

UNCONQUERED ETHIOPIA



Young Ethiopian Nobles.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

ETHIOPIA (or Abyssinia), where the world's newest emperor, Ras Tafari, has just taken his throne, is the one sizable and climatically desirable region of Africa which is not under European influence. It sits aloof on its elevated plateau, unconquered, little known, and almost unvisited. Its autonomous position, however, is not for lack of interest, since it is larger than the republic of France; it has a delightful and beautiful climate, and its economic resources have large possibilities. It is rather because it has natural strategic advantages of location and because it is inhabited by a wonderfully patriotic and warlike people, who have defended it against all comers.

If we are not too particular in our analogies, Ethiopia might be called the Tibet of Africa. It has no Dalai Lama and no forbidden city of Lhasa, with its monasteries, but it does have a numerous religious people, ancient and isolated, living in a mountain stronghold on the top of a continent. It is not now exactly a closed territory in the way that Tibet is, but it has been practically closed for long periods in the past and foreign travel within its borders has always been very limited. In order to enter it, one must ask permission of the Ethiopians (Abyssinians) themselves, rather than of some European power. With Afghanistan and Siam, it is one of the three absolute monarchies left in the world.

The beginnings of Ethiopia go back to times of myth and legend. Unlike Egypt, with which some of its early history was doubtless connected, it has left only scanty and very imperfect records. That it was peopled from the north, perhaps from ancient Judea, with additions from Egypt and Arabia, is evident. The people, therefore, are Hamitic and Semitic in origin.

Rulers Descended from Solomon.

One of their most cherished traditions is that of the descent of their line of rulers from the offspring of Solomon and the mysterious queen Makeda, or, as now designated, the Queen of Sheba, who is supposed to have visited King Solomon at Jerusalem about 1,000 B. C. From this time on for some three thousand years their dynasty is believed to have continued, and it is certain that, in spite of many civil, religious, tribal and foreign conflicts, they have maintained themselves as a free and independent people.

Their territory has expanded or contracted from time to time, but its essential integrity has persisted. Their civil and social customs, language, and their outlook upon the rest of the world also have remained largely unchanged; so today they stand as anachronisms in a world which is moving at bewildering speed.

Although surrounded by negro tribes and having some admixture of negro blood brought in through centuries of slave-holding, the Ethiopian is by no means a negro. He is dark-skinned, with hair usually kinky and lips frequently thick, but he has a good high-bridged nose, well-set eyes, and a firm chin. To this he adds a proud and dignified bearing and a warlike, patriotic spirit, which mark him in an outstanding manner.

His principal language is Amharic, an ancient Semitic tongue, but many languages and dialects are spoken. There is no literature in Amharic and only priests can read and write in Ge'ez, also of Semitic origin, but a dead language no longer spoken.

Has a Feudal Government.

The government is an old-fashioned feudalism, such as flourished in Europe in the Middle Ages. Theoretically, the hereditary ruler is all-powerful, with the life or death of every man in his hands. All are subject to his call to arms and, through a system of provincial governors, overlords, and petty chiefs, to taxation and other forms of service.

Practically, the system is subject to some variation; for, in a country with poor communication and many physical barriers, might can make right here as elsewhere, and it is sometimes possible for a man to rise to comparative power through his own effort. Under the feudal system, as in days of old, the vast majority of the

people are vassals in one degree or another.

Every little village has its chief, or shun, and around him are his retainers. When he travels or appears in public they tag at his heels, and when he is at home they lie about his courtyard like so many hunting dogs, waiting to be called. If he is a big chief, they may number hundreds or, on special occasions, thousands; if he is of minor importance, they may be only two or three; but every one who can muster as much as one small boy to act as his attendant will take great pains to do so.

In addition to serfdom, slavery has existed for hundreds of years, and, although the present government is making a sincere effort to mitigate and diminish it, there is little hope that it can soon be entirely abolished. Long before our European ancestors had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, Ethiopians were devout Christians, and Christians they have remained to this day. They are Christians of the Coptic, or Monophysite, branch, which originated in Egypt and is supposed to have reached Ethiopia early in the Fourth century. The priesthood is very numerous and very powerful and numbers nearly one-fourth of the male population.

Ras Tafari and his court in Addis Ababa are a mixture of the old and new. Outside the capital city there is nothing modern and the customs of the people have not changed for centuries.

Much Beautiful Scenery.

Much of the country is beautiful beyond description. Mountains and valleys, forests and meadows, lakes and rivers, deep-cut gorges and sheer-walled canyons, all combine to furnish such a variety of natural conditions as is rarely to be found.

Although a large part of the country is thickly inhabited, the people live in small, round, grass-hatched huts, known as tukuls, which are built in small clusters on the tops of knolls or so nestled into the sides of the hills that they seem always to have been there. Since there are no fences or roads, no telegraph lines, and no wheeled vehicles of any kind, the appearance of smiling virgin nature is everywhere maintained.

An expedition of scientists recently spent seven months traveling in Ethiopia. They covered nearly two thousand miles of territory and made nearly two hundred camps. There was scarcely one of these that did not provide an attractive setting and all practical requirements—level ground for the tents, water and forage for the mules, shade, firewood, and opportunity to collect specimens of mammals and birds.

