

tian religion, of civilization, and refinement, among millions of our fellow-creatures. Its proximity to India would add greatly to its value, and its favourable situation at the entrance of the straits would render it invaluable to us as a commercial port, being accessible at all times of the year.

Next in importance as a trading station, is the harbour and town of Zeyla. Like Berbera, it is now a place of considerable trade, and the terminus of a great commercial route from the interior ; the surrounding country is also inhabited by the Soumauliks and the Gallas. Here may be collected annually from 10 to 15,000 hides and horns ; coffee abounds a few miles in the interior ; ivory is annually brought down from the Esa Soumauliés, the Galla, Hurra, and Baskala countries ; gum-arabic, myrrh, and ostrich feathers, by the Goodebusa Soumauliks, jawarrie and wheat from Baskala and Goori, and slaves from all parts of the interior. To Zeyla is likewise brought much of the produce of the countries bordering on the Red Sea, pearl, and pearl shell, tortoise shell, sea-shore teeth, coral of commerce. The town is large, and populous during the trading season, and there are many well-peopled and conditioned villages scattered through the adjacent country. There is also a large river at Zeyla, which is said to flow from the Lake Tzana, and is navigable for some distance into the interior. The natives of this district have relaxed in their hostility to strangers, and are now favourably disposed towards communication with Europeans. There would be little difficulty in effecting a settlement among them. The people are under the government of their own chiefs.

As a commercial port, Zeyla is undoubtedly superior in its physical capabilities to Massowah, and much of the trade formerly possessed by the latter place is now diverted to it, in consequence of the impositions which were practised by the Naybe, and the dangerous state of the country round Arkeeko.

The occupation either of Zeyla or Berbera by the British would, doubtless, rouse the commercial ire of Mehemet Ali, whose custom-house revenues at Massowah would doubtless suffer greatly by that event, should it ever take place. If the British government, or the East India Company, do not form a settlement at Socotra, and form it into a free port, like Singapore, the interests not only of British commerce, but of British India, require the possession of Zeyla and Berbera by England.

About halfway between Mocha and Massowah, on the African coast of the Red Sea, is the bay of Amphila, which comprises an extent

of fourteen miles along the coast, and from its outer island measures nearly twelve miles in depth, containing altogether thirteen islands. The height of these islands often exceeds thirty feet above the level of high-water mark. They are now uninhabited, though sometimes visited by fishermen. The shores to the windward of these islands are in general steep, and, when the weather is foul, difficult of approach, owing to the encroachment of the sea, which has undermined the rocks. At the bottom of the bay, on the mainland, lie the two villages of Madoi and Durrora, the latter of which is conveniently situated for traffic, as it is scarcely a mile from the port in which the dows actually anchor. The country behind these villages is an extensive plain covered with brushwood, and bounded by a range of mountains, forming a kind of natural amphitheatre, at about fifteen miles' distance, lying in a *n. w.* and *s. e.* direction, fronting the coast. To the northward of this range passes one of the routes into Abyssinia. The mainland towards the sea is everywhere skirted with a thick jungle of the rack tree, the leaves of which, though exceedingly bitter and acrid, form the chief support of the numerous droves of camels kept on the coast. The country round Amphila forms part of an extensive tract, formerly termed the kingdom of Dankali, but it is now subdivided among a great number of petty tribes, each ruled by its own chief. Of every article of sustenance an extreme scarcity prevails along the coast. In the interior, however, cattle are plentiful. Ships of burden cannot approach within one mile of the shore, nor can water be procured within one mile inland. The bay affords very little protection to shipping in stormy weather, and is useless as a commercial port.

Massowah, the ancient port of Abyssinia, is a small barren island, of coralline formation, standing opposite the town of Arkeeko, or Dochom, in *n.* latitude 15. 36. 15. and *e.* longitude 39. 23. 30. ; it is partly embayed by the main continent, being separated from it by a deep narrow channel, which affords excellent anchorage for vessels, Massowah is approached by a narrow but safe channel, is accessible at all seasons of the year for vessels of moderate burden, and is capable of holding from fifty to sixty vessels. In length it is not more than three-quarters of a mile, and in breadth one quarter of a mile. The town, if worthy that name, is, with three or four exceptions, an assemblage of wretched huts, seldom exceeding one apartment each, built of reeds, and thatched with grass or straw; the furniture of these houses in general may be comprised in a bare bedstead, and a few household utensils. The number of resident inhabitants is constantly fluctuating,

