

This PDF was generated on 25/01/2022 from online resources of
the **Qatar Digital Library**

The online record can be viewed at:

http://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000000912.0x000001

It contains extra information, high resolution zoomable views and transcriptions.

**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN
E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH BENGAL INFANTRY.'**

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	IOR/L/PS/20/60
Date(s)	1895 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	1 volume (36 folios)
Copyright for document	Open Government Licence



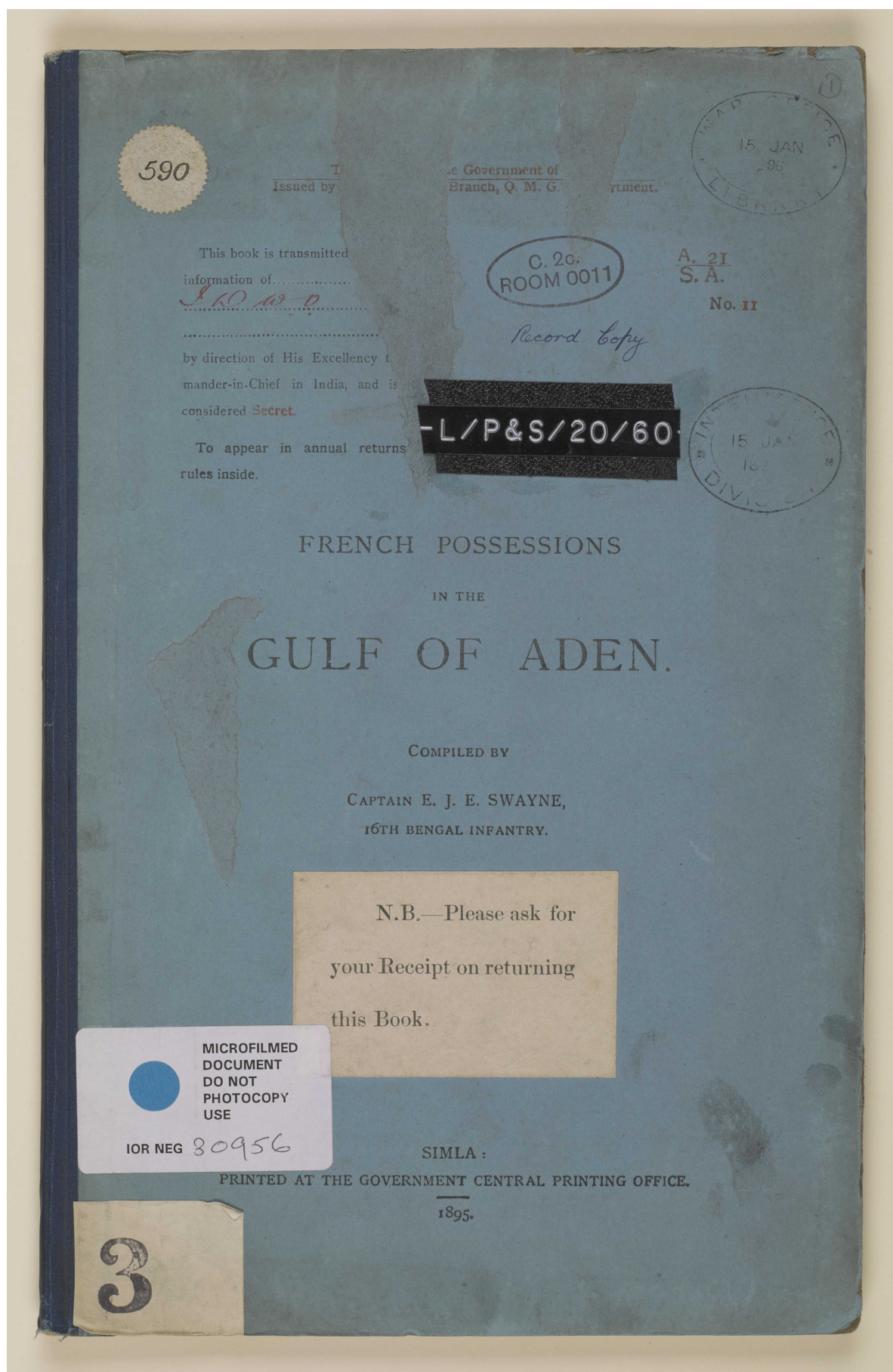
About this record

This volume consists of an intelligence document issued by the Government of India, Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department, which provides comprehensive descriptions of French possessions on the African coast of the Gulf of Aden, including the towns of Obok [Obock] and Jibouti [Djibouti]. The volume contains two maps held in a map pocket, and is divided into nine sections.

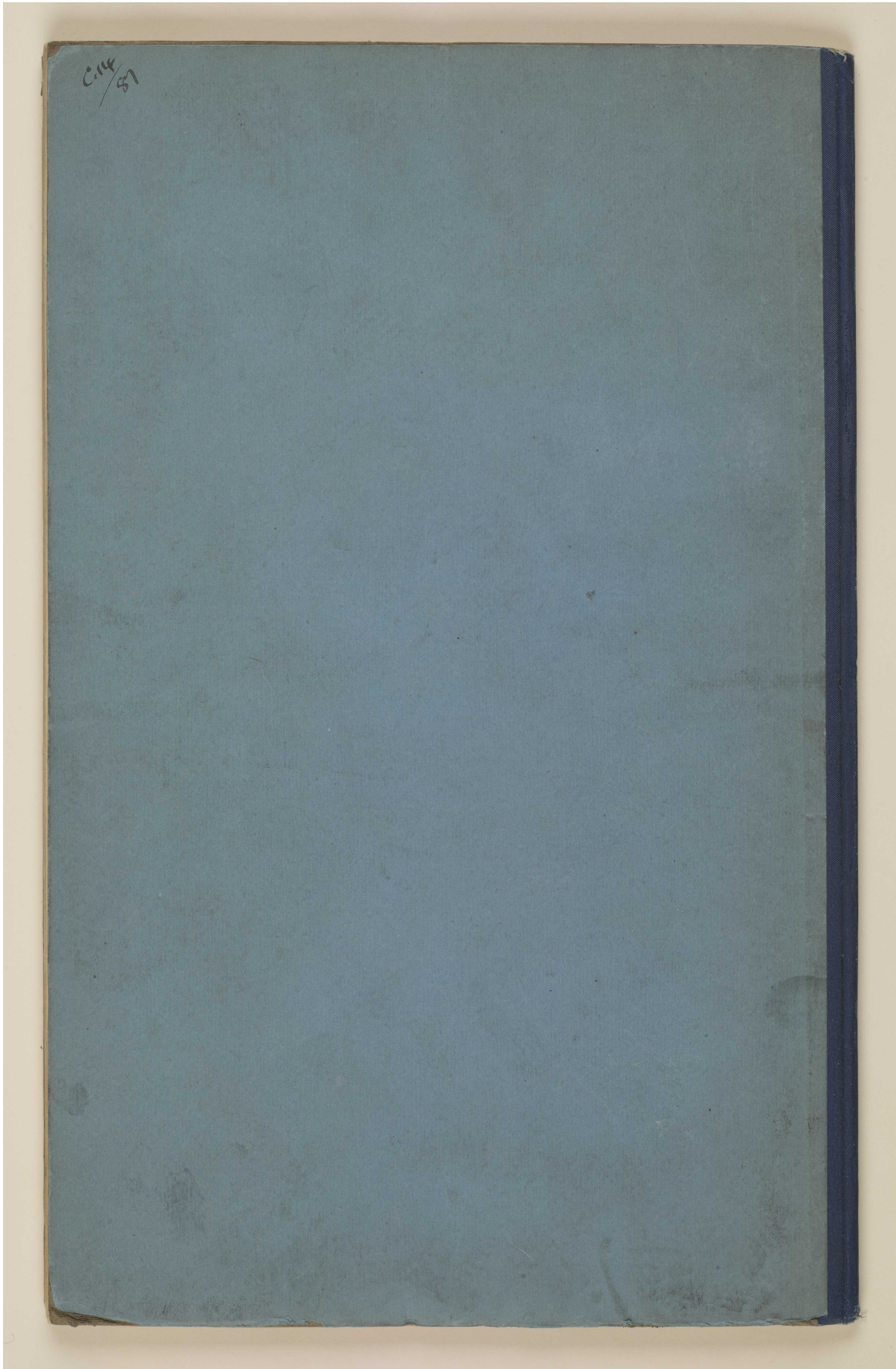
The volume was compiled by Eric John Eagles Swayne, 16th Bengal Infantry. The printing statement reads, 'Simla: Printed at the Government Central Printing Office. 1895.'

Two hand stamps appear on the front cover and on folio 5, which read, 'War Office Library 15 Jan 96' and 'Intelligence Division 15 Jan 1896'.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [front] (1/76)



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.'** [back] (2/76)



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [spine] (3/76)**



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.'** [edge] (4/76)



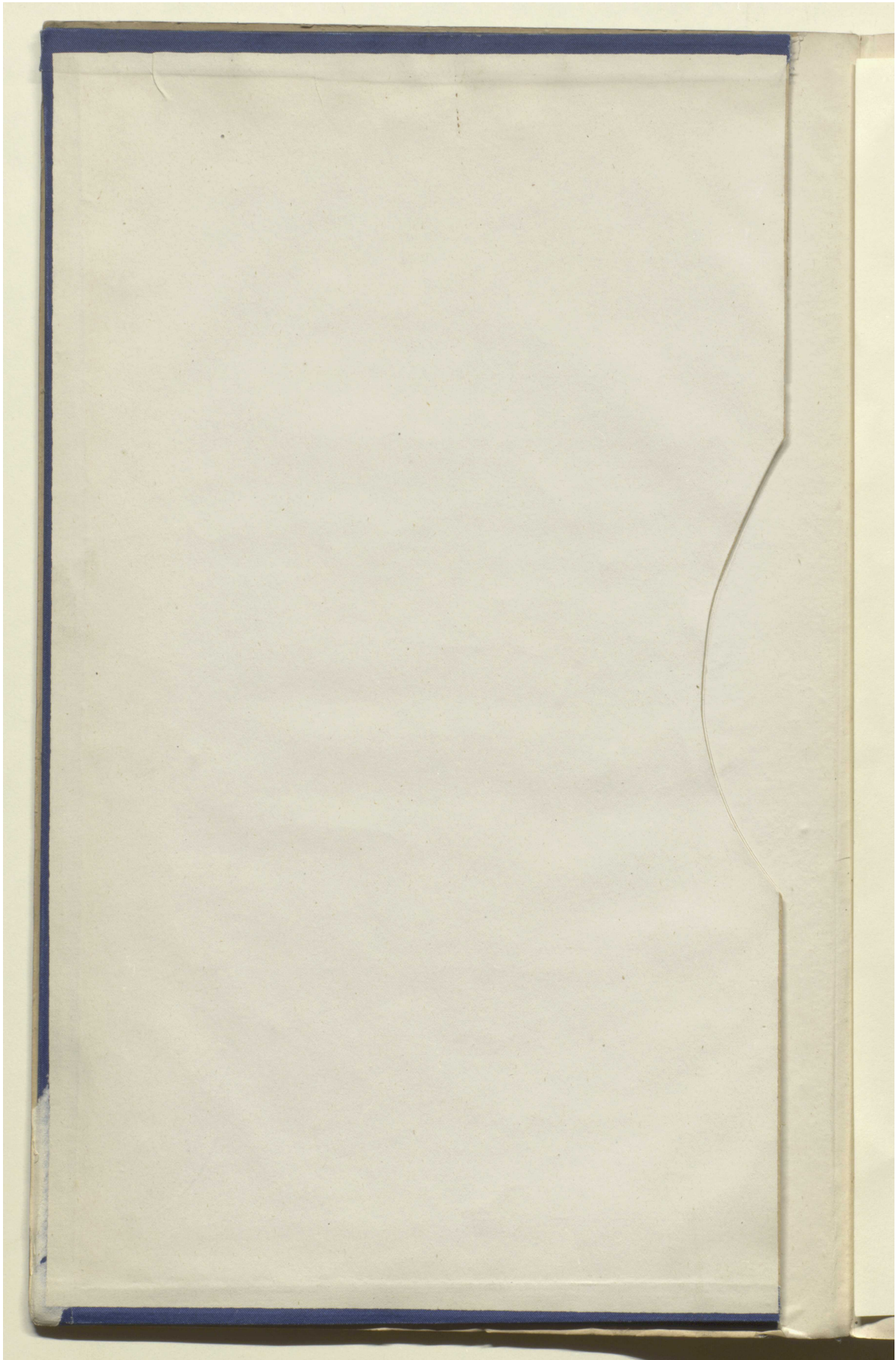
**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.'** [head] (5/76)



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [tail] (6/76)**



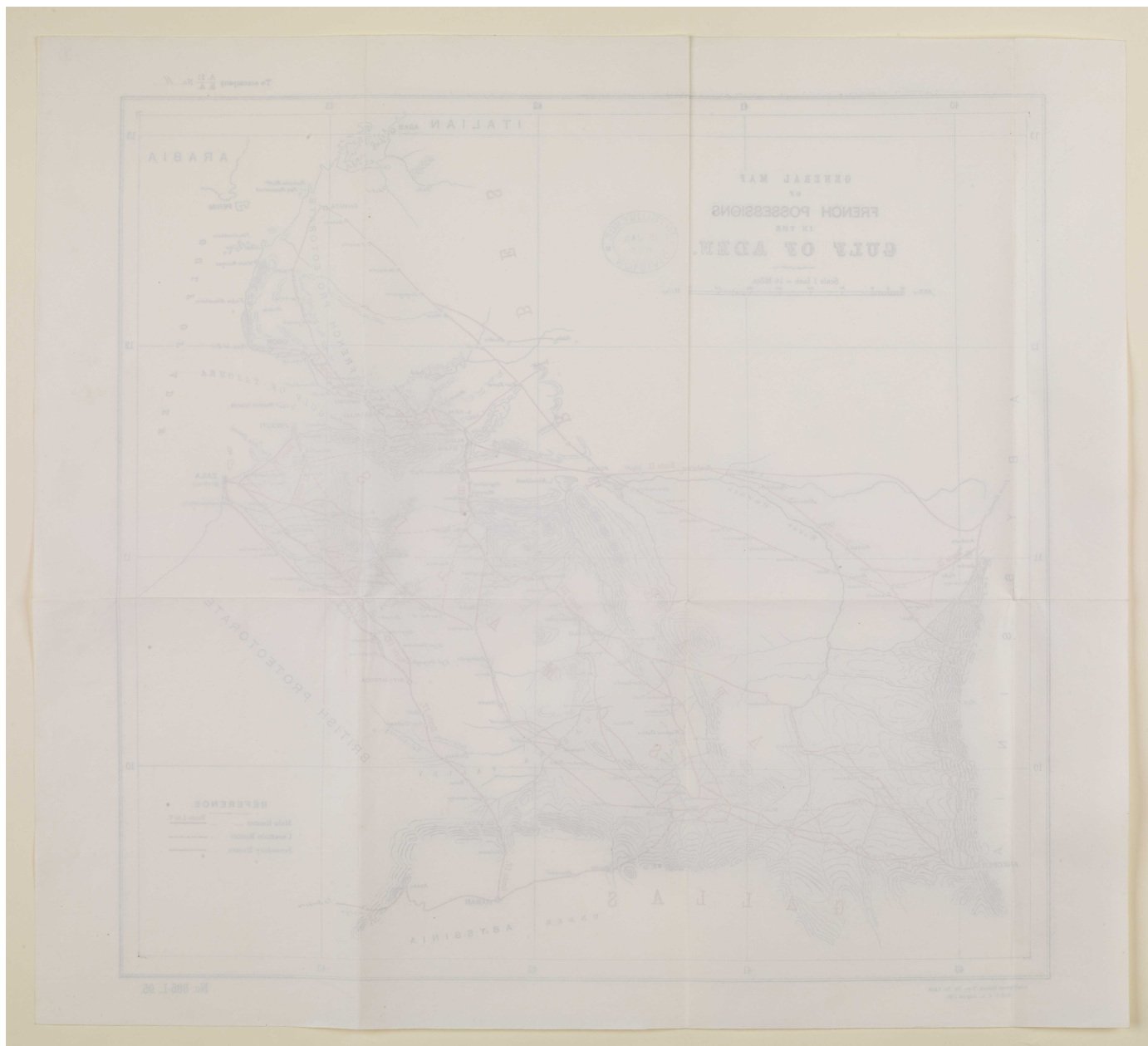
**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.'** [front-i] (7/76)