Ethiopia offers as delightful conditions for outdoor life as can be found anywhere in the world. In the dry season, there is practically no danger of fever, and insect pests, with the exception of fleas in the settlements, offer little or no annoyance.

The Mountain Nyala.

A most interesting Ethiopian animal is the mountain nyala, one of the largest and handsomest of African antelopes and one of the rarest. It is also called giant bushbuck, and on account of its strictly Ethiopian distribution and its great beauty the suggestion has been made that it be christened "Queen of Sheba's antelope."

Like its relative, the ordinary bushbuck, it skulks and is given to lying in close concealment. Considering its size, its ability to hide in relatively open country is remarkable.

Fortunately for the hunter, the nyala does at times appear in the open on high ridges or at the edges of mountain glades. In such places he presents a magnificent sight.

The natives met in southern Ethiopia are mainly Gallas, belonging to the most important of the so-called subject tribes. There are various branches of them, some of which have extended into the central and even the northern part of the country, and have become so powerful and so numerous they may almost be regarded as assimilated. They are probably of Hamitic origin and are lighter in color than the old Ethiopians. Although mostly pagan, some have embraced Christianity, while others, especially in the southeast, are Mohammedans.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS ENTERTAINED BY D. A. R.

The March meeting of the Bellefonte chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, held in the parish house of the Episcopal church at State College, last Thursday evening, proved to be another outstanding event in the chapter's current year. It was a "mothers and daughters" meeting, the mothers and daughters of chapter members being the guests of the evening. In their honor it was decided to waive all unnecessary business.

Guests and members united in the salute to the flag and in the singing of "America, the Beautiful."

The regent, Dr. Lucretia VanTuyt Simmons, read the names of the following who have been proposed for membership: Miss Helen Bortof, of State College; Miss Mae Taylor, Mrs. Paul McGarvey and Miss Roxanna Mingle, of Bellefonte, and Mrs. Samuel Waite, of Narberth.

Mrs. John G. Love presented a resolution for an amendment to the constitution which would provide for an assistant corresponding secretary, this to be voted upon at the next meeting.

Dr. Simmons announced that in April the chapter will have the pleasure of hearing an address by Dr. Frederic Godcharles, State librarian, of Harrisburg.

The program committee, of which Mrs. H. E. Hodgkiss is chairman, presented two very clever and well-acted plays, entitled, "Rise Up, Jenny Smith," by Rachel Field, and "Extra! Extra!" an adaptation by Robert Sherwood. The former, with its world-war background, was directed by Mrs. P. H. Dale, the parts being taken by Mrs. Harold A. Everett, Mrs. John R. Haswell, Mrs. J. Orvis Keller and Mrs. Charles M. Thompson. In "Extra! Extra!" directed by Mrs. Arthur B. Bingham, the parts were taken by Mrs. S. W. Fletcher, Mrs. H. E. Hodgkiss, Mrs. Henry W. Thurston and Master Austin Patrick.

To the hostesses, Mrs. W. B. Nissley, Mrs. D. S. Cryder, Mr. W. C. Kelly, Mrs. E. H. Lederer and Mrs. L. S. Rhodes all present owe a vote of thanks.

CENTRE COUNTY NATIVE KILLED NEAR ALTOONA.

Frank E. Wagner, a native of Centre county, was killed on the Hollidaysburg branch of the Pennsylvania railroad some time last Thursday night, his badly mutilated body having been found along the tracks shortly after one o'clock Friday morning. Both legs were severed below the knees, his right arm was cut off near the shoulder and his head was crushed.

He was a son of Jacob P., and Catherine E. Wagner and was born at Pine Grove Mills in August, 1894, hence was in his 37th year. He had been a resident of Altoona a number of years and at one time worked at the Altoona rolling mills.

He was unmarried but is survived by the following brothers and sisters: Charles W. Wagner, of Chicago; Mrs. Edward Miller, of Cresson; Mrs. R. B. Tinsley, of Pittsburgh; George J., of Los Angeles, Cal.; Mrs. Susan Chandler, of Julian; Curtis A. and Nevin J. Wagner, of Altoona.

Funeral services were held on Sunday evening at the Lafferty funeral parlors and on Monday morning the remains were brought to Bellefonte for burial in the Union cemetery.

The Macmanus sale, on March 27th, will give to the public the opportunity of buying some of the rarest antiques ever sold in this section of the State. Among them will be a pair of Heppelwhite inlaid mahogany tables, solid brass andirons, mahogany sideboard, mahogany square piano, two mahogany bureaus, one pair Sheffield plate candlesticks and numberless other pieces which will appeal to the collector of antiques.

WORKMEN'S BOARD WAS CONFIRMED BY SENATE.

Former Judge Arthur C. Dale is now chairman of the State Workmen's Compensation Board, in fact as well as by name, as his appointment was confirmed by the State Senate, on Monday night, almost two months after his appointment was announced by Governor Pinchot. Senator Scott, chairman of the committee on executive nominations, reported to the Senate that the committee recommended confirmation of the three appointees. They were voted on separately, Dale's confirmation made by a vote of 42 to 1. The vote on William J. Burchinal, Fayette county, was 40 to 2, and on Edward J. Hunter, Philadelphia, 46 to 0. Mr. Dale went to Harrisburg on Tuesday to take over his new job.

—Read the Watchman.



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WILLS

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