but cannot exceed more than 15 or 1,600.* The original inhabitants were Abyssinian Christians, but the numerous revolutions which this island has undergone has given to it a mongrel race, inheriting the bad qualities of their several forefathers, without their redeeming virtues. The island is at present but poorly defended; the only show of defence being a small dilapidated round tower, within which, mounted on hurdles, are two cast-iron guns, honeycombed from age and neglect, and giving fair promise to scatter wide their favours on friends as well as foes, if fired off. Mehemet Ali has a small garrison of fourteen or fifteen men, whose duties are to collect the customs and preserve the peace, but who seem to think their time much better employed in exacting toll on their own account of all who are unfortunate enough to fall in their way. Massowah has neither wood nor springs of water; there are, however, several large reservoirs, which collect the rain-water for the use of the inhabitants, and the shipping is supplied from the wells of Arkeeka, at a moderate rate of payment.

Massowah is more celebrated for what it once was, than what it is now ; it was formerly the great inlet into the empire of Abyssinia, and a place of great commerce, possessing even a share of the India trade. It was once governed by its own prince, under the title of **Bhar-na-gash**, or Lord of the Sea, who held it and the opposite mainland which stretches to the foot of the chain of hills which encircles the northern frontier of Abyssinia, as a fief under that once celebrated monarchy, and was then inhabited by a Christian population. About the year 1577 Massowah, as well as several other places on the African shore of the Red Sea, was taken possession of by the Turks, and a **garrison** of four hundred Bosnian soldiers was stationed there, for whose support a monthly stipend of 1400 ounces of silver was charged on the revenues of the place, over which was placed a **pasha** of three **tails**. The sublime Porte soon lost sight of so insignificant and distant a dependency, and Massowah then fell under the nominal control of the pasha of Djeddah. The Bosnian soldiers, or, as Bruce calls them, the Janissaries, in the mean time intermarried with the **Hábab** tribe occupying the shores of the mainland, and adopted their manners and language. Forming a kind of military corporation, they transmitted

* Mr. Thomson D'Abbadie, in a late communication to the Royal Geographical Society of London, states, that the population of Massowah has been much underrated by travellers, and estimates it to be 5,000. The inaccuracy of this assertion is apparent, the island would not contain one half the number of people. The amount of population, as stated above, is from personal information,

to their representatives a title to the pay, and obligation to do military service. To their chief was granted a firman by the Sultan to rule the coast of the mainland, and the town of Arkeeko, with the title of **Naybe**. In the course of the seventeenth century, as the Turkish power in the Red Sea declined, the governor of Massowah was obliged to pay tribute to Abyssinia, on which he was to some extent dependent for provisions. Towards the close of the last century, however, the **shérif** of Mecca made himself master of the port, and reduced the monthly pay of the **Naybe's** people to 1005 ounces of silver, and under his rule Massowah, with the other ports of the Red Sea, became the resort of pirates. In 1814, when Mehemet Ali's power was established on the opposite shores of Arabia, Massowah followed the fortunes of Djeddah, and received his officers. The new kaimakin, or lieutenant-governor, ventured to doubt the validity of the title under which the **habáb** claimed to share in the revenues of the port, and in 1826, pretending that his coffers were empty, he suspended the payment of their pensions. This occasioned a revolt, which forced him to fly, but in a few months peace was established on the old footing, the Turk keeping possession of the island, and paying out of its revenues 1005 ounces of silver to the rude soldiery of the mainland, among whom, in process of descent, it is now very unequally divided, some receiving a handsome income, and many but a miserable fraction, from the fund. The revenues of the island of Massowah amount to about 40,000 dollars annually, of which 23,000 are expended in the place, the rest is remitted to Djeddah.

The trade of the interior to this port is almost gone ; the lawless habits of the **habábs** prevent the safe passage of goods, and have diverted the principal traffic to other ports. Numbers of vessels of small burden still visit Massowah, not so much, however, for the purposes of commerce as to refit, the harbour being well adapted thereto. The trade that is still carried on consists chiefly of cottons from Muscat and Bombay, arms and ammunition, knives, small looking-glasses, beads, and other European trifles, for which they give, in exchange, gold-dust, ivory, civet, ostrich feathers, cardomoms, slaves, and other commodities. The natives build dows and small boats, which trade to Mocha, Djeddah, and other ports of the Red Sea,