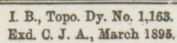
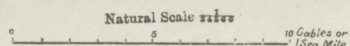
'GENERAL MAP OF FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN.' [2r] (1/2)



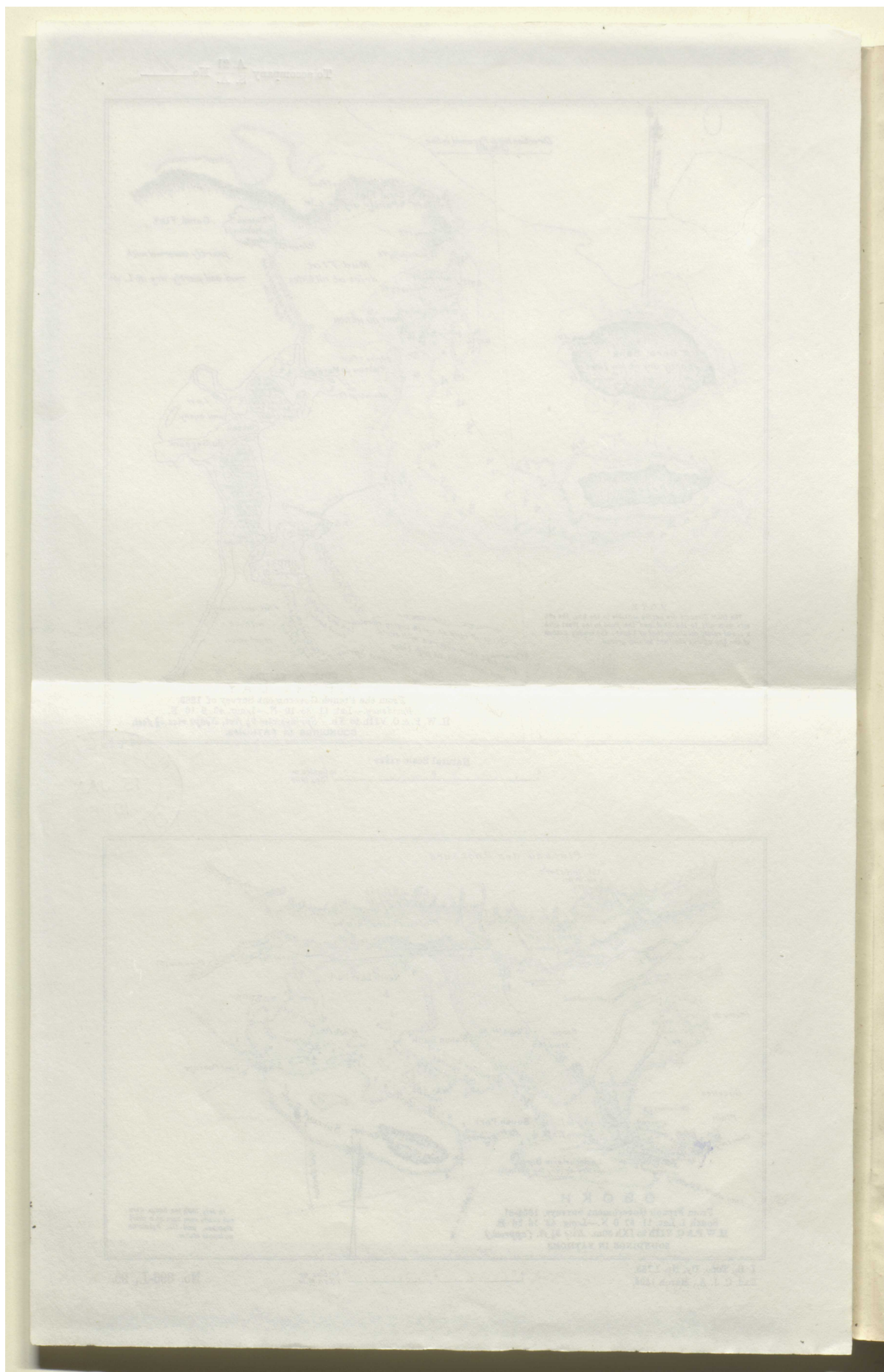
'GENERAL MAP OF FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN.' [2v] (2/2)



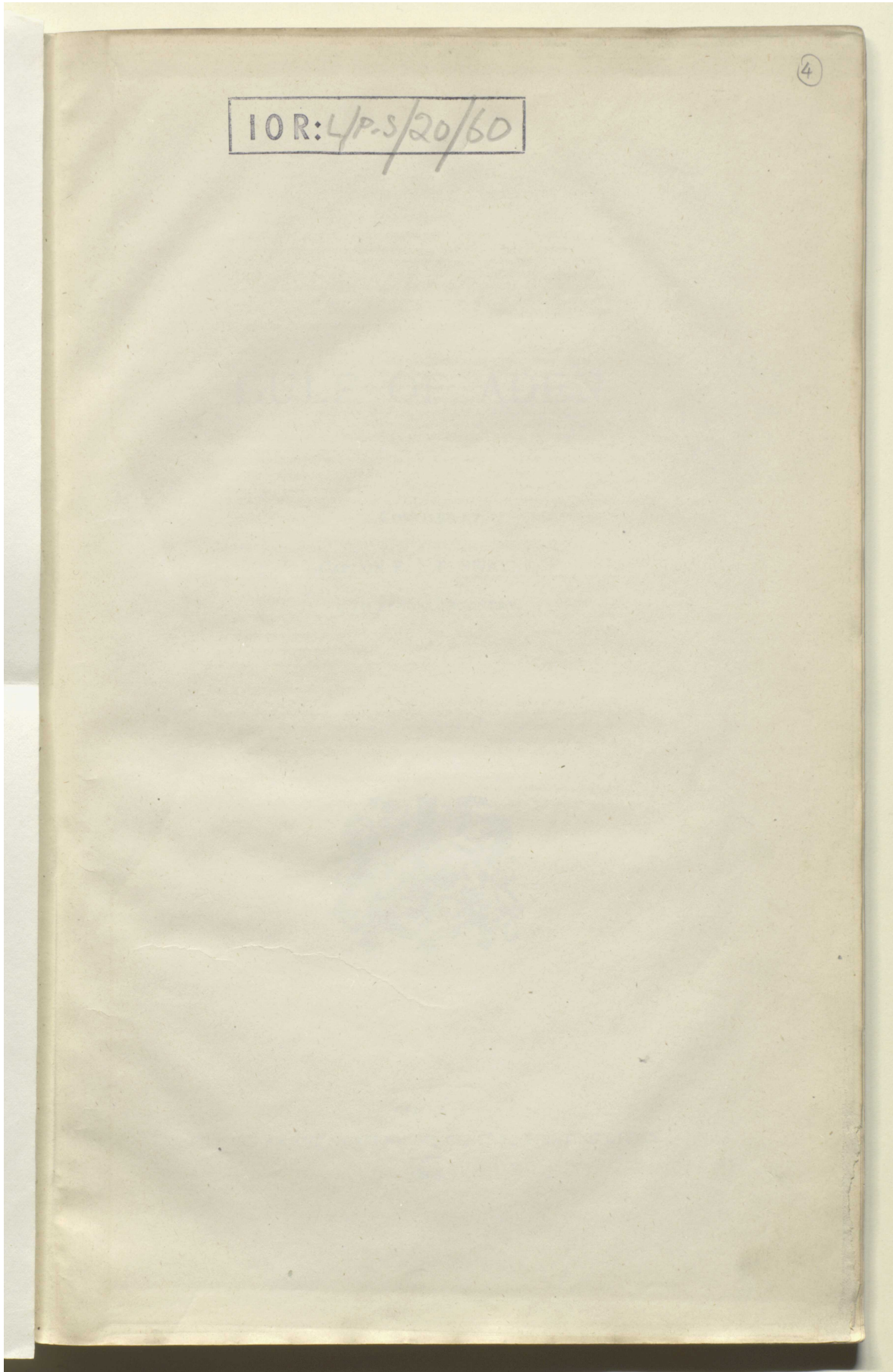
To accompany $\frac{A. 21}{S. A.}$ No. 11



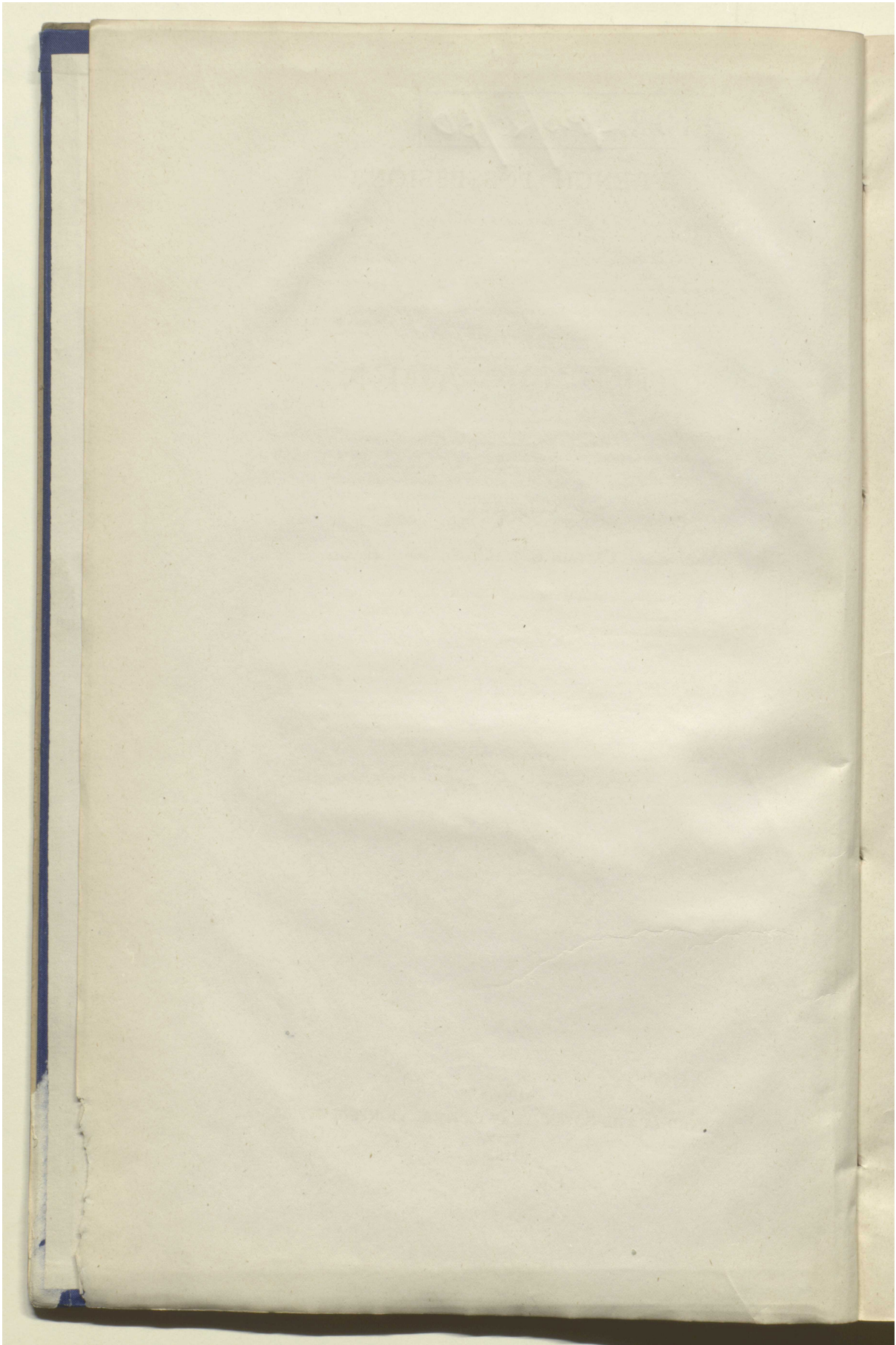
No. 696-I, 95.



