



Notes on the Geography and People of the Baringo District of the East Africa Protectorate

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since my conceptions were derived from seeing his surveys in H.M.S. *Penguin* ten years ago. I was specially interested in the new soundings between Cargados and Mauritius. In one chart, prepared for the Maldive expedition, I joined these lands on purely theoretical grounds within the same 1000-fathom line. In a chart prepared for this evening, I separated them, in view of our soundings, and I am happy in now being able to include them again, as I think Mauritius and Bourbon must have been connected with the Cargados-Seychelles crescent.

The questions raised by Mr. Lydekker go very deep, and are scarcely suitable for consideration now. At this hour one cannot go into the question of the geographical distribution of animals and the very divergent views that people take about parallel and convergent evolution. He suggested that I was wrong in considering to-night the ocean between Madagascar and India by itself; but the expedition only explored that line, so I naturally confined myself to it. I quite accept a great deal of what he said, and of the considerations put forward by the late Dr. Blanford, who largely assisted me in the scheme for my expedition. I do not see why the subsidence which formed the bay of Bengal should have also disconnected Madagascar and Ceylon. I am sure most geologists will be agreed that the Madagascar-Australia connection was broken down long antecedent to that of Madagascar with India, the Bay of Bengal having then been formed. Now as to the question of the tortoises. How did they get to Aldabra? Aldabra must have been connected to Madagascar! Is this possible? It is a recently elevated limestone island, and we should have to imagine a complicated series of upheavals and subsidences in quite recent periods, making and destroying a bridge, but leaving a little speck of land peopled by tortoises. I confess that this supposition is to me incomprehensible, and I must fall back on such methods of marine transport as brought tortoises to the Chagos and lizards to so many lands. The question of the means by which such distributions were effected is a difficult one, and surely too complicated and detailed for discussion at this late hour.

NOTES ON THE GEOGRAPHY AND PEOPLE OF THE BARINGO DISTRICT OF THE EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

By C. W. HOBLEY, C.M.G.

THIS district comprises an area of about 10,000 square miles, and was until the last few years one of the least-known portions of the protectorate, and it is on this account that it is considered that the following notes may interest the Society.

Personally, only a small portion of the district is known to me, and the bulk of my information has been collected from the reports of Mr. G. F. Archer, who has energetically administered it during the last two years.

Geographical.

From an altitude of 3325 feet at Lake Baringo the country drops steadily towards Sugota and Rudolf lake (1250 feet), where the heat becomes intense and the grazing-grounds are scorched by a withering

sun. About March or April torrential rains usually occur, and the numerous dry watercourses are transformed into great rivers—in a few days half the country is under water or converted into quagmires. The soil, however, is so sandy and porous that a few weeks later the water has all disappeared again.

Owing to this scarcity of water, there is little in the district to attract the European settler, and this area may be definitely looked upon as a native reserve; the only change might come from the discovery of minerals, but the very recent volcanic formations of which the country is composed do not offer hopeful prospects. In spite of the aridity of



TURKANA CHIEFS AT BARINGO. AJIGWA THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF, ON EXTREME RIGHT.

the area, the grazing is declared by the natives to be marvellously good, especially for sheep; but, owing to the precarious water-supply, they are forced to adopt a nomad existence and move on from one water-pool to another. In some places they depend on brackish springs, and often dig wells in the dry watercourses to a depth of over 20 feet.

One of the most curious features of this region is the river Sugota, which, when visited by Mr. Archer in September last, was a rapid stream about 10 yards wide and 2 feet deep. It is hot and brackish, but drinkable in its upper course. It runs on northwards for about 70 miles without widening out in any way, and when it approaches the vicinity of the Andrew volcano, which is on its east bank, suddenly disappears into the ground. North of this point there are great flats covered with



TURKANA, SHOWING HEADDRESS.

deposits of natron (the magadi of the natives), and in the middle there is a small lake fed by two small streams from Mount Nyiro.

The enormous Lake Sugota of the Intelligence Division map, No. 1429 (*d*), is non-existent, and it is difficult to understand how it became delineated. The Sugota river is bounded by great walls of lava, so could hardly have flooded the plains. It, however, may be that Cavendish or one of the earlier explorers saw the whitey natron deposits from the slopes of Mount Nyiro, and took them for water.

There are also natron deposits higher up on the Sugota river, at a place called Pirias, and at this point the stream becomes quite undrinkable, and, according to native account, if camels and sheep drink it they die in a few minutes.