The population of Massowah and Arkeeko is of the most degraded description ; particularly that of the latter, who are a race of arrant knaves, possessing no redeeming quality. These semi-barbarians are, generally speaking, a mixed breed, between the savages of the western coast of the Red Sea, and those "super-savages," as a modern writer

terms the Turkish janissaries. There are few pages in Bruce's travels more painfully interesting than the description of the treatment he received from the Naybe of Massowah, whose cruelty and **treachery** were only exceeded by his avarice, and the fear of whom was Bruce's principal reason for returning from Abyssinia through Sennaar and the Desert. Salt visited the place forty-one years after Bruce, and found the character of its ruler and its people unchanged : at present, deprived of the power to do mischief, and held in subjection by **the** Turkish authorities, they are incapacitated from committing acts of outrageous violence on the persons of Europeans, but it requires no little tact and judgment to combat successfully their thievish propensities and malignant treachery. The fraudulent habits of petty traffic, the bigotry nurtured by their vicinity to a rude Christian nation, and, above all, the slave-trade in which they are engaged, have corrupted **all** their feelings, and extinguished in their breasts every sense of shame. They are constantly putting the stranger on his guard against one another's deceitful arts, meditating, at the same moment, to catch him in the very snares which they pretend to be pointing out. One of the most eminent traders of Massowah, paying a visit to Dr. Riippell, the German traveller, the first volume of whose Travels in Abyssinia has 'lately appeared at Frankfort, stole from the bench on which he sat ten pounds of lead ; the theft was discovered for a reward by another equally respectable merchant, who asked for lead to purchase, was shown the stolen piece, and carried it off. The Swiss missionaries who have lately gone to Abyssinia likewise testify of the unchanged character and **habits** of these barbarians, The whole of the sea-port towns of the Red Sea are occupied by a similar nondescript race, the basest of mankind, kept in awe only by the presence of Egyptian soldiers, but exhibiting on every opportunity their lawless passions.

The inhabitants of the coast, enjoying a kind of lawless independence, moving about in predatory bands, plunder the unfortunate native of the interior who endeavours by by-routes and ingenious devices to reach the sea-coast, with his small stock of gold-dust, ivory, feathers, or civet; nor, while Abyssinia is torn to pieces with civil dissensions, while agriculture is neglected, and commerce set aside, can reformation be expected.

So impressed was Lord Valentia with the advantages likely to proceed from a direct commercial intercourse with the Red Sea and Abyssinia, that, on his return to England in the beginning of the present century, he memorialized the East India Company and the Board of Trade on this subject, but without effect. The plan was by

them pronounced to be chimerical, and founded on no real knowledge of trade. An eminent mercantile establishment, however, thought otherwise, and determined to enter into a direct trade, according to his lordship's recommendation. Lord Valentia's influence with government induced the foreign secretary, Mr. Canning, to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, and open a communication with the Abyssinian monarch. For this purpose, Mr. Salt was directed to accompany the commercial expedition : he was instructed to use his utmost exertions to ascertain the then state of the Abyssinian trade, the quantity, quality, and value of goods imported, either by way of Mocha or India ; the different articles exported by Abyssinia *via* the Red Sea, as also the state of the trade carried on by means of caravans between Abyssinia and the interior of Africa, and to express the desire of England to open a trade with Abyssinia, unfettered by exactions and uncertain duties. This expedition, in a mercantile point of view, was productive of considerable advantage, though somewhat inferior to that which might have been anticipated, had circumstances remained in a position which could have justified a second speculation to the Red Sea ; but about this period the island of Java fell into the possession of the English, and as its productions rivalled in quantity and nearly in quality many of the articles procurable at Mocha and **Mas-sowah**, it was not thought prudent to hazard another voyage to those places.

So far as was within his power, Mr. Salt fulfilled his mission. He obtained some insight into the history, character, trade, and commerce of the **different** countries which came immediately or indirectly under his observation. But, unfortunately, he did not collect much additional information on Abyssinian commerce, having been prevented from pursuing his-journey to Gondar **from** the precise nature of his orders.