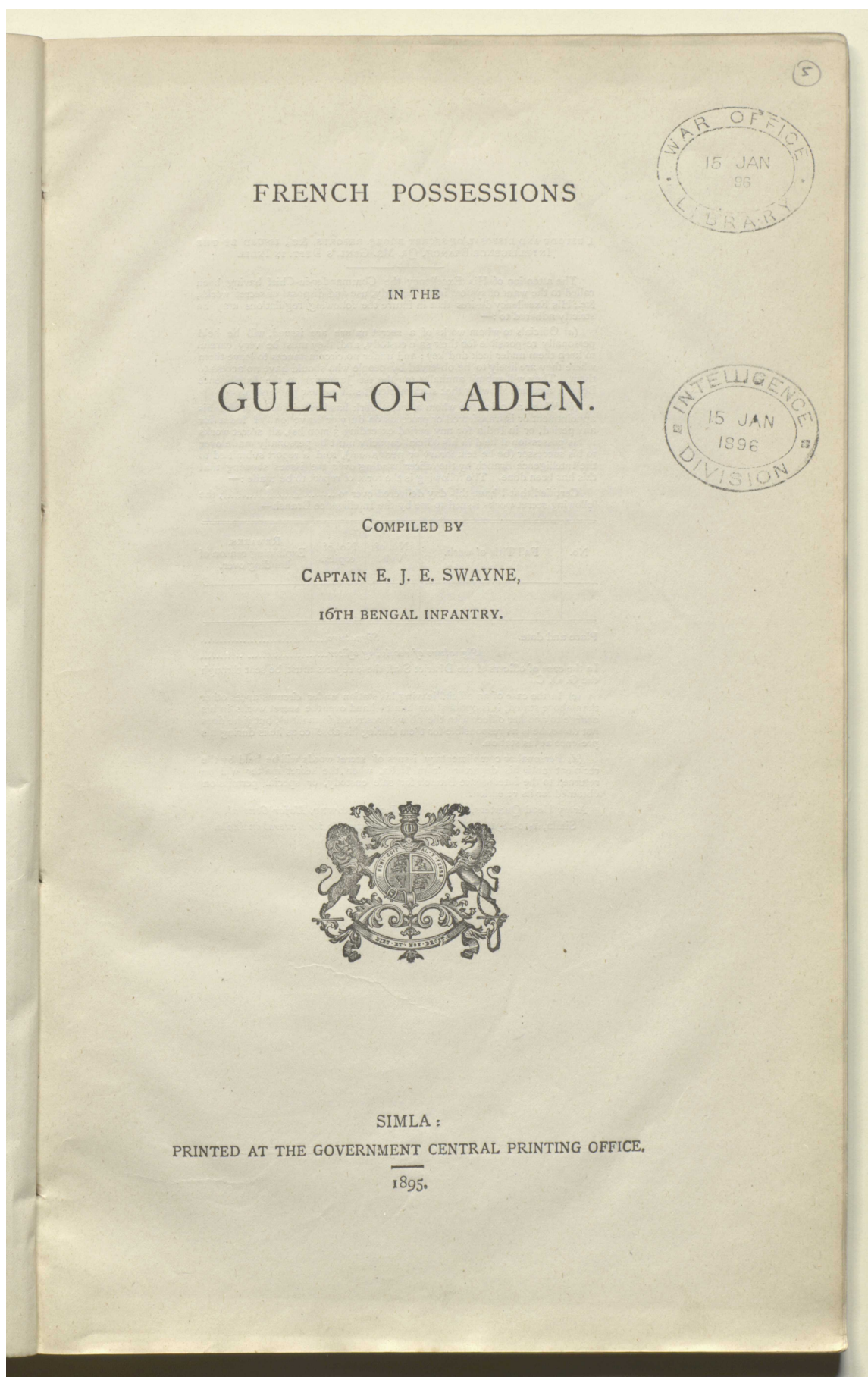
'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [4r] (12/76)



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [4v] (13/76)**



'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [5r] (14/76)



'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [5v] (15/76)

CUSTODY AND DISPOSAL OF SECRET BOOKS, REPORTS, &C., ISSUED BY THE
INTELLIGENCE BRANCH, Q.R. MR. GENL'S DEPT. IN INDIA.

The attention of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief having been called to the want of system in the custody, use and disposal of secret works, &c., His Excellency desires that in future the following regulations may be strictly adhered to:—

(a) Officials to whom works of a secret nature are issued, will be held personally responsible for their safe custody, and they must be very careful to keep them under lock and key: and under no circumstances to leave them where they are likely to be observed by people who should have no access to them. They will submit annually (on the 1st January) to the Intelligence Branch a return showing that such matter is still in their possession.

(b) When an official to whom a secret work has been issued vacates his appointment or is transferred or proceeds on duty or leave (out of India for any period, or in India for any period exceeding 3 months), all secret works in his possession if held in his official capacity must be personally made over to his successor (be he temporary or permanent), and a report submitted to the Intelligence Branch by the officer handing over the issues showing that this has been done. The following is the form of report to be made:—

Certified that I have this day delivered over to....., the following secret works issued to me by the Intelligence Branch—

No.	Full Title of work.	No. of Vols.	No. of copies.	REMARKS. Explaining reason of handing over.

Place and date.

Signature.....

Signature of receiving officer.....

In the case of officers of the District Staff these reports must be sent through the G. O. C.

(c) In the case of an official leaving his station under circumstances other than above stated, it is optional for him to hand over the secret works in his charge to another officer with the above prescribed formalities, but if he does not do so, he is as responsible for them during his absence as he is during his presence at his station.

(d) Personal or complimentary issues of secret words will be held by the recipient until his departure from India, when the secret matter will be returned to the Intelligence Branch for safe custody, or special permission obtained for its retention.

Army Head Quarters,
Simla, 1-10-1891.

JAMES BROWNE, Major-General,
Quarter Master General in India.

PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT CENTRAL PRINTING OFFICE

1891

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [6r] (16/76)

PREFACE.

THIS is a compilation prepared by Captain E. J. E. Swayne, 16th Bengal Infantry, who surveyed the Anglo-French boundary in Somali-land in 1892.

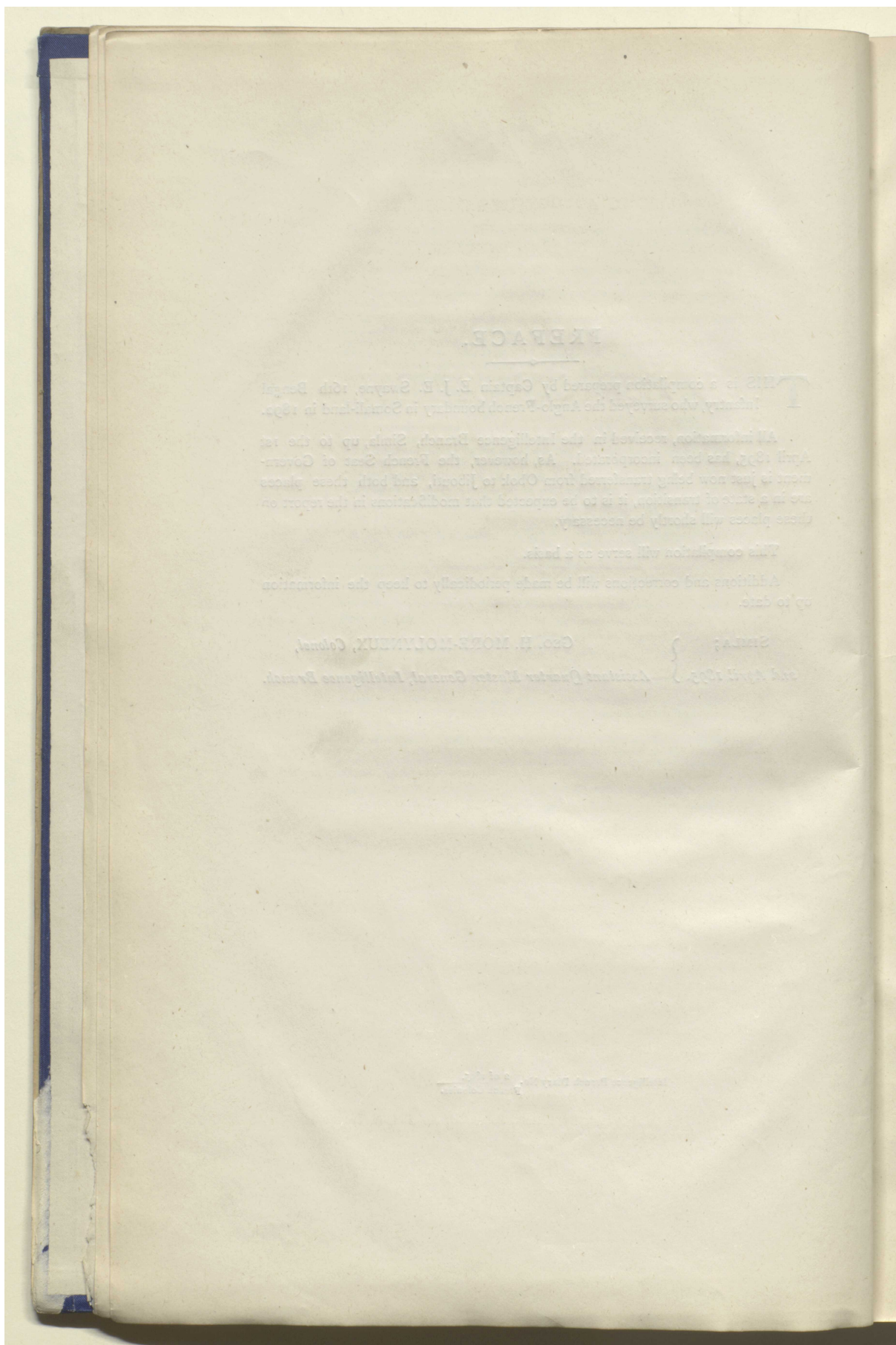
All information, received in the Intelligence Branch, Simla, up to the 1st April 1895, has been incorporated. As, however, the French Seat of Government is just now being transferred from Obok to Jibouti, and both these places are in a state of transition, it is to be expected that modifications in the report on these places will shortly be necessary.

This compilation will serve as a basis.

Additions and corrections will be made periodically to keep the information up to date.

SIMLA; } GEO. H. MORE-MOLYNEUX, *Colonel,*
2nd April 1895. } *Assistant Quarter Master General, Intelligence Branch.*

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [6v] (17/76)

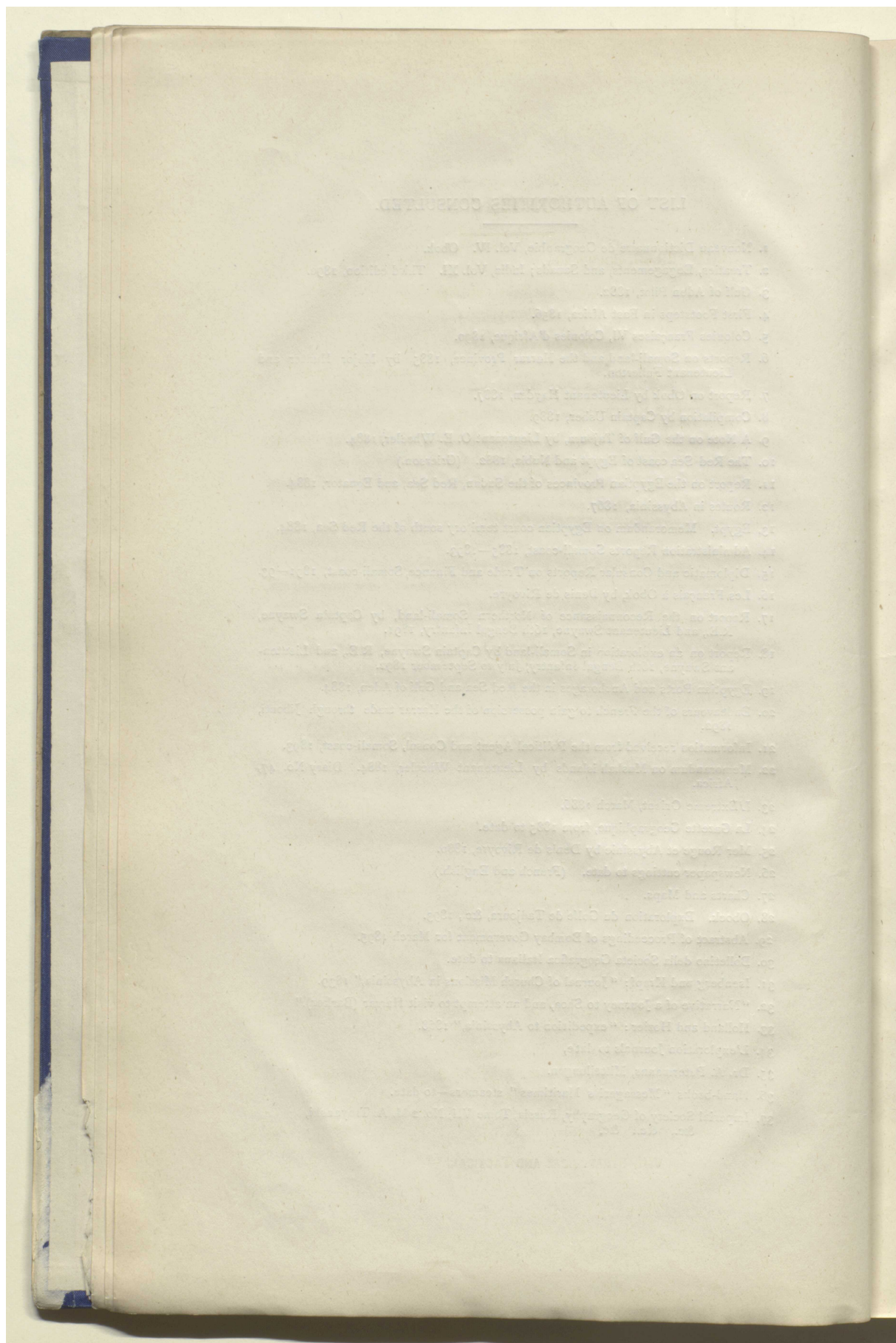


'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [7r] (18/76)

LIST OF AUTHORITIES CONSULTED.

1. Nouveau Dictionnaire de Geographie, Vol. IV. Obok.
2. Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads; India, Vol. XI. Third edition, 1892.
3. Gulf of Aden Pilot, 1882.
4. First Footsteps in East Africa, 1856.
5. Colonies Françaises VI, Colonies d'Afrique, 1890.
6. Reports on Somali-land and the Harrar Province, 1885, by Major Hunter and Lieutenant Fullerton.
7. Report on Obok by Lieutenant Hayden, 1887.
8. Compilation by Captain Usher, 1889.
9. A Note on the Gulf of Tajoura, by Lieutenant O. E. Wheeler, 1884.
10. The Red Sea coast of Egypt and Nubia, 1882. (Grierson.)
11. Report on the Egyptian Provinces of the Sudan, Red Sea, and Equator, 1884.
12. Routes in Abyssinia, 1867.
13. Egypt. Memorandum on Egyptian coast territory south of the Red Sea, 1884.
14. Administration Reports Somali-coast, 1885—1893.
15. Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, Somali-coast, 1891—93.
16. Les Français à Obok, by Denis de Rivoyre.
17. Report on the Reconnaissance of Northern Somali-land, by Captain Swayne, R.E., and Lieutenant Swayne, 16th Bengal Infantry, 1891.
18. Report on an exploration in Somali-land by Captain Swayne, R.E., and Lieutenant Swayne, 16th Bengal Infantry; July to September 1892.
19. Egyptian Ports and Anchorages in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, 1884.
20. Endeavours of the French to gain possession of the Harrar trade through Jibouti, 1892.
21. Information received from the Political Agent and Consul, Somali-coast, 1893.
22. Memorandum on Mushah islands by Lieutenant Wheeler, 1884. Diary No. 47, Africa.
23. L'Extreme Orient, March 1886.
24. La Gazette Geographique, from 1885 to date.
25. Mer Rouge et Abyssinie by Denis de Rivoyre, 1880.
26. Newspaper cuttings to date. (French and English.)
27. Charts and Maps.
28. Obok. Exploration du Golfe de Tadjoura, &c., 1893.
29. Abstract of Proceedings of Bombay Government for March 1895.
30. Bolletino della Societa Geografica Italiana to date.
31. Isenberg and Krapf: "Journal of Church Missions in Abyssinia," 1839.
32. "Narrative of a Journey to Shoa, and an attempt to visit Harrar (Barker)."
33. Holland and Hozier: "expedition to Abyssinia," 1868.
34. L'exploration Journals to date,
35. Dr. A. Petermanns, Mitteilungen.
36. Hand-books "Messageries Maritimes" steamers—to date.
37. Imperial Society of Geography, Russia, Tome VII, No. 2 M. A. Troyanski, &c., &c., &c.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [7v] (19/76)



'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [8r] (20/76)

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.—I. BOUNDARIES.

