I on the second point enlighten the critic, or shall I not? The fact is, I was not asleep, though with the greatest propriety I might have been, but at the very moment of the perpetration of the murder, I was leaning in bed upon my elbow, conversing with Captain Graham. Nevertheless, from the form of the *wady*, I could not command a view of every part of the encampment, or discern in the dark the approach of the assassins, at the distant point which they selected for their noiseless attack.

As to the manner in which I have related the circumstance, that is another affair, and the critic is at liberty to judge of it as he pleases. I claim, however, the same liberty for myself, and will venture to observe, that this part of his review is more lumbering, heavy, and absurd than ordinary; that in attempting to display feeling, he is only betrayed into lugubrious affectation; and that however I may be able to wield our mother tongue, he manages it so unskilfully that he wounds no one but himself.