Mr. Salt was the first person to suggest that the only plan which offered a hope of restoring anything like a regular form of government into the distracted country of Abyssinia, was by removing the **obstructions** which interrupt her communications with the coast, and by establishing thence a free communication with the East : this he proposed to effect by placing a branch of the royal family, by the consent of the chiefs of **Tigré**, **on** the throne of Ayum. To destroy the power of the **piratical** powers in possession of the Red Sea, he proposed the formation of a native power in that quarter, **sufficiently strong** to counteract their influence, and likely to prove friendly to the English interests, and to take some point on the Abyssinian coast under the protection of the British flag. **We** would improve upon this plan : we would

extend the seat of government nearer to the lake Tzana ; we would make Gondar the capital of Abyssinia, without defining the limits of the empire ; Adowa, the city next in importance, to be governed by the eldest son or heir-apparent to Abyssinia. Five hundred Europeans, well disciplined and instructed in the arts of war, and supplied with great guns and ammunition, would be able to defend the city, however large, against 20,000 of such men as could be brought against it. The seat of empire established, the first object should be to raise and train a native corps in the European arts of war, to give them a clothing congenial to the country, to attach them to their duties by regular and good pay, to have gradations of rank, making promotion to depend on good behaviour, to keep them as much apart from the citizens as possible, and to punish rigorously the most trifling outrage against them. The city of Gondar rebuilt and provided, a line or lines of communication opened to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, then would European wealth and enterprise flow towards the capital ; and the magnificent plains which surround Gondar would be once more reclaimed from their wild uncultivated state. This is no Utopian scheme, but one which comes readily within the compass of reasonable minds, and which might, with little expense to England, be put into immediate execution.

The Abyssinians love the English, and always openly manifest their wishes that we should have greater intercourse with them. Mr. Gobat, one of the Swiss missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, was repeatedly asked by men of consideration in Abyssinia whether the British government would not interfere, and put an end to the intestine discords which distract their fine country. The presence of a small body of British troops would overawe the rebellious, and at once secure the rightful sovereign in that degree of power which would be necessary for the true happiness of his people ; power firmly established, security of person and property ensues, and the energies of industry are awakened.

It has been asserted that Abyssinia contains in itself little to interest us as a commercial people ; but in the present wretched state of affairs, the same may be said of all Africa. It is true that the commerce of this once great nation has faded before the mists of idleness, brought on by internal dissensions and by civil and foreign wars, which have almost broken up a mighty empire, curtailed it of its fair proportions, thinned it of its inhabitants, who were slaughtered or carried into slavery, and rendered desolate and naked its once cultivated plains. Surrounding barbarians, taking advantage of this disunion and decay,

have hastened the ruin, and, extending their own possessions, have almost isolated this country from the rest of the world, closing the avenues of commerce, or rendering it so exceedingly precarious as to confine its operations within very narrow boundaries. Let England remove these causes ; let her throw her protecting shield over a people united to us in the holy ties of religion ; over a people who have for many years past supplicated our assistance, and the tide of commerce would flow from all parts of the interior of Africa into the kingdom of Abyssinia, passing thence to the several sea-port towns on the borders of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean ; and the resources of this fertile country would be re-developed. Its climate, its soil, watered by numerous streams, may with truth be compared with the richest and most fertile provinces of India ; the sugar-cane, indigo, cotton, and other valued products, are everywhere growing wild upon the hills, being trampled down or devoured by herds of elephants and other beasts of the field ; it abounds in corn and cattle, in wine and oil, in honey and spices, civet, gold, iron, copper, gums, and drugs ; and the cultivation or collection of these articles would soon be resorted to by the native, when he found his person and property respected, and his **labours** attended with their due reward.

The Djeddah pirates, thanks to the East India Company's cruisers, are no more ; their dows have been swept from the Red Sea, and those waters may now be traversed by voyagers in search of gain or pleasure in perfect safety ; but there is another power rising to fill their place—a power which circumstances may render a more formidable opponent of British commerce. The obstacles to effectual intercourse with Abyssinia, when the ports of Massowah and Suakin were in possession of the **Shérif** of Mecca, were the unjust exactions which were made upon the merchants who traded to these ports, which are the gates of communication with Ethiopia. These ports are now in the occupation of Mehemet **Ali**, whose conversion to the doctrines of free trade Dr. **Bowring** has sung in one of his highest strains ; and the same obstacles still exist. These restrictions, or rather prohibitions on **commerce** with Abyssinia, are, we readily admit, no subject of exultation or glorification to Mehemet **Ali**, the merchant-prince; but they are both, to Mehemet **Ali**, the ruler of Egypt and Syria. He would **willingly** abolish them as matters of commercial policy ; he stoutly enforces them as matters of political necessity. The **pasha**, once secure in the hereditary possession of Egypt and Syria, has long since determined to add Bbyssinia to his already overgrown Arab empire. Intercourse with Europe, he clearly sees, would lead to internal quiet and

organization, little suited to his views, and, as a matter of policy, he would render the trade to Massowah, Suakin, and other ports in his possession, as insecure as possible. To obtain the important town of Mocha, he stimulated the chiefs of the Desert Arabs, who accordingly invested that town in 1834 with 30,000 men. Although garrisoned by 200 Turks only, the place would have proved impregnable, even to this numerous body, had not treachery worked its way. The city, after a fortnight's siege, was taken and sacked, and its brave defenders were killed or driven into the sea. Mehemet Ali having thus far succeeded by violence, finished the good work by bribery, giving the conqueror 200,000 dollars for his conquest.