"A"—The Colony of Obok.

"B"—Its Protectorate.

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Water, Geology, Cultivation, Climate, Fauna, and
Flora.

III. THE COAST AND ANCHORAGES.

From Loyi-Ada to Jebel-Sijan.

Islands.

The Assal Salt Lake.

IV. TRIBES AND POPULATION.

Danakil, Somalis, Gallas.

Numbers.

V. TOWNS.—OBOK.

Situation, Physical features, Harbour, Shipping,
Communications, Transport, Administration,
The Town and Defences, Residents and
Troops, European and Native Life, Supplies.

JIBOUTI.

Situation, Harbour, Shipping, Town, Inhabitants,
Administration, Traders, Defence, Water, Sup-
plies, Communications, Trade, Political.

TAJOURA.

Town, Fort, Water, Harbour, Tribe, Trade, In-
dustries, Supplies, Communications, Defence,
Slave-trade.

LOVI-ADA.

Frontier, Guard-house, Commanding Hills, Gar-
rison, Wells, Supplies.

VILLAGES.—SAGALLO.

AMBABU.

AUSSA.

VI. COMMERCE, COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, AND
SUPPLIES.

VII. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL.

Relations with Italy, with Russia, with Abyssinia,
with the Tribes.

Traffic in Arms.

The Slave-trade.

VIII. STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [8v] (21/76)

ii

IX. ROUTES IN DETAIL.

1. Obok to Tajoura, Abyssinia, Shoa, and Harrar.
2. Tajoura to Gondar.
3. Tajoura to Ankober.
4. Jibouti to Harrar.
5. Jibouti to Zaila.

X. APPENDIX. MAPS (in map pocket).

1. General Map.
2. Obok and Jibouti Harbours.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [9r] (22/76)

CHAPTER I.

BOUNDARIES.

A.—The Colony of Obok.

B.—Its Protectorate.

Boundaries.—The territory submitted to French influence on the African Coast near Perim comprises an area of about 3,800 square miles, and consists of—

"A"—The Colony of Obok.

"B"—Its Protectorate.

The coast line (about 200 miles) includes the whole of the Gulf of Tajoura, and extends from Ras Dumeirah on the Red Sea, latitude $12^{\circ} 42' 40''$ north, longitude $43^{\circ} 7' 30''$ east, to Loyi-Ada on the south of the Gulf of Tajoura, latitude $11^{\circ} 27' 4''$ north, longitude $43^{\circ} 15' 43''$ east.

The coast to the north and south of the French is occupied by Italy and Great Britain respectively.

The Colony "A."—The limits of the Colony "A," are on the north, Ras Dumeirah and the mouth of the Raheita river; on the south, Cape Ras Ali, about three miles east of

"A"—The Colony of Obok.
Tajoura.*

The following islands are included in "A",—

1. Dumeirah, near the cape of that name.
2. The Brothers, 11 miles to the south of Perim.
3. The Mushah group, in the centre of the Gulf of Tajoura.
4. Bab islet, in the entrance to the basin of Gubbet-Kharab.

The Protectorate, "B," is the continuation of the coast line southward from Ras Ali, the southern coast limit of the Colony, until it meets the British protectorate at Loyi-

Ada. Here a palm-tree marks the frontier line, which leaving the coast runs inland south by south-west to the wells of Abas-Wein and Biyo-Kaboba, and thence along the Zaila-Harrar road to Gildessa and Harrar.

The Protectorate, "B", includes—

The inland sea of Gubbet-Kharab, the villages of Tajoura, Ambabu, Sagallo and Jibouti. The latter has the most important harbour in the French possessions.

The Hinterland.—The Hinterland is still undefined owing to the position which Italy has lately taken up in Abyssinia and Harrar not being yet fully recognized by France.

The French, however, claim to have obtained by treaties with various tribes a strip of country 19 miles wide, running along the whole length of the coast line of which they are in possession.

The neighbouring independent chiefs are,—on the North, Mohamed Emphale or Hanfuli of Aussa, said to be an Italian protégé,—on the West, Sultan Mohamed Laïta,—on the South, Sultan Agad of the Esa Somalis. Lastly on the extreme North, about 50 miles from Obok, and on the sea coast opposite Perim, is the territory of the Sultan of Raheita and Assab, an Italian protégé.

The Sultan of Tajoura is a French protégé, and his territories are included in the French protectorate.

* NOTE.—The frontier on the north has only as yet been delimited on the coast and has not been carried inland.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [9v] (23/76)

2

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Water, Geology, Cultivation, Climate, Fauna, and Flora.

General Description.—The Gulf of Tajoura, whose shores are now entirely within the French sphere of interest, has the form of an estuary. Its mouth, between Cape Ras Bir, on the north, and Cape Ras Jibouti, on the south, is about 29 miles wide.

A straight line joining the two capes passes through the islands of Mushah, at one-third of its length from Ras Jibouti.

The gulf, which penetrates about 58 miles into the land, gradually becomes narrower and narrower, until it reaches the small entrance to Gubbet-Kharab, a circular inland sea surrounded by mountains.

Good anchorage exists only in a few places, the best being found at Jibouti and Obok.

The anchorage at Tajoura is too shallow and exposed, and the entrance to Gubbet-Kharab is difficult in a heavy sea.

The whole of the coast from Ras Dumeirah to the neighbourhood of Jibouti consists of a line of great sandy plateaux, descending from a high inland range, whose summits from east to west are—Jebel Jain, Jebel Gudeh, and Jebel Sirayo. Of these, Jebel Gudeh is perhaps the highest. It is tabular in form, and rises abruptly to 5,250 feet above the sea.

The line of plateaux, running generally in a parallel direction with the coast, now approaches and now recedes from the sea. Sometimes they jut out into the sea as steep cliffs, at others they retire, and leave a strip of low-lying stony country of varying width between themselves and the beach. At Jibouti the plateaux break up into detached hills, and then the coast as far as Berbera is low and sandy.

Water.—Numerous water-courses, full to overflowing after recent rain, but at other times dry, descend from the interior mountains and cut their way deep through the plateaux to the sea.

Here and there, where a number of these water-courses join, a valley is formed, broad at its mouth on the sea shore but narrowing quickly as it cuts back into the plateaux.

The valley beds are flat, and in their upper end covered with loose boulders and choked with thorn bushes. Although dry for the greater part of the year, there is always an underlying sub-stratum of water, and it can easily be obtained by digging pits in the sand.

The water is generally brackish, but is good enough for domestic animals and for agricultural purposes. As wells are dug higher up the valleys, the water becomes sweeter and has no ill effect on Europeans or natives, although the former generally suffer from diarrhœa for a time before they become used to it.

Two of the most important valleys are those situated at Obok and at Atella, a few miles southward.

In the former brackish water is found at a depth of from six to nine feet. Many wells have been dug in the sandy bed. They supply the drinking water for the natives and water the gardens in which the French grow European vegetables.

A chemical analysis of this water shews the presence of bicarbonate of sulphur, lime, silica, chlorate of sodium, chlorate of potassium and chlorate of magnesia.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [10r] (24/76)

3

Although the water near the beach is generally brackish, excellent water is found at certain spots well known as watering places to sailors. They are described in *The coast and anchorages*.

In the interior, until the Abyssinian highlands are reached, water is always more or less scarce, and there are some districts, notably that called Téhama, near Lake Assal, which, owing to the heat and to the scarcity of water, are much feared by caravans. But they cannot be avoided.

There is only one flowing river in the country, and this even does not reach the sea, but is lost in the brackish Aussa lake, distant from the coast about 65 miles. This river, known as Hawash, flows from the Shoa highlands, and is navigable by small boats for a considerable distance. In its upper reaches it flows through fine pastures and forests teeming with big-game.

Geology.—The whole of the coast region has been formed by the recent upheaval of the sea-bed, and there are many traces of volcanic action. Deep-sea shells are found imbedded in the stony ground, and volcanic rocks and trap boulders radiate the stifling heat. Here and there sulphurous hot-springs bubble up through the rock. One of these rises at the foot of the cliffs about 500 yards to the west of Cape Obok.

On the night of the 24th August 1893 no less than thirty-three shocks of earthquake were felt at Obok. They were, however, slight and the houses were uninjured.

The plateaux generally consist of lime-stone, covered with a fine layer of sand, impregnated with salt efflorescences.

Under the lime-stone we find alternate layers of clay and blue or green-veined marl. (Vide also *Chapter III. The Assal Lake*).

Cultivation.—The tribes are nomad shepherds, and do not cultivate. The French, however, have attempted gardening in a small way, and manage to raise vegetables in the cold weather, in sufficient quantities for their consumption.

Seed is imported from Europe. The vegetables generally raised in the Obok valley and at Jibouti are lettuces, cabbages, peas, cucumbers, melons, tomatos.

Although the greater part of the country is extremely sterile, still there are spots where wild date-trees grow, and where it would be possible to cultivate fruit-bearing trees.

The French, who have gained much experience in the cultivation of the date palm in Algeria, propose to plant oases in suitable spots along the coast and on the caravan tracks to the interior.

Cocoonut and date palms have been imported, and successfully acclimatized, and it is now proposed to induce the natives to extend the cultivation, and rear up under the shade given by these trees the more delicate fruit-bearing trees, such as the almond, the fig, the lemon, etc. The cost of covering 25 square yards with fruit-bearing trees, including all expenses up to the time that the trees are sufficiently grown to produce a full crop, is estimated at 15£. The matter is fully gone into in "*Colonies Françaises*, VI 1890."

Climate.—On the whole the climate of Obok is not unhealthy for Europeans, although it would be impossible for them to colonize as we understand the term—that is, to rear children.

The climate is essentially an extremely dry one, although there are here and there on the coast marshy spots which should at certain seasons be avoided by Europeans. This applies notably to Sagallo, and the bed of the Obok valley.

Seasons.—There are two seasons, the cold season from October to May, and the hot season from June to September. They merge very gradually into one another, and the months of September and October may be taken as an intermediary period.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [10v] (25/76)

Temperature.—At Obok the average temperature in the cold season is 79° Fahrenheit; it rises in the hot season to between 104° and 107°, and in September and October remains fairly stationary at 86°. The extremes of temperature are, hot season, 116° and 118½° (for a few days only between 2 and 4 P.M.); cold season, 63° and 64° (once or twice only in the early morning). Generally speaking the heat increases every month from the end of January to the end of July, and decreases from the middle of August till the end of December.

Rain.—The sky is unclouded except in October and November, when it occasionally, but rarely, happens that a violent sandstorm is followed by rain. In 1882 there had been no rain at Obok for four years; in 1885, however, a very heavy rainstorm dismantled some of the European buildings. The Obok valley was on this, and a few other occasions flooded. The water, however, soon flows off, and the sandy bed is presently dry again.

Winds.—Winds shift about considerably throughout the year, but there are two which are fairly constant, and are identical with the usual north-east and south-west monsoons.

The S. W. wind.—This wind, known to the natives at Obok as Khamsin, at Berbera as Kareef, blows with great violence in the hot season, whirling clouds of burning dust and sand over the land.

It commences about the end of April, and continues to blow until the end of August, and is in full force in the months of June, July, and August.

The wind rises generally at midnight, and blows fiercely and steadily till the afternoon, when it gradually dies away and is replaced by light N. W. winds, followed by a period of dead and sultry calm.

These calms do not occur regularly, however, as the wind will sometimes continue in full force for several days on end, without stopping for a single hour. Whilst it blows, Europeans remain indoors, and fasten doors and windows, and try to keep out the dust by stopping up all crevices, and the temperature suddenly rises 10°.

N. E. wind.—The N. E. wind, the usual trade wind of the Northern Hemisphere, commences to blow in the cold season, about the end of October, and goes on till the end of February.

It rises about 10 A.M. and blows till 10 P.M., being then followed by a calm which lasts until 2 A.M. A light S. W. wind then rises.

The N. E. wind, although not so hot as the S. W. wind, is said to be much more fatiguing, and to produce a peculiarly suffocating and prostrating effect upon Europeans, so much so, that very few can move out of doors whilst it is blowing.

After the end of the north-east monsoon, in the months of March and April, the winds become less constant than in the preceding four months, and are followed by light and shifty breezes from the west and south-west, and there are frequent calms.

Diseases.—Amongst the natives, skin-diseases and ulcers are the most prevalent.

Fever is rare, and dysentery exceptional. Europeans should guard against heat-apoplexy, sunstroke, and abscess of the liver.

Sanitariums.—The temperature on the high range of mountains behind the coast is many degrees cooler than that at the coast, and vegetation is fairly abundant.

Jebel Gudeh with its extensive flat top would furnish a good site for a sanitarium, being only a few miles distant from the coast. Water and good pasturage are said to be abundant. The suspicious Danakil are, however, averse to allowing Europeans to visit the spot.

Fauna.—*Wild*—Leopard (rare), wild cat, spotted hyæna (known as "wuraba"), jackal, gazella naza, segaro, two varieties of the adder, the scorpion. *Domestic*—The camel, the ass, the goat, the dumba sheep (black faced), cattle.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [11r] (26/76)

Domestic animals are only found at the coast when pasturage is scanty in the interior. Cattle are not brought to the coast, and horses are seldom or never seen there. The Esa Madoba are said to possess some horses, but the animal is generally rare in the country, though numerous in the interior highlands of Shoa and Harrar. Camels, sheep, and goats are very numerous in the interior, especially in the Aussa, Errur, and Hawash valleys.

When grass is plentiful, the people live on camel's milk alone, but when the dry season approaches and milk dries up, sheep are killed and the meat is boiled and eaten with clarified butter.

Flora.—Vegetation is generally very scanty and thin, especially so at the coast, where it is chiefly confined to the beds of torrents, as in the Obok valley. Here a variety of the broad-crowned acacia grows pretty thickly.

At various spots along the coast there are clumps of date palms; they are wild, however, and the date fruit is useless for consumption. In the dry season what little vegetation there is at the coast dries up. The leaves of the mimosa bushes on which the flocks usually browse, then wither and fall off, and there is no pasturage except a kind of dry couch grass.

In crevices in the rock, and in sheltered hollows, euphorbias are sometimes found, and the castor oil plant stands neglected in sandy torrent beds. On the hills, in the interior, thorn bushes are more abundant and grass never entirely gives out, but the whole aspect of the glaring stony country is miserable and hopeless. This is especially so in the heat-reeking district called Tehama, in the centre of which the Assal salt lake lies.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [11v] (27/76)

6

CHAPTER III.

THE COAST AND ANCHORAGES.

From Loyi-Ada to Jebel-Sijan,—the Assal lake.

The Coast and Anchorages.—The French coast line begins at Loyi-Ada, about half-way between Zaila and Jibouti. The houses of both towns are easily seen from the hills behind the wells. Close to the wells, and within a few yards of the sea there is a French guard-house.

The Coast.—The coast at the guard-house is low and sandy, and sweeps out in a gentle curve until it reaches a rocky headland, called Ras-Jibouti. From the bottom of Jibouti harbour, on the western side of the headland, the coast takes a west $\frac{1}{2}$ north direction for a distance of 10 miles, to Khor-Ambadu, thence west by south to the entrance of Gubbet-Kharab.