The native accounts of the Andrew volcano are rather interesting. They are firmly convinced it is the home of Engai (a Masai word meaning "God"), and are afraid to approach it closely. Strange rumbling and hissing noises are continually heard in the vicinity; the ground all round for several miles is broken up by great fissures in which boiling water is visible; and, most appalling of all, frightful cyclones pick up objects near the mountain and carry them into the crater. When these occur, the Turkana say they huddle together on the ground, and their spears and shields are often carried away; they laughed at the idea of a European being able to pitch his tent anywhere near, and said it would be swept into the crater like a herd of their camels had been a year or two ago. The essence of all this farrago

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is that the volcano is probably only approachable from the east side, on which occurs the only fresh water which is to be found in that locality.

A rough analysis has been obtained of the water of the Sugota river, and it is said to contain the following salts: Sodium sulphate, magnesium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium carbonate, traces of iron. It also gives off odour of sulphuretted hydrogen after keeping.

The country bordering the upper part of the Sugota river, though intensely hot, is very pleasant to the eye, a profusion of palms taking the place of the ubiquitous sansevieria aloe; lines of magnificent wild date palms mark the course of the river, and the broken jagged lumps of lava which are strewn over so much of this country gives place to hard sandy soil, which renders travelling pleasant.



SUK: TABOLAY, KAMUTA, SAGWALAN.

Native Tribes of the Baringo District,

Five tribes are represented in the Baringo district, for, besides the Suk, Turkana, and Njamusi, there are sections of the Kamasia



TURKANA FIGHTING MEN COMING TO CAMP TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.

and Elgeyo peoples, and it may be of interest to trace the history of the people inhabiting this stretch of country during the last half-century.

Originally the whole of the valley from Lake Baringo to Loroghi was occupied by the Samburu, but, being frequently molested and raided by the Elburgo Masai, they gradually trekked away north to the neighbourhood of Mount Nyiro for safety. The country was then left uninhabited for a while, till the Suk—an offshoot of the Karamojo, and not of the common Laikipia stock—who till this time had confined themselves to the country to the north-west of the Kerio river, began to work southwards, and were followed by the Turkana from Lake Rudolf. These two tribes came right down to Lake Baringo, the Suk keeping more or less to the western side, and the Turkana to the east, with the Ribkwa escarpment as the dividing-line between the two, and after a while made a combined attack upon the Njamusi (a numerous people living at the south end of the lake), which was successful; then, however, they quarrelled amongst themselves, with the result that the Turkana, in trying to get rid of the Suk, were beaten themselves, and had to return whence they had come, leaving the Suk in possession of the country and large herds of their cattle and sheep.

The raid on the Njamusi must have taken place about forty years ago at Lakasissio; the old chief of Njemps was then a “laioni,” and is interesting as showing that at that time the Turkana were occupying the very part of the country to which they are now anxious to return.

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The Suk, however, suffered much at the hands of the Masai after this, and to this day still cherish unpleasant memories of the Morans of Ongatabus. To this fact, however, is due in a great measure their attitude towards Government, which they now have come to look upon as a benefactor in preserving them and their stock from these raids, and also their willingness in paying up their hut tax, for they realize that if the Masai had been allowed to continue in their predatory habits, and the Government had not stepped in to offer them protection, by this time they would have very little left. They admit they cannot stand against the Masai, though of the Turkana, curiously enough, they have but little fear.

Turkana and Suk.

The range of the Turkana at present extends from just north of Labur, on the north-west side of Lake Rudolf, to the north end of Lake Baringo, a distance of some 250 to 300 miles. On the west side the tribe is bounded by Karamojo to the north and Suk to the south ;



CORACLES ON LAKE BERINGO.

on the east by Lake Rudolf, Mount Nyipo, the river Sugota, and the Loroghi mountains.

The Turkana are, numerically speaking, very strong, and one section alone, the Tuo, I am told, considerably outnumbers the whole of the Suk pastoral people.

The subdivisions of the tribe are as follows:—

Section.	District.	Chief.
Ngolio	Kerio	Onameri. Mutellili.
Kotonya	Kerio	Katodi. Ajigwa (Govt. chief).
Ataacha	Kerio	Apuche.
Ngaboto	Dorobo of the upper Tirkwell	No recognized chief. Ngamatak.
Ngamatak	Tirkwell	Rioball ("Tumbo" of the Swahilis).
Nisir *	Tirkwell	Lobwin.
Tuo *	"	Akeno.
Apacheros	Tirkwell, near Nare- met, Lake Rudolf.	
Ceyagwara	Tarash	Engelecha.
Herimong	"	Unknown.
Ngur	"	"
Nisir	"	"
Lukumomong	"	"
Atokomemwa	Labur	"
Nisigar	"	"
Kalabong	N.W. Lake Rudolf	"

From this it will be seen that there is no one paramount chief, nor, so far as can be ascertained, is there a Laibon. Lokorechum, an Ngolio of the Kerio who died about two years ago, is said to have been the last of the medicine men.