Once in the possession of Mehemet Ali, all hope for the future regeneration of Abyssinia is gone. It would be in his hands a second Nubia ; a source from which to replenish his exhausted treasury, to fill the ranks of his army, and to execute his public works. The praises of Mehemet Ali's civilizing spirit are daily and loudly sung. It is true, that he has organized a government in Egypt, and raised himself to be of European importance ; that his officers and ministers are men of education and ability, and that he has vast, and in some respects noble schemes of physical improvement. But he has effected and projected all these things by the destruction of the nationality of the people he governs ; he has broken their spirit, reduced them to abject slavery, and keeps them in a state not far removed from starvation. What he has done in Egypt and Nubia, he will attempt to do in Abyssinia, should he ever gain a footing in it ; and his troops even now encircle its western frontiers. Besides, all that he has done was quite compatible with his allegiance to the Porte ; and is no excuse, but rather an aggravation, of his rebellion.

But, it may be asked, would Abyssinia, now distracted by the quarrels and dissensions of rival governors, with its monarch subsisting on the charity of his nobles, with its people demoralized by civil wars, be in a worse state under the dominion of the pasha of Egypt than it is at present ? We reply, that the nationality of a country is even more valuable than its peace. Spain might be more quiet under the government of France than, under the daughter of Ferdinand ; but the line of policy which would place Spain in the power of France, disguise it as we may, is an emanation from the spirit of universal European monarchy. Now, the principle of a universal monarchy would be equally adverse to civilization and improvement in Africa as in Europe. The only defensible ground on which a monarch can forcibly take possession of any state to which he has no claim, is that the state does not

possess within itself the means of improvement, and that he is able to infuse that spirit into it. Mehemet Ali has not the means to reanimate Abyssinian civilization, and Abyssinia has within itself those means. The curse of Abyssinia is a weak and unsettled, but not a barbarous government. The unsettled state of its government arises **from** the outlets to the commercial operations of the country having been blocked up. Let commerce flourish at Berbera, Zeyla, and Massowah, and Abyssinia must revive ; commerce requires and compels peace, and infuses civilization wherever it penetrates.

However destructive the dissensions which afflict this country may be to the Abyssinians themselves, they offer no obstruction to the progress of the **traveller**. Riippell, who lately passed through **Tigré** **during** the progress of civil war, says :—“ Salt’s journal of his visit to Abyssinia, and even the narrative of the celebrated Bruce, had spread abroad the opinion **in** Europe, that access to Abyssinia was opposed by almost insuperable difficulties, and was attended by much danger, and that whoever had the good luck to reach the interior of that country unharmed, must make up his mind to stay there. Time may have made great changes since the days of those travellers : at all events, in the course of my journey in Abyssinia, **I** have never met with the difficulty on which they lay so much stress. Consequently, on my return through **Egypt**, I could not avoid sending a communication to M. Camille Tarbes, the editor of the journal published in Alexandria in the French language, by which means I hope to fix the attention of the scientific public in Europe on the **fact**, that there is at present no difficulty in penetrating in Abyssinia, and remaining there an indefinite length of time ; that the fanaticism, formerly described as so dangerous to Europe&s, exists no longer, and therefore that so rich and so wide a field-for the inquiries of the naturalist ought not to remain any longer neglected.” To this statement we may add, that Dr. Riippell, during his residence at **Gondar**, received his letters and newspapers from Europe as regularly as at Cairo. M. M. Coombes and Tamissier, two late travellers in Abyssinia, assert that the natives almost worship white men. . **Dr. Rüppell’s** announcement of the comparative **ease** and **safety** **with** which Abyssinia **may** be explored, has not been lost on the lovers of novelty and adventure. A number of travellers, French and German, have since visited **Abyssinia** ; of these **M. M. Coombes** and **Tamissier**, and **M. Katte** have published narratives alike worthless, More recently, **M. Lefevre** has **penetrated** into **Shoa** and the southern parts of Abyssinia by the great **caravan** route “ **from Zeyla.**” His **steps have been since** followed by **M. Dufay**, and by the Swiss mis-