For the first five miles as far as Mersa-Manga-Daffa it is low and swampy, but after this it is steep and bold, being formed of cliffs rising 400 or 500 feet out of the sea.

Manga-Daffa.—Manga-Daffa is a small boat anchorage.

The mountains here come close down to the sea and skirt the coast to the neighbourhood of Obok, imprisoning Gubbet-Kharab.

Khor-Ambadu.—Khor-Ambadu is a stream of fresh water, in front of which there is very good anchorage in from 12 to 15 fathoms of water.

Watering parties should, however, be armed, as a number of French sailors belonging to the crew of the *Pengouin* were not long ago murdered whilst laying in a supply of water.

The Coast.—The coast from Khor-Ambadu to Gubbet-Kharab, a distance of 17 miles, is steep-to, and with one or two exceptions, there is no anchorage. Between Ras-Eiro and Sagallo the coast is black and arid, the signs of volcanic action being everywhere visible. Here and there, there are a few stunted thorn-bushes whose height seldom exceeds 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Ras-Eiro.—Ras-Eiro, or Erolé is a small bay, affording anchorage in 12 fathoms of water, close in to the cliffs. The anchorage is sheltered from easterly winds. It is sometimes known as Sheikh-Musa, and there is said to be brackish water obtainable near by at Daga-Libah.

There is moderately good anchorage immediately outside Gubbet-Kharab, on the Esa Coast, in 17 fathoms of water.

Bab-islet.—Bab-islet is situated in the narrow entrance, only $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide, which conducts into the basin of Gubbet-Kharab. This rock, 40 feet high, divides the entrance into two channels, and is in the exact prolongation of the northern point of the entrance. The southern channel, 350 yards wide, has 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms of water in it, over a rocky bottom. The northern channel is only 40 yards wide, but the water is deeper, there being 17 fathoms in the shoalest part. The tides rush through these channels very swiftly, making the navigation at times difficult and dangerous.

Gubbet-Kharab.—Gubbet-Kharab is an extensive inner basin of the Gulf of Tajoura, 13 miles long and six miles wide.

The northern and southern shores are formed of black precipitous limestone cliffs from 400 to 3,000 feet above the sea. The western shore is strewn with lava, and volcanic fragments. There is no vegetation or sweet-water. Captain Malcolm, R.N., considered that the basin might be converted into an important port, and gave it as his opinion that the whole navy of Great Britain might lie there safely. Later French accounts, however, go to show that in spite of the great depth of water, which is from 100 to 200 fathoms, there is good anchorage only on the north-east side, and then only for one or two vessels of light draft.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [12r] (28/76)

7

Although the basin is completely shut in, yet the wind at times finds its way in, and raises heavy seas, so that the only safe anchorage is near the islands, in 17 fathoms. In good weather there is anchorage about 1 mile off the inner shore of the basin. A French explorer, who in 1893 visited Lake Assal, was anchored near the islands for four days, before he was able to land.

Islands.—At the western end of the basin there is a precipitous inaccessible island called Bud-Ali, about 300 feet high, of a reddish white appearance. There are two others, one called Had-Ali, bearing south-east $\frac{1}{2}$ south from the above, and three miles distant from it; the other is a mere dry rock on the Dankali coast, having a narrow channel between it and the shore.

The heat of the bay is excessive, the temperature in September being between 92° and 110° .

From the entrance to Gubbet-Kharab as far as Tajoura, $16\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the coast is bold to approach, there being from 10 to 15 fathoms water close-to.

The high mountains approach close to the sea until within 9 miles of Tajoura, when they recede about 3 miles, approaching the sea again 6 miles to the eastward of Tajoura. The entrance to Gubbet-Kharab divides the Esa and Danakil Tribes. There is an anchorage at Del-Hara about 2 miles to the North, where a limited supply of brackish water is obtainable.

The villages of Sagallo, Tajoura, and Ambabu are all situated on the sea coast, on the most abrupt slope of Jebel Gudch.

Sagallo.—Sagallo itself is merely a small thorn wood situated near the beach about 14 miles south-west of Tajoura, and 10 miles from Ambabu. Caravans here finally leave the sea and strike inland. It is the least desolate spot in this part of the country; unfortunately the ground is swampy and the climate unhealthy, so it is only occasionally inhabited by a few Danakil. In the middle of a date-grove there are the ruins of a small fort, formerly occupied by a French garrison, which was, however, withdrawn when the number of troops at Obok was reduced.

This small fort was also occupied by General Atchinoff during his brief stay on the coast, before he and his Cossacks were turned out by the French.

Excellent water is found in a well situated in the torrent bed which surrounds the wood.

The anchorage is bad even for native craft of 20 to 60 tons.

The place belongs to the tribe over whom the Sultan of Laitah is Chief. It has at various times been claimed by French and Egyptians, finally remaining in the former's hands. It is a far better starting point for caravans than Tajoura, as the worst part of the road is avoided.

Ambabu.—About four miles south-westward of Tajoura is the small village of Ambabu, consisting of about 30 huts grouped in the middle of a date-grove. There is good water, but the anchorage is unsafe. The best anchorage is in 12 to 14 fathoms south-south-east of the village.

The place is inhabited by a section of Abubekr's numerous tribe.

After rain the water collects in lagoons near the beach.

Khor-Ras-Ali.—Three and-a-half miles to the eastward of Tajoura is Khor-Ras-Ali, a narrow inlet of the sea $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in length, having 6 fathoms of water in it, and affording shelter in all winds. It is used during the south-west monsoon by native craft. There is a rocky bar across the entrance with only 9-feet of water on it at high tide.

The coast from Tajoura to Ras-Ali is fronted by reefs extending 200 to 300 yards from the shore, which is sandy, and rises gradually towards the mountains in the interior.

Between Ras-Ali and Ras-Duan (bluff), there is a bay $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles deep.

Sukti.—In the eastern part of the bay there is a watering place called Sukti, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles eastward of Sagallo, and a little further on there is another well, called Doulloul. Both these places are frequented by caravans.

Duan Wells.—Immediately at the base of the tabular cliffs forming Duan bluff, and distant from the beach three-quarters of a mile, are three wells—two of which are cold springs of excellent water, the other a hot spring, the temperature of which is about 100° .

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [12v] (29/76)

From Ras-Duan to Jebel-Jan the coast is bold. After $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles there is a slightly projecting bluff point, from which to Ras-al-Bir, bearing east by north and distant $17\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the coast is concave, forming a bay 3 miles deep. For 17 miles from Ras-Duan the shore is a precipitous cliff, the mountains approaching close to the sea. After this, it is low and sandy and the mountains recede from the sea, approaching it again at Jebel-Jan. Native vessels resort to an anchorage 5 miles to the westward of Obok. Good water is obtainable in the Atella valley.

Ras-al-Bir.—Passing Obok, we come to Cape Ras-al-Bir, a sandy point 20 feet high, forming the north point of the entrance to the Gulf of Tajoura.

Thence to Jebel-Jan the coast is low and sandy, and between it and the mountains there is an extensive plain covered with mangroves and brush-wood.

Jebel-Jan.—Jebel-Jan is the highest of three or four ranges of tabular mountains, which reach a great elevation and approach close to the sea. It is distant from Ras-al-Bir about 18 miles. From Jebel-Jan to Jebel-Sijan, a distance of 13 miles, the shore is low, sandy and covered with jungle. It is fronted by a rocky reef extending from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from it.

Ras-Sijan.—Ras-Sijan forms the southern point of the entrance to the Red Sea. It is a peak 380 feet high, connected with the coast by a strip of low land 700 yards wide.

ISLANDS.

Mushah islands.—The islands of Mushah in the centre of the Gulf of Tajoura were bought by the British Government in 1840, as was also the islet of Bab. Both these were ceded to France in 1887. The Mushah islands are a group of coral islands rising from 30 to 40 feet above sea level. They lie on a coral reef which extends north-east and south-west for 7 miles, and is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide.

There are 3 islands and 5 rocky islets, the whole group dividing the entrance to the Gulf of Tajoura into two channels.

The north channel is 7 miles wide and perfectly free from all danger.

The islands are dangerous to approach, the surrounding coral reefs being dry at low water for a distance of two miles.

Anchorage.—There is good anchorage, affording shelter at all seasons, in a gap in the reef, bearing north-west $\frac{3}{4}$ north from the north-east extreme of the north-easternmost island of the group. The anchorage is rather more than half-a-mile distant from this island.

The westernmost island is called Maskali.

Pearl-fishers.—The group is resorted to by about 50 native boats engaged in pearl-fishing. The fishermen remain here from September to the middle of June, and use the island as a depôt, after which they set sail for Aden and other ports, in order to dispose of their cargo.

Fresh water must be brought from the mainland, about 8 miles distant. There is none on the islands.

The Brothers islands.—The Brothers, or Jezirat Sabah, is a group of six rocky islets, the highest lying due east of Jebel-Sijan, and $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Perim. The islands are of a brownish color, the northern one being about 350 feet high, the westernmost about 200 feet, and the second from the westward 250 feet.

The anchorage is good, a low rocky islet to the westward is the only part that may be considered dangerous.

ASSAL SALT LAKE.

Bahr Assal.—THE ASSAL SALT LAKE lies in the centre of a great black elliptical depression, and is about $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles distant from GUBBET KHARAB.

It is separated from the latter by a volcanic ridge 320 feet high, and distant from the sea $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

The ascent from the sea is fairly easy, and LAKE ASSAL is seen directly the top is reached. After crossing the ridge, which is 210 yards broad, and 420 yards

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [13r] (30/76)

9

long, the descent to the lake is steep. At 550 yards sea level is reached, but the descent still continues, so that by the time the lake is reached, we are 490 feet below sea level.

There appears to be very little doubt that both LAKE ASSAL, and GUBBET KHARAB were once craters of volcanoes which rose to a high elevation above the surrounding country, and poured lava and cinders over it for considerable distances. A great stream of lava descended to Ras Eroli, and thence spread out over the land as far as JIBOUTI. During some great convulsion, these volcanoes disappeared, and the sea flowed into the depressions caused by their subsidence. The ASSAL SALT LAKE in course of time was cut off from the sea by the upheaval of a ridge, and the level of the water, evaporated by a constant heat of nearly 100°, gradually subsided.

Certain evidences of this exist in the formation of the ground. The ridge separating LAKE ASSAL from GUBBET KHARAB, and its western slope to the lake, are white with calcareous deposits, and sea shells, and there is a great white zone of cleanly cut cliffs, 160 feet high, completely encircling the lake.

The lake is oval in shape, the major axis $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, lying east and west, the minor axis being about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

It is fed in the south west by a small salt spring of a temperature of about 157½° Fahrenheit, and on the north by a strong cold spring, also salt.

A solid mass of salt clings in the form of a segment to the western shores. The deposit is about 7 miles in arc, and is $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles broad at its greatest breadth.

The bottom is incrustated with salt, and although the people for 100 miles around come to the lake, and periodically remove large quantities, yet the evaporation is quite sufficient to make good the difference. The salt is cut into blocks, and taken to Aussa and Abyssinia where it passes for money.*

The French, aware of the flourishing condition of the Aden Salt Company, are fully alive to the commercial value of Lake Assal, and have lately exchanged views with the Italians, in order to secure an undisputed title to its possession.

The correspondence is of interest as showing to what extent the French are inclined to recognize the Italian Protectorate over Abyssinia.

In the meantime, the claims of the Danakil tribes, who have held a monopoly of the salt from very ancient times, have been ignored, and a concession has been granted to a Mons. Chefneux.

The tribes, however, protested against this, and took up such an attitude, that Mons. Lagarde, Governor of Obok, found himself obliged to convene a meeting of the Chiefs at Obok on the 13th March 1893.

Only the SULTAN OF RAHEITA, however, and the BEY OF JIBOUTI, (BOURHANE BEY), accepted the invitation. The Sultan of LAITA sent his youngest son, but the most powerful chief of all, Mohamed HANFULA OF AUSSA refused to have any communication with the French in the matter.

The communications between TAJOURA and the interior lie through the lake Assal valley.

The road from TAJOURA to the lake is through the difficult and rocky Rah-Esa pass, where the track is encumbered by heated blocks of lava.

Near the lake the track forks into two branches. One skirts the margin of the lake, and is utterly devoid of fresh water; the other leads over high lava ledges past the small well of HANLEFANTA. Even this route is extremely trying to a European, owing to the excessive heat of the utterly arid district of the Te'hama through which the road lies. It is usual to obtain guides from the SULTANS OF TAJOURA and OF LAITA when visiting the lake.

The former is responsible for the travellers' safety on the road from the coast to the lake; the latter is chief over the Debench in whose country the Lake lies.

The Sultan of Tajoura appears to make visitors pay heavily for their guides, he having in 1893 furnished a French traveller with three guides at 4 £ a head.

Vide also chapter X, Route II, Aleek Shatan.

*NOTE.—The blocks are neatly wrapped up in date matting. They are 10 inches long, $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches wide and $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches thick. From three to twelve blocks are equal to one dollar, according to the exchange, which fluctuates.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH BENGAL INFANTRY.' [13v] (31/76)

10

CHAPTER IV.

TRIBES AND POPULATION.

Danakil, Somalis, Gallas, Numbers.

Tribes.—There are two distinct races occupying the territory over which the French claim influence, the Afar or Danakil tribes and the Somalis, the whole population being roughly estimated at 30,000. The Gallas, also, border on the hinterland.

The Afar or Danakil occupy the coast from the Bay of Adulis on the north, to the head of Gubbet-Kharab on the south. They reach as far as Farri and the borders of Shoa, the Hawash river in its upper course dividing them from the Alla, Ittu, and Argobba Gallas, who occupy the Abyssinian and Harrar highlands. On the south lies the Esa-Somali tribe, stretching from the head of Gubbet-Kharab to Killelu and the Harrar highlands.

The Afar or Danakil tribes.—In former times the most powerful section was the Ad-Ali (Arabic plural Adayil). This coast tribe gave its name to all the country occupied by the Afar tribes. The land is still known to the Arabs as Adel.

The Afar tribes are divided into three main groups, the Shohos, Hazortas and Taltals of the north, the Central tribes, and the Coast tribes. The two latter groups are generally known to the Arabs as Adayil (plural of Adel).

The French Protectorate extends wholly or partially only to the Coast tribes. *Vide also Chapter VII—Political.*

Coast tribes.—The principal coast tribes are :—

1. Asmila	...	...	} Administered by a chief named Bourhan-Abdou. A portion of the Assobas occupies separate lands, and is under Omar-Bourhan Bey.
2. Assobas	...	...	
3. Madima	...	...	
4. Takyil	...	...	
5. Ab-Ammila	...	...	} Under the Chief Mohamed Ali.
6. Aden Sara	...	...	
7. Bedwi-Tamila	...	...	
8. Ad-Ali	...	...	(plural Adayil) under the Sultan of Tajoura.

These eight tribes number about 22,000 individuals and can furnish 6,000 fighting men.

They are sub-divided into a number of sub-tribes, which again consist of a number of sections and families. Each sub-tribe, section or family acknowledges the control of a secondary chief.