The Suk have only three subdivisions, viz. the Kasawarie, Lagit, and Kajiribkwa, and of these the first is by far the biggest. Lagwalan, Kamuta, and Karorlay, the three Suk chiefs of the Baringo district, are all Kasawarie; Lotonyalli is the chief of the Legit, and Aribomoi of the Kajiribkwa. With regard to the customs of the Suk and Turkana, it may be well to point out, to begin with, that these two tribes, particularly the latter, are exceedingly moral, and I do not suppose that there has ever been a case of a Turkana woman joining a trader's caravan when in the interior.

* Living together they form practically one big section, the most numerous and powerful in Turkanaland.

In the matter of the purchase price of a woman, it is interesting to note the difference between the Turkana and the Masai, for instance. A Masai pays as an outside price a cow or two, probably a few sheep; a Turkana a hundred head of cattle, ten camels (which are valued higher than cows), and droves of sheep. The reason given for this is the scarcity of women in Turkana, a fact largely attributable, it is imagined, to Abyssinian raids and oppressions. Those men, however, who can afford the luxury of a wife are well pleased with their investment, for in their own words, "our women are more prolific than dogs," and children to them mean wealth. Compare this, again, with the Masai tribe, who, on account of the comparative sterility

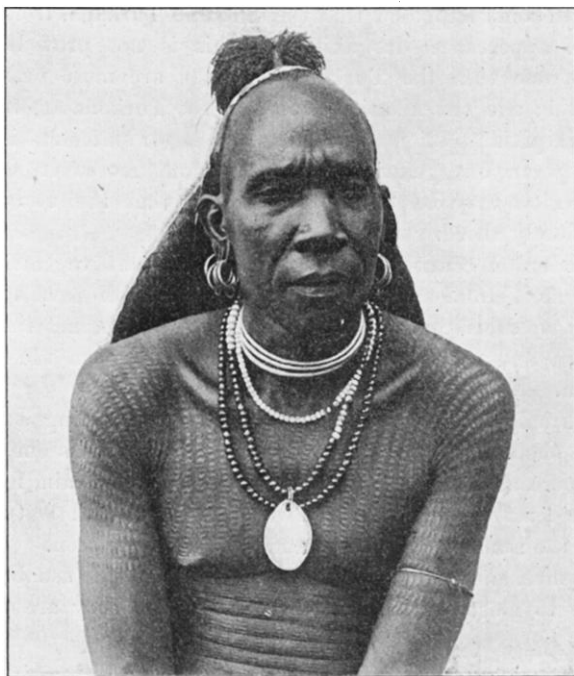


NJEMPS KUBWA. FIG TREES UNDER WHICH JOSEPH THOMSON CAMPED.

of their women, are believed by some to be on the road to extinction. The Suk pay nothing like so large a price for their women, though a rich man may pay as much as twenty head of cattle. An ordinary price is three or four cows and thirty sheep.

Of all serious offences amongst the Turkana adultery ranks first evidently, for the penalty, as a general rule, is death by spearing. In exceptional cases, however, when a man is very rich, the confiscation of every single head of stock he possesses is considered sufficient punishment. Amongst the Suk confiscation of all property is the invariable rule, and the hut, or manyatta, of the offender is also burnt to the ground.

Cases of murder seldom or never occur amongst either tribe, long



TURKANA CHIEF.

curved sticks only being used to settle differences where amongst the Masai spears or knobkerries would be the order of the day. In the event of murder, however, being committed, it becomes simply a matter of compensation in stock to the murdered man's brother or next of kin, final decision in the matter being left to the elders of the tribe.