The following are some of the divisions of the eight coast tribes—

Coast sub-tribes.

Tribes.	District.	Sub-tribes.	Remarks.
1. ASMILA ...	Atella ...	1. Aat-Asmila ...	{ Atella is also known as Alateila. It is near Obok. Under Bourhan Abdou.
		2. As-Asmila ...	

NOTE.—The people call themselves Afar, but are known to the Arabs as Danakil, singular Dankali.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [14r] (32/76)

11

Coast sub-tribes—contd.

Tribes.	District.	Sub-tribes.	Remarks.
2. ASSOBAS ...	Mabla, Tagareh ...	1. Amaralito ...	Under Bourhan Abdou.
		2. Badri-Chikto ...	
		3. Katouha ...	
		4. Omarguaba ...	
		5. Omartou ...	
	Tajoura, Ambabu ...	6. Audiyas-Sara ...	Under Omar-Bouhan Bey.
		7. Sheikh-Arbahinto ...	
		8. Yikoubto ...	
3. MADIMA ...	Guardarasso ...	1. Aaat-Alito ...	
		2. Ali-Watal ...	
		3. Mognamaley ...	
4. TAKYIL ...	Obok ...	1. Gaudili-Takyil ...	Under Bourhan Abdou.
		2. Gui-Babi ...	
		3. Hayou-Takyil ...	
		4. Mondo-Takyil ...	
		5. Schim-Sara ...	
5. AB-AMMILA ...	Khor Angar ...	1. Hamado ...	The territories of these sub-tribes are separated from the others by some distance.
		2. Kamilo ...	
		3. Guémisso ...	
		4. Abita ...	
6. ADEN-SARA ...	Guattarey ...	1. Ashaley ...	
		2. Hoboita ...	
7. BEDWI-TAMILA ...	Adegueno ...	1. Afada ...	Under Mohamed Ali.
	Yuéma ...	2. Aitoura ...	
		3. Ederkalto ...	
		4. Ali-Sara ...	
	Doubia ...	5. Harmilto ...	Doubia is between Ras-Bir and Ras-Sijan.
		6. Oursanina ...	
		7. Gaassera ...	
	Asbol ...	8. Assal-houra ...	Asbol is near Raheita.
	Bedwita ...	9. Bedwita-boura ...	
	Guémi ...	10. Gueydeley ...	
	Moulhoulay ...	11. Haisso ...	Acito is near Raheita.
	Acito ...	12. Kourha* ...	
	Ourirasso ...	13. Oulid ...	
	Gunta ...	14. Yas-Odom ...	
	Sonyali ...	15. Yokos ...	

* Note.—The greater portion of the Kourha appears to be living with the Mudaito.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH BENGAL INFANTRY.' [14v] (33/76)

12

Coast sub-tribes—contd.

Tribes	District	Sub-tribes	Remarks
8. Ad-Ali (plural Adayil).	Tajoura	1. Aero-Hasso 2. Abli 3. Adlito 4. Chika 5. Daba-Adali 6. Darhouma 7. Garaisso 8. Guaronni	Under the Sultan of Tajoura. (in 1893 Mohamad-bin-Mohamad.)

Central and Inland tribes.—The most important of the inland and central tribes are:—

1. Mudaïto ... Under the Sultan of Aussa, in 1894, Mahomed Haufula, Emphale, or Humferi.
2. Debeni ... } Under the Sultan of Laïta, south-west of lake Assal.
3. Woema ... } Near Errur.*
4. Musheikh ... } Under Gobuz-Elincha, in the south-west of the valley of Aussa.
5. Hurruk ... } Near Killelu.
6. Budaito ... }
7. Gibdosa ... }

(1) *Mudaïto*.—Of the above tribes the Mudaïto is the most powerful, and turbulent.

It occupies generally the whole Aussa valley.

It is limited on the north by the Alla, Ittu, and Argobba Gallas, the upper course of the Hawash river being the boundary.

On the south the Mudaïto are limited by the Esa-Somalis under their Sultan Agad, the boundary line running generally from the head of the Gubbet-Kharab basin to Killelu on the direct Shoa caravan track.

The following are the principal sub-divisions of the Mudaïto:—

(1)—*Mudaïto*.

Tribes	District	Sub-tribes	Remarks
(1) MUDAÏTO	Aussa	1. Assa-himera†	Under Sultan Humferi of Aussa.
	Oomerguluf	2. Issé-hiraba	Under Das-Ali, an independent chief.
	Arabdera and Amadu.	3. Galleyla	Under Daamar Ibrahim.
	South of Aussa	4. Dar	Under Digar Miargi.
	Aeito near Raheita...	5. Kourha	Under Yusuf Abokr.

*NOTE.—The local Dankali chief of Errur, in 1895, was Tembako successor and brother of Bida. Errur is a great meeting place of Danakil and Somalis.

† NOTE.—Ur Assai-Mara.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [15r] (34/76)

The Kourha sub-tribe, which appears to have originally belonged to the Bedwi-Tamila, is constantly at war with the Assa-himera, as also with the Woema and Debeni tribes.

(2) DEBENI, (3) WOEMA and (4) MUSHEIKH.

The Debeni and Woema conjointly occupy the Errur valley and lie generally on the south and south-west of Lake Aussa, extending to the foot of the Harrar highlands. They are both said to acknowledge the Sultan of Laita as Chief.

(2) *The DEBENI*.—This tribe carries on most of the salt traffic between Lake Assal, Aussa and Shoa.

It lies on the east of the Woema, one of its chief centres being Saggadera.

(3) *The WOEMA* occupy the country farthest inland, from Killelu to Mullu.

They extend far into the Gammissa District and are bordered by the Takyil and Gasoba sections of the MUSHEIKH.

(4) *Musheikh*, an outlying section of the Woema at Sutlelli near Errur, acknowledges a chief called Tembako as its head. This Chief lives at Errur.

Very little is known of the other tribes mentioned, the (5) Hurruk, (6) Budaito, and (7) Gibdosa.

Population.—The Danakil are essentially a pastoral people and consequently nomads. They have no fixed habitations, but wander about according to the season of the year, wherever the necessity of obtaining pasturage for their flocks leads them.

Each tribe moves in an orbit of its own, and its pastures and watering places are jealously guarded from the incursions of neighbouring tribes. In times of drought it frequently happens that tribes are forced to seek pasturage beyond their own particular limits, and unless the tribes have intermarried and are allied, this invariably leads to war. There is hardly a tribe that is not at some time or another at war with some other tribe, and even sub-tribes, and individual families, are frequently in a state of blood feud which has perhaps existed from immemorial times.

Character.—Roaming, as he does, about large tracts of country and meeting with various strange tribes, the Dankali is a trader by instinct. Suspicious, blood-thirsty and treacherous, he takes a pride in murder and boasts of his deeds. If a European or a chief fall to his spear, he wears a white ostrich feather stuck in his frizzled hair, lesser victims being commemorated by a black feather. This custom is sometimes varied by wearing iron or brass bracelets on the arms, or by sticking blocks of wood in the pierced lobes of the ears.

The enemy's dead are invariably mutilated.

If the prejudices and customs of the tribes be respected, however, and a proper introduction and escort be obtained from their chiefs, a European may travel without interruption from the tribes, but each tribe acknowledges only its immediate chief and cares very little for the superior Sultan, who makes an empty claim to the chieftainship of tribes who never even see or hear of him.

Chiefs and Tribal Laws.—Thus the authority of the Sultan of Tajoura, who claims control over tribes extending far into the interior, ceases to be even a pretence a day's march short of Aussa.

The authority of the Sultan of Aussa is perhaps the most widely recognized, but then even, it is so only in his own particular sub-tribe of the Madaïto. The remainder of that tribe acknowledges other chiefs, each sub-tribe obeying only its own particular chief and acknowledging nothing more than the empty title of the Sultan, who, however, has influence to combine them against a common enemy.

The titles of Sultan and Wazir are hereditary, but are assumed turn and turn about. Thus on the death of the Sultan, the Wazir succeeds him, the latter being succeeded as Wazir by the Sultan's son, who subsequently, on the new Sultan's death, becomes himself the Sultan.

The elders of the various families rule their followers with the help of public opinion, as expressed by those families. The *lex-talionis* is the only law

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [15v] (35/76)

14

generally recognized. Blood demands blood, but murders and raids committed against another family, sub-tribe, or tribe, concern only the injured parties and do not concern the tribe at large. The aggressors and aggrieved can fight it out amongst themselves. Where the parties are inclined to compromise a murder, a certain sum of money, or number of camels is fixed as the price to be paid for each man killed, but when this price has been paid, the immediate relatives of the deceased are in no way debarred from squaring accounts by a stab in the dark should a fitting opportunity offer.

Religion.—The Danakil are all Mussulmen, but their religion sits very lightly upon them. Some of the inland tribes are so indifferent to the actual forms of their religion, as to copy the Abyssinian Christians in many of their rites.

Men occasionally make pilgrimages to Mecca and becomes Hajis, but this is not often done, and the journey is only prompted by the wish to obtain influence over their fellows. For on return to their country, Hajis assume an important position in tribal councils. On the coast they assist the local Chiefs in the administration of justice and are called Kazis.

Appearance.—The Dankali's figure is tall, well set up and hardy, and there is not an ounce of extra flesh.

The skin is generally darker than is the case with Somalis. The features are regular, but hard and savage.

The eyes are deeply sunk, and the brows are contracted from the habit of looking out upon a glaring waste.

The hair is frizzled or waving, and although it sometimes approaches the woolly hair of the negro, it never can be mistaken for it.

It seldom reaches below the nape of the neck, and is worn like a mop, being made to stand out at the sides and at the back of the head by means of a liberal application of clarified butter.

Clothing.—Rich men wear the Somali-tobe, a length of 4 yards of strong white cloth (American drill) draped round their heads and limbs, and confined by a raw hide belt at the waist.

Usually, however, men content themselves with the half tobe, the chest and shoulders being left bare, and the cloth simply wound round and round the waist and falling to the knee. The inland tribes wear tanned skins or adopt the Abyssinian blue striped half-tobe.

Cow's hide sandals are worn, but are usually carried in the hand, unless the ground be very rocky.

The chiefs on the coast generally wear the Arab dress as a mark of superiority.

Weapons.—The warlike weapons consist of a heavy iron weighted-spear* from 6 to 7 feet long, a curved soft-iron dagger in a raw hide scabbard, and a thick cow-hide shield. The usual plan of attack on a caravan, is to follow it day and night at a safe distance, until a favorable opportunity is found, then, generally on a dark night, to crawl up to within 40 yards and rush through the camp yelling, and stabbing right and left.

Women.—The women do all the hard work. They fetch wood, draw water and cook the food. They make mats and baskets, and load up the camels for journeys. The men on the other hand lounge about amongst the flocks, hunt, raid, or waste their time in interminable and unprofitable debates.

The women wear either a kind of blue shirt, or the usual tobe hitched over the arms at the shoulder, and tucked around the waist in a number of pleats. Arms, ankles and ears are adorned with heavy copper ornaments, the neck being encircled by a necklace of colored glass beads.

Unmarried girls wear the hair separated into a multitude of small pig-tails, the ends of which are adorned by glass beads and plentifully besmeared with clarified butter. Married women confine the hair in a leather or blue cotton bag which falls on the back of the neck, and is renewed only when it falls off through long use. The practice known as infibulation is prevalent.

* These are forged in baked clay receptacles, the iron being derived from old hoops, Egyptian swords, &c.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [16r] (36/76)

15

Habitations.—The Dankali's hut resembles a dirty-brown bee-hive, and is similar to the Somali hut. There are two kinds, the ordinary small one which is made of camel mats, and the larger one which is left standing in central places, and is called by the Somalis Agal. Many of the latter may be seen at Obok. Pieces of date-matting and skins are used for the roof and walls.

Whenever a tribe moves, the small huts are pulled to pieces in a few minutes, the mats of chewed bark being placed as a pad on the camels, and the hoop-like pliant sticks which form the frame work of the huts being lashed over the pad, on which a few simple wooden bowls and cooking utensils are then hung.

The greater part of these huts are too low to stand upright in, and can only be entered by crawling in on the knees.

Food.—At the coast men live comparatively well, for besides the usual fare of camel's milk and mutton, rice and fish are obtainable, and the diet is occasionally varied by thick millet cakes soaked in clarified butter.

In the interior, however, men must live on milk and meat alone, generally on the former, for sheep are only killed when the dry season approaches and milk dries up. Salt is plentiful.

A Dankali will, on caravan journeys where water is scarce, live on a pint of water a day, and can on an emergency go two days without water.

Language.—The Dankali language, which is known as Afar, is related to the Ethiopian. Oratory is a cultivated art, and, as with all people living the life of nomads, poetry is innate in them.

The language is not written, and the only work obtainable is a dictionary published in London in 1840 by the Reverend C. Isenberg.

At the coast the people have picked up a colloquial smattering of Arabic, but there are only one or two chiefs who can write it.

Somalis.—The only Somali tribe within the French protectorate is the Esa-Madoba section of the Esa tribe.*

This tribe is quite separate and distinct from other Somali tribes, in its origin, its customs, and its sympathies. It is divided into two main groups of sub-tribes, the Esa-Ad (or white Esa) group, and the Esa-Madoba (or black Esa) group. The former lies entirely within the British protectorate on the east of the Zaila-Harrar road; the latter is generally within the French boundary, although one or two sections, such as the Weel-Mosa and Rer-Furlabba, overlap the boundary line and occasionally graze their flocks within the limits of the British protectorate. The Esa tribe is numerous and powerful, and enjoys a well-deserved reputation for courage. The men are tall and well made, the skin being much darker than is the case with the Barri or eastern Somalis.

Although the tribe numbers possibly 20,000 fighting men, yet it is not probable, owing to the want of cohesion between the various sections, that more than a third of this number could be put into the field. The Esa-Madoba raid across the boundary into the Danakil country; the Esa-Ad every now and again are at war with the Habr-Awal and Gudabirsi Somalis.

The only reason why the latter tribes are able to hold their own against the fiercer and more uncouth Esa is that they have large numbers of mounted spearmen, whilst the Esa on the other hand are nearly all infantry, their pastures being unsuitable to the breeding of horses, and a great part of their country being so rocky and covered with loose trap boulders that horses are of very little use.

The Jibouti-Harrar and Zaila-Harrar roads are, as far as Gildessa, the foot of the Harrar highlands, entirely within the territories of the Esa, from whom an Abban, or protector, must invariably be obtained as an escort, and the tribe's camels and camelmen must be employed. The Zaila-Harrar road has for some time past been perfectly safe for caravans who agree to submit to the above conditions, as the Esa are fully alive to the benefits they derive from an uninterrupted traffic through their country. The influence of Menelek, king of Shoa,

* NOTE.—Since going to Press information has been received that genealogical tables of the Esa and Gudabirsi are now being printed at Aden (March 1895).

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [16v] (37/76)

16

has done much of late years to render the roads in Abyssinia safe for caravans, and his influence extends to the Danakil and Somali tribes on his borders, and especially so along the Errur Road. Brigandage in Abyssinia is stopped by very severe measures.

At present very little is known of the tribal sub-divisions of the Esa. The Esa-Ad and Esa-Madoba have sections lying next each other which are known by the same name, the only means of distinguishing between them being by the use of the affix Esa-Ad or Esa-Madoba.

Thus the Rer Momansa, Esa-Ad, lie next the Rer Momansa, Esa-Madoba, the Rer Furlabba, Esa-Ad, next the Rer Furlabba, Esa-Madoba, and the Rer Musa Esa-Ad, next the Weel Musa, Esa-Madoba. The latter inhabits the district to the west of Ellan, and is a powerful sub-tribe under a chief of the same name.

The boundary line between the Esa-Somalis and the Afar tribes runs from the head of Gubbet-Kharab to Killelu and so to the Harrar highlands to the west-ward of Gildessa.

Gallas.—In conclusion, the Galla tribes cut off the Danakil and Esa from Harrar and Shoa.

They are a powerful and warlike people occupying a mountainous district, and stretching back through the Abyssinian highlands to the Juba and Tana rivers. They are skilful horsemen and breed large numbers of hardy and sure-footed ponies.

Their arms are generally similar to those carried by Somalis. Their habitations resemble those of the Abyssinians, and they have many settled villages where cultivation is carried on.

Some of the Galla tribes are Musulman and some Christian,* the Sidama sub-tribe being entirely Christian. The greater part of the Galla tribe is independent, whilst the other is in a more or less degree under the influence of king Menelek of Shoa. The tribes immediately at the back of the French protectorate are the Alla, Ittu, and Argobba Gallas.

The Gallas speak a language of their own, and are much lighter in color than the Somalis and Danakil.

Numbers.—It is difficult to obtain a fairly accurate estimate of the strength of the various tribes, owing to the fact that they have no settled villages (excepting only here and there at the coast), and that every man is actuated by a desire to increase the importance of his own particular tribe, and exaggerates its numbers accordingly.

The only estimate which may be considered to have an official character is that given in the "Notices Coloniales," 1885. It estimates the population of the Colony of Obok proper at 7,770 souls, and of the protectorate at 14,600; say a population of 23,370 for the whole territory claimed by the French.

This estimate, however, requires modification, owing to the increase of territory obtained by France in 1887-88.

* NOTE.—The Abyssinians accepted the Coptic Christianity of the 4th Century under the Patriarchs of Alexandria, from whom they still receive a Head-Priest or Atuna.

CHAPTER V.

TOWNS.—OBOK.

Situation, Physical Features, Harbour, Shipping, Communications, Transport, Administration, The Town and Defences, Residents and Troops, European and Native Life, Supplies.

Situation.—A ship leaving Perim and steaming due south along the African shore will after about 45 miles reach Cape Ras-Bir, the entrance to the Gulf of Tajoura.

The coast here sweeps abruptly inland at right angles, and Obok is easily seen five miles distant due west of the cape, its latitude being $11^{\circ} 57'$ north, its longitude $43^{\circ} 16' 56''$ east.

Physical Features.—It is a roadstead situated in a rectangular bay containing a number of coral reefs, and surrounded by high arid Madrepore plateaux which are cut through, on the western side of the bay, by a number of dry water-courses. These combine near the sea, and form a valley about one mile broad, occupying the whole western side of the bay.

The shore on this side is low and sandy, except at the extreme western extremity of the bay, where the Plateau des Gazelles, on which the official quarter is built, projects into the sea at a point called Cape Obok. This plateau is about 65 feet above the sea, the southern slopes, at the base of which there is a sulphur spring, descending steeply down to the water's edge. The northern plateau runs from west to east, and skirts the valley until it reaches the middle of the bay, after which it borders the sea, turning inland at the eastern extremity of the bay. This plateau is much higher than the other, rising to about 200 feet above sea level. It descends to the valley and sea in two steps, the summit being called "Le Plateau des Pasteurs." The lower portion overlooking the valley is called "Plateau des sources;" the more easterly part skirting the sea being known as "Le Plateau des Aigles." On this northern plateau there are a few houses, but the greater part of the buildings as well as the native villages are on the southern plateau. The plateaux themselves are limited inland by a higher range of hills, shutting out the interior.

Gardens.—The mouth of the valley is low and sandy and covered here and there with mangrove bushes. After rain the ground becomes marshy and the valley is unhealthy. In the upper part of the valley there is fairly thick thorn jungle growing on a red clay soil, and the French have here made some vegetable gardens under a detached portion of the southern plateau, called "Plateau du Lievre." The gardens are watered by means of wells dug in the dry torrent beds, the water being raised by a kind of water wheel called by the French "Noria," worked by mules. There are pomegranate, jujube, and acacia alleys, and lettuces, radishes, etc., are produced in small quantities in the cold season. The water is brackish, but sufficiently good for domestic animals. The natives obtain somewhat better water higher up, and the Europeans chiefly use condensed water, a condenser having been in use since 1884. *Vide also Chapter II, Cultivation.*

Harbour.—The port, which is an indifferent one, lies inside a number of coral reefs which stretch across the mouth of the bay, leaving a small and somewhat intricate passage on the east, (4 fathoms), and a large and fairly easy one on the south-west, (18 fathoms), 650 yards broad. The port is divided into two portions by a number of detached reefs in the centre. The Northern portion immediately under the Plateau des Aigles is called the north-east port; the southern portion in front of the official quarter is called the south port. These portions are connected by a channel which has lately been made practicable, with 8 fathoms of water. The accommodation in the north-east harbour is not so good as in the southern port, in which the Messageries and Government steamers generally lie; but it is fairly well protected against the south-west monsoon, which for a considerable part of the

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [17v] (39/76)

18

year makes the southern port dangerous. In both basins the bottom is mud, anchorage in 7 fathoms in the north-east port, and in 9 to 10 fathoms in the south port.

Light-houses.—The channels are all buoyed out, and at night leading lights make the entrance to the southern port fairly easy. The leading lights are a red one on the Soleillet tower (74 feet), on the plateau on the north side of the valley, with another red light (147 feet, visible 10 miles) on the Plateau des Pasteurs, north-north-west of the former. A red sector on a light-house on Cape Obok, close to the Residency, indicates the zone of anchorage. It was at one time proposed to protect the south harbour by means of a breakwater built on a reef.

Latterly a masonry tower with a white light (157 feet), visible 12 miles, has been built on Cape Ras-Bir, shewing the entrance to the Gulf of Tajoura to ships steaming south from Perim.

Pilotage.—There is a local pilot service.

Defence.—The harbour is incapable of defence by means of land batteries, as ships lying there are fully exposed to a bombardment.

Ships generally lie in the south port about three-fourth mile off shore.

Landing arrangements.—There is a special landing company. The shore is low and shifting, but boats can be rowed up to a long and narrow wood and iron pier under Government House. This pier was constructed by the Coal Company, and is about 120 yards long, and at its head there is about $\frac{1}{2}$ fathom at low water. It was, however, decided some time ago to continue the pier to a total length of 400 yards to the edge of the La Clocheterie bank, where there is generally from five to six fathoms of water.

Tramway.—There is a rickety tramway connecting the shore end of the pier with the gardens in the Obok valley about 1 mile distant.

Coal Dépôt.—The coal dépôt and provision store is beside Mr. Mesnier's* warehouse, distant over a mile from the pier and situated across the valley on the Plateau des Sources, close to the Penitentiary and Soleillet tower. The stock of coal kept up varies; in 1884 it was said to amount to 3,000 tons, but only about 500 tons is now kept, owing to the want of custom, ships finding it more advantageous to buy coal at Perim, where it is cheaper and there are far greater quantities. Mr. Mesnier's ware-house stands in the middle of a court yard. It is fairly well built, and is connected by a tramway with another ware-house in the middle of the valley at the edge of the sea.

Coaling.—The Government and Messageries ships which coal here find some difficulty in getting their coal on board. It is put in sacks and loaded in light draft country boats of 8 or 9 tons, and thence carried to 80 ton barges moored in deeper water. The latter are then tugged alongside the ships. When the pier is finished, coal will be taken straight off to the ship in the barges. It has been proposed also to have a dépôt on a small island in the harbour, when it is hoped 400 tons can be put on a ship in a day. At present the coal company claim to be able to put 250 tons on board. The monopoly which was granted in 1884, expires in 1895, when the "Messageries Maritimes" propose to make their own arrangements, and locate their dépôts at Obok and Jibouti. The present price of coal at Obok is prohibitive. In 1893 coal cost at Obok from £3-1-0 to £3-2-6 per ton. At Aden, Perim, and Mauritius £1-11-8 to £1-15-0 per ton.

Shipping.—Besides Government and Messageries steamers, and an occasional coasting steamer, there is no shipping except native craft of about 80 tons.

Guardship.—A guardship has been stationed in the harbour since 1883.

The present guardship, L'Etoile, belongs to the Madagascar squadron.

She carries 6 guns of 3.94 inches, (10 centimetres) of the 1885 model, two Hotchkiss guns, and a boat gun. The crew consists of 5 officers and 75 men. The Captain in 1893 was Mons. Cotigny.

* NOTE.—Mesnier and Poingdextre, managed in 1893, by Mons. Villard.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [18r] (40/76)

19

There is also a Government buggalow, "The Rapide," which plies between Obok and Jibouti.

Messageries steamers.—Obok has been in direct communication with Marseilles since August 1888.

The Messageries line of steamers have since then made Obok a port of call on their way to Mauritius and back.

They leave Marseilles on the twelfth of each month, call at Port-Saïd and Suez, and reach Obok on the 23rd of the month, twelve days after leaving Marseilles. After coaling they continue the voyage *via* Aden, Zanzibar, Mayotte, Nossi-Be, Diego-Suarez, Sainte-Marie, Tamalaye, to Reunion and Mauritius.

The same itinerary is followed on the return voyage, the steamers calling at Obok on or about the 10th of each month. The *Pei-Ho* is 384 feet long, 3325 tons, and 2400 H. P.

A small trading steamer *Beltégeuse* was, in 1893, trading between Obok, Jibouti and Zaila.

Government vessels.—Government despatch vessels leave Toulon once every forty days and proceed to Indo-China, calling on the way at Obok.

Native craft.—Finally, Arab buggalows from Aden call twice a month with provisions, once coming and once going. With a favorable wind the voyage to Aden takes 15 to 18 hours, but in the monsoons it sometimes takes several days. Sailing vessels from Cutch (in India) to Zaila, Tajoura and Obok, can make a good passage in the north-east monsoon between November and March, returning in the south-west monsoon between June and September.

The buggalow "Rapide" in a fair wind crosses from Obok to Jibouti in 6 hours.

A Port duty of 9½ francs used to be levied on all native craft, but as it was found to drive away shipping, it was discontinued.

Distances by sea.—Obok to Perim about 55 miles, north-north-east by north.
To Aden 115 miles north-east by east. To Jibouti
27½ miles south-south-west by south.

Freight.—Freight by Messageries steamers to Marseilles is 28 francs a ton of 1,543 lbs. or cubic metre (at choice of company) for all merchandise taken off the quay.

For merchandise consigned through the Company at Paris and shipped at Havre or Marseilles, 40 francs per cubic metre, or ton of 2,204 lbs. plus the rail freight from Paris to either of those ports.

Passages.—Passages to Marseilles: 1st class £34, 2nd class £24, 3rd class 12£.

French officials, and the military get a reduction of 30 per cent.

Communications, Telegraphic.—Obok is connected by cable with Marseilles *via* Perim and Malta, the cost of each message being 4 francs a word.

Obok is connected with Aden *via* Perim.

There is at present no telegraphic connection between Obok and Jibouti, but a cable will shortly be laid. The estimated cost is 180,000 francs.

Postal.—A postal service has lately been established between Jibouti and Harrar. Letters can thus be sent direct from Europe or India to the interior *via* Obok and Jibouti, and *vice versa*, but no arrangements have yet been made for the transmission of parcels. French stamps are affixed at Jibouti. They are large and well got up, and bear the title Protectorat Français de la Côte des Somalis. They are reported to be one of the few lucrative sources of revenue of the settlement.

The gun-boat "L'Etoile" and the Government buggalow "Rapide" keep up the connection between Obok and Jibouti.

There is only one road leading from Obok into the interior. It skirts the shores of the Gulf of Tajoura as far as Sagallo, and then strikes inland to Shoa and Abyssinia. It is a bad road, especially that part of it which skirts the sea shore passing Tajoura, and it is not much used.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [18v] (41/76)

20

There is no overland route to Jibouti except through Tajoura and round the head of Gubbet-Kharab, and this route is so rocky and round about that it is never used.

Transport.—No transport is available on the spot. Camels or donkeys can, however, be ordered in from the surrounding tribes, in which case, there will always be greater or less delay according as the tribes happen to be grazing near by or far off. The tribes are not always very willing to hire or sell animals. A good plan is to buy animals at Tajoura and form the caravan at Sagallo, to which place goods can be taken in a native sailing boat, or better still, tranship goods to Jibouti (for Shoa, and collect camels there.

Administration.—Obok is the capital of the colony, but Jibouti with its better harbour is being rapidly developed and is quickly becoming the more important place of the two. It is proposed to shortly transfer the seat of Government to it.

Until 1884 the administration of the colony was carried on by a commandant.

This functionary has since then been replaced by a Governor, assisted by the following staff—

Governor 1895 Mons. Lagarde.		
PRIVATE SECRETARIAT	...	One Secretary, and two Interpreters who also act as customs officers.
POLITICAL	...	One colonial administrator.
NATIVE ADMINISTRATION	...	One marine subordinate officer.
TREASURY	...	One cashier.
MEDICAL	...	One doctor, 1st class, one doctor, 2nd class.
PUBLIC WORKS	...	One subordinate Engineer of the Ponts-et-Chaussées corps.
INDUSTRIES	...	One subordinate.

Justice.—The judicial powers of the colony are defined by a decree dated the 2nd September 1887, supplemented by another dated the 22nd June 1889, which was again followed by another dated 4th September 1894.

The latter states that the grant of more extensive powers has become necessary owing to the development of Jibouti. The main principle observed is to recognize all existing tribal laws, and submit only Europeans to the operation of the French Code.

A functionary appointed by the Governor, usually the officer in charge of the native administration, is invested with the combined powers of a "Juge de paix" and "tribunal de commerce" as exercised in France. He is assisted in the native administration by native Judges, called Kazis, and by mixed tribunals composed of natives and Europeans.

Bourhan Abubekr, a Dankali chief, was charged with the administration of a part of the colony, but he has lately lost credit with the French.

There will be a court of appeal at Jibouti, consisting of the Governor and two assessors.

Finance.—There is practically no revenue.

The cost of the administration up to and including 1885 amounted to £24,990, and for 1886 £7,200.

The town and defences.—Obok consists of four separate quarters, two European, official and non-official, and two native villages, the Arab village and the Dankali village.

The official quarter.—The official quarter, which is just above the Arab village, is situated at Cape Obok, on the sea face of the Plateau des Gazelles, and immediately above the pier.

It is known as "the Camp" and is separated from the non-official quarter and the Dankali village, immediately below the latter, by the flat valley of Obok, here about a mile and a quarter broad.