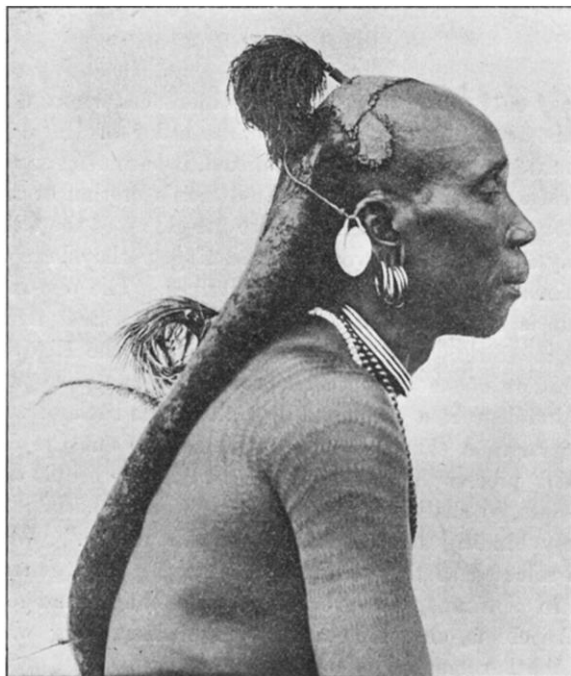
The only other customs worth mentioning, perhaps, are the various methods of making peace amongst these tribes. The one in which the dog appears is common to several other tribes in East Africa, among which are the Bantu Kavirondo, the Nandi, and the Elgeyo. In this case the leaders of the two parties concerned grasp respectively the fore and hind legs of a sacrificial dog, along the back of which is laid a wisp of grass. A sharp spear is then used to cut the dog in two, during which process the chiefs cry aloud, "If my people do anything to your people, so shall God do to me," or words to that effect. This is absolutely binding and ensures a *bonâ fide* "amen." Why the dog should be selected as the victim is not clear. The general method employed in Turkana, however, is simply the exchange of sticks between the chiefs, on which are bound solitary long white ostrich plumes. Another method is for two spears to be laid on the ground parallel, when all concerned, if they wish for peace and friendship, walk between them.

It is commonly supposed that the Suk and Turkana, from a general likeness of appearance, are akin, but this is not proved, and it is curious to note that the Turkana say they are more nearly related to the Masai; and the Masai declare that the Turkana are the survival of the Laikipikiah section of Masai. The latter statement is, however, undoubtedly an exaggeration. The Turkana, moreover, do not circumcise, which may be taken as evidence that the two tribes are not very closely allied.

Their adopted country of burning sand, scant vegetation (acacia scrub and aloes), and salt water, however, seems to have agreed with them, for they are for the most part enormous men, and their women, too, are tall and well set up, and very different from the undersized Suk women.

Their kraals consist of a zeriba of bushes containing a number of temporary shelters of palm leaves and grass; these seem to be put together more as a protection against the sun than rain, for they are not in the least weather-proof. Two of the principal features of the kraals are the number of donkeys and children to be seen.

The women and children seem to be fearless, and usually come out and dance to meet a traveller whose *bona fides* they are assured of.



TURKANA CHIEF.

Their dancing is the same as the Suk, and, when the men join in it, is really rather a fine spectacle, for with their huge "chignons," waving plumes of black, white, and orange-dyed ostrich feathers, and their yellow clay-bedaubed faces, they present a fantastic and war-like appearance, and one realizes that here at least one is among really unsophisticated natives.

They are very rich in stock, with numbers of camels (which, however, they do not know the use of as draught or riding beasts), cattle, sheep (the white-bodied black-faced variety), and numbers of donkeys, which run about more or less wild and quite unattended. These donkeys go out in the morning to their grazing-grounds and come back again at night, sleeping anywhere near the kraals in the open. The surprising thing is that they are not the prey to troops of lions, but the Turkana say that if a lion gets amongst them at night, so far from stampeding, all the others go to the rescue, and generally the remains of the intruder are found in the morning kicked to pieces.

They will sell their sheep and male donkeys for trade goods or cattle, but are most averse to parting with their camels or donkey mares, as they use them for milking. Male camels are often killed for meat. They have no idea of using the camel as a beast of burden.

One has read much about giant Turkana, and there is not the least doubt about it, the men, generally speaking, are enormous, for if they are not invariably tall they make it up in breadth. They are literally twice the size of Kikuyu, and weigh, I should think, on the average very nearly double as much. What struck me most, however, was the size of quite young "Laionis," who have great thighs and hips just as big as full-grown Suk, and their bones seem extraordinarily big.

RUWENZORI AND THE FRONTIER OF UGANDA.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

HIS Royal Highness the Duke of the Abruzzi, who has paid a visit to London since his return from Africa, has promised to offer a paper to the Society on his recent ascents in the Ruwenzori Range, of which he has made the complete conquest, having climbed the twelve highest snow-peaks, which all stand in a close cluster within a radius of a few miles; none of them, he tells me, exceeds 17,000 feet. The paper will be read in January, and will be illustrated by a number of Signor Vittorio Sella's photographic panoramas and views, which completely elucidate the topography of the upper region above the snow-level. Further details of the meeting, at which His Royal Highness expects to be present, will be duly announced to Fellows.

Dr. Wollaston, a member of the party sent out by the Natural History