* NOTE.—Vide footnote page 25.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [19r] (42/76)

21

It contains a residency, church, treasury and post office, lying in a slight depression on the top of the plateau, and sheltered somewhat from the fierce south-west winds. Behind these buildings are the quarters of the staff, the barracks, ware-houses and officers' mess house, further back stands the hospital, and finally there is the Catholic Mission station, consisting of two masonry buildings, about three hundred and fifty yards distant from the Residency.*

One house is occupied by the missionaries, who here teach the French language to native boys; the other, which is of later construction, being occupied by Sisters of Mercy, whose mission it is to teach the girls.

The Residency, (constructed in 1886), together with its outbuildings, takes up the whole of the southern corner of the plateau. It is large and comfortable but ugly, being merely a white cube of masonry covered by a corrugated iron roof with sky-lights, and is remarkable only for a curious garden, made of red, black and white stones which surrounds it.

The barracks, which are immediately behind it, consist of low buildings with large verandahs, the floor being well raised from the ground. They are constructed with a view to defence in case of emergency.

The Residency and some of the buildings near it are protected against a rush of natives on the land side by a ditch 6 feet deep and 9 feet wide, dug across the point of the plateau, the other sides of which drop steeply to the sea.

Visitors can lodge in Mons. Merignac's house near the sea beach. The ground floor of his house consists of a large room half of which is used as a store for all kinds of retail goods, the other half is open to the public as a Café-Restaurant, a billiard table occupying the middle. The sleeping quarters are upstairs and consist of a room divided into three closets by partition planks 8 feet high. The roof is not water-tight and the doors and windows can only be partially shut. With the exception of a bed, table, and wash-hand stand the rooms are bare.

Buildings generally.—The buildings are for the greater part merely temporary structures, whose white walls and red roofs, contrasted with the dingy mass of native huts below, give them a neat appearance.

The roof is, as a rule, supported by masonry pillars and iron girders; the walls are of brick and the roof of red tiles, or corrugated iron.

Some buildings are of wood entirely.

Excepting the iron girders, &c., which were brought from France, the building materials were found on the spot. Lime is made out of the coral and lime-stone rock; and a certain kind of clay, very commonly found in the neighbourhood, can be made into good mortar.

Timber comes from the forest of Angar, which is situated some distance inland.

There is a saluting battery on Cape Obok.

The Native Town—Arab Quarter.—The Arab village is immediately under the official quarter, on the side of a subsidiary detached hillock which is separated from the Plateau des Gazelles by the Chasseurs valley, the nearest end of the village being about 200 yards from the Residency.

It is composed of a single street, faced on both sides by about 20 white-washed houses, built either of stone or of pisé, and branching off at right angles from the main street in the direction of the sea, there are three or four small streets faced by mat huts. Formerly, all Government notices used to be stuck on a big post planted in the centre of the village, but they are now nailed on the door of the Residency instead.

The Arab village contains the dwellings of the Arab and petty European traders, of whom three are Frenchmen and five Greeks (1893).

The Non-Official Quarter.—The non-official quarter, known as old Obok, is situated across the valley on the lower steps of the northern plateau. It consists of Mr. Mesnier's coal and provision ware-houses, and of the penitentiary.

* NOTE.—The missionaries call themselves Pères d'Afrique and are under the supervision of Mgr. Taurin, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Harar. The superior at Obok is Père Léon.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [19v] (43/76)

22

The former has already been noticed; the ware-houses stand in a square enclosure of 80 yards side, surrounded by a six-foot wall. Immediately on entering the enclosure one finds oneself in front of a wooden building which served in 1884-85 as the Residence of the Governor. Mons. Arnoux's tomb is immediately outside the court-yard door.

Penitentiary.—The penitentiary is about 50 yards further inland. It consists of a square tower of two stories 30 feet high, standing in the centre of a square enclosure of 150 yards side, the surrounding masonry wall being 10 feet high, and commanded at the corners by small square turrets 3 feet higher than the walls.*

The central tower, which has been converted into a light-house mounts four small 4-pounder guns, one on each face, overlooking the walls.

The enclosure walls are not loopholed, nor is there any sign of a banquette, but this could be quickly rectified.

Both the Mesnier establishment and the penitentiary overlook the valley and the Dankali village (distant about 250 yards). They are protected on the sea face by a nullah 20 feet deep and steep-to. Bridges are built across it from both the Mesnier establishment and the penitentiary, the bridge from the latter being of wood and removeable.

Position for a fort.—The upper part of the plateau, called Le Plateau des Pasteurs, rises steeply about 200 yards behind the penitentiary, and commands both this building and the Mesnier establishment, as well as the harbour, and the official quarter, and Arab village on the other side of the valley.

A site for a fort was chosen at the edge of the plateau, about 200 feet above the north-east port, but nothing further was done as experts have declared it impossible to defend the shipping.

There is now only a small tower. It is above the penitentiary and is used as a light-house.

Dankali Village.—The Dankali village lies in the Obok valley at the foot of the plateau, immediately under the penitentiary, and is near some wells.

It consists of mat huts only. The site will shortly be moved nearer to the Arab quarter, as the present site is within the limits of a concession obtained by the Messageries Maritimes Company, who there wish to place their ware-houses and coal depôt.

Residents and Troops (Europeans).—The total number of Europeans at Obok, including five Greek traders, is probably about twenty-two. Twelve are officials and 10 traders.

Troops.—Besides these, there is the crew of the guardship lying in the harbour, 5 officers and 75 men.

The French troops had in 1894 all been withdrawn. The first detachment reached Obok in 1884, and the numbers were gradually increased to 330 (including the crew of the guardship). The service was, however, very unpopular, and it has latterly been thought more advisable to employ native levies.

Natives.—The present number of the latter is about 60. They are mostly Sudanese.†

The total native population varies between 300 and 700. In 1879 there was not a single permanent inhabitant, the Dankalis resorting to the place only during the season that pasture is procurable.

There are now some 400 habitations, including the mat huts in both villages.

* The Soleillet tower after the builder's death was utilized as a store by his principal, Mr. Gaudin, a French trader of Havre. He, however, failed and ceded the tower and enclosure to Government, by whom it was used as a convict station. The tower was partly destroyed in 1885 by a violent storm, but was rebuilt, and the corner turrets on the enclosure walls were added.

A light has been placed on the top of the central tower, and this, together with a light placed on a small tower on the top of the Plateau des Pasteurs, gives leading lights to vessels entering the south port.

† A French visitor in 1893 stated that there were only 6 Sudanese, and that no other native troops existed at Obok. Possibly the 60 men mentioned include Police.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [20r] (44/76)

23

European and Native life.—The life of Europeans at Obok is very monotonous. They vary their time in strolling about the village or in the gardens in the Obok valley, when the duststorms permit of it, and there is a small library in the Mess House where they sometimes congregate, and there is a billiard table at Mons. Merignac's Restaurant.

The men are nearly all bachelors, only eight* European women having ever visited Obok, and these generally only for a very short time.

Native life.—The native population is very mixed, the greater part being Somali Arab, or Dankali; but there are also Ethiopians and Sudanese, the latter being chiefly employed in the native levy or in the police. There are also a few Gallas and Hindus.

The Arab village at certain hours of the day presents a very lively appearance.

Native traders, half reclining on their stalls, serve their customers whilst leisurely smoking hookahs. Butchers, fish vendors, and sellers of millet cakes instal themselves in the middle of the street, and call out their wares to passers-by. Eating houses invite the wayfarer to meals of millet cake, dried fish, mutton, and curried rice. The establishments doing most business, however, are the coffee shops. They are crowded, the doorways are filled up, and the customers, not finding room inside, sit outside in the street.

Coffee is brewed from the outer husk of the berry, and whilst it is being consumed amidst a babel of voices, smoking hookahs are passed round from hand to hand, each customer taking a whiff and passing the pipe on to his neighbour.

The cross roads are blocked up by groups of monotonous debaters, who sit on the ground and pass the day in lengthy efforts at oratory.

In the midst of the crowded street the Sudanese policemen quietly circulate, smart in their white uniforms and caps, carrying a small cane in the hand, and wearing a sword bayonet at the side.

The native mat huts are of a bee-hive shape, and constructed of pliant sticks lashed together in the form of a hoop, and covered with matting and hides.

Supplies.—Cheap food is fairly plentiful, but fresh vegetables are only obtainable in the cold season; at other times tinned vegetables are consumed. Sea fish are fairly abundant and good, and mutton, goat's meat, fowls, milk, and eggs can generally be bought. Beef can not be procured so easily, as owing to the want of suitable pasture no cattle are kept in the neighbourhood. Firewood is cheap. Water is plentiful in the wells dug in the valley bed, but it is more or less brackish, Europeans as a rule drinking condensed water, which is sold at 6 centimes a litre. A small supply of condensed water at 50s. a ton is available for the shipping, but as vessels can obtain any quantity at Aden for 10s. a ton, they prefer to get their water at the latter place.

Ice also can be obtained.

Supplies, generally, are only sufficient for the needs of the colony; as nothing comes in from the surrounding country, everything being brought either from Aden, Jibouti or Tajoura.

TOWNS.—JIBOUTI.

Situation, Harbour, Shipping, Town, Inhabitants, Administration, Traders, Defence, Water, Supplies, Communications, Trade, Political.

Situation.—The town of Jibouti (latitude: of Residency $11^{\circ} 35' 10''$ north; longitude $43^{\circ} 9' 10''$ east) is situated on the western side of a low rocky promontory called Ras Jibouti, which marks the southern limit of the gulf of Tajoura. The promontory, which projects due north $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles into the sea, is narrow, and consists of a series of small coral plateaux about 18 feet above the sea level, and connected with

* The wives of two officials and of two traders, and four Sisters of Mercy. Mons. Villard of Mesnier Poingdextre and Cie was here with his wife and daughter (1893).

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [20v] (45/76)

24

each other and the mainland, which is low, by narrow stretches of mud and sand, the outer strip being covered at half tides and the others at high tide.

Harbour.—The harbour is good and spacious, and protected from wind and sea. It was first included in the French protectorate in 1887, and has since then been greatly improved.

Improvements.—A causeway now connects the plateau on which the town stands and the mainland. A long pier has been constructed, allowing of the approach of boats. The harbour has been buoyed and light-houses built, and the communications with the interior improved; whilst the town has been regularly laid out.

The harbour is sheltered from the north-east gales by the promontory, and from the south-west monsoon by a number of coral banks partly covered at low tide and by hills on the mainland. The harbour is one mile in extent with a clear space of $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in diameter.

The usual anchorage is about half a mile from the pier, in from 4 to 5 fathoms of water, with a muddy bottom affording excellent holding ground.

There is an inner harbour near the head of the promontory called "Port du Heron," with from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 fathoms of water.

Channels.—There are two entrances to the harbour, the main one on the north, and the other on the west, the coral banks on both sides of the northern channel being buoyed out with buoys of two sizes.

Buoys and leading marks.—The larger sized buoys mark the main channels, and the others the anchorages in the interior of the harbour. It was proposed in 1893 to place a large bell-buoy on the outer reef of the Mushah islands which command the northern entrance to the port, but it is not known whether this was done.

Ships entering by the northern channel steer a nearly due south course, taking as leading marks a pyramid, situated at the mouth of a creek on the mainland, and the light-house of Hyabili or Djabilé 5 miles in the interior.

In the western channel there is from 7 to 8 fathoms of water.

The French ship "Pei-ho" (3325 tons) tested the north channel in 1894 and found the buoying arrangements satisfactory. Arrangements were subsequently made to make the entrance easy at night by means of lights.

Fortified Light-house.—The light-house at Hyabili is connected with the town by a good road, on which a line of rails for the carriage of material has been laid. The light-house itself is loopholed and occupied by a number of the native levy.

Landing arrangements.—The pier, which is constructed of rough stone and rubble, is about 600 yards long and rather narrow. Only boats can approach it, there being at present only half a fathom of water at the pier head; but if the pier be lengthened another two hundred yards, as is proposed, there will be one and-a-half fathoms at low water.

Shipping.—At present, excepting a few small Arab craft, the Government buggalow "Rapide," and the gun boat Etoile, which plies almost daily between Jibouti and Obok, there is no shipping.

It is, however, proposed to establish a coal depôt here for the Messageries Maritimes and other ships sailing to Madagascar and Indo-China. A prospector employed by Mons. Savoury claims to have discovered coal near Tajoura.

		Miles.	
<i>Distances.</i> —To Obok	...	27½	north-north-east.
To Aden	...	132	north-east.
To Perim	...	75	north-north-east by north.
To Zaila	...	30	south-east.
To Gubbet Kharab	...	6	hours steam.

**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [21r] (46/76)**

This page cannot be made available due to copyright or data protection restrictions.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [21v] (47/76)

26

the interior. It was reported in 1888 by Captain Gissing, R.N., that the natives of Tajoura found no difficulty in obtaining shipments of arms from Obok, that 300 stand of arms were then in their possession. The terms of the Brussels Act have constantly been evaded, and as the Abyssinians require principally arms, Jibouti has thus been able to take some of the Harrar and Shoa trade from Zaila, where the authorities holding to a stricter interpretation of the terms of the Act, refused to supply arms to the natives.

An American house at Aden in 1893 started a sub-agency for skins and hides at Jibouti.

The town is fairly healthy. Some years ago (about 1892) there was an epidemic of cholera. Doctor Deloncle was one of the victims.

Defence.—The settlement is at present unprotected by any defences. It is naturally, however, easily defensible landwards. There is a loopholed light-house at Hyabili, connected by telephone with the settlement.

Troops.—The native levy and police, which are composed of Somalis and Soudanese, are said to number 150, and to be armed with breech-loading rifles. A small party occupies Hyabili light-house at the inland end of the made road (5 miles in the interior), and another party generally garrisons the French guard-house at Loyi-Ada. The men are good fighting material, especially the Soudanese.

Water.—There is a good well about one mile from the village close to the shore. There are others inland.

Supplies.—More abundant than at Obok, but practically none for outside consumption. A small number of sheep and goats come in from the Esa country, and the rest from Zaila.

Cultivation.—Vegetables are sometimes raised on the muddy patch crossed by the causeway. The gardens here are larger than at Obok, and the water, which is obtained from pits in the mud, is not so brackish.

Communications.

(1) A good track over fairly flat ground along the coast past Loyi-Ada to Zaila, distance 31 miles. There is very little traffic on this road.

(2) A bad but well-watered road to Harrar, 2 days longer than the Zaila-Harrar road, distance 187 miles.

Letters.—There are native police posts on this road at regular intervals, and a weekly post by means of camel sowars is established between Jibouti and Harrar, and *vice versa*. At present only letters are taken, to which French stamps are affixed. Parcels are not received. Letters from Europe or India should be addressed to Obok to be forwarded to Jibouti, etc. The post takes 5 days in transit between Jibouti and Harrar. Caravans take from 15 (Léonteff) to 17 days (Lieutenant Mashkoff, 1892).

It was proposed to continue the made road from Hyabili into the interior, but the Esa fearing that one of their means of livelihood as carriers (by means of their camels) was endangered, put a stop to the work, and traffic at the end of 1893 was at a standstill.

(3) A branch road from Ugaz Robli leads to Shoa.

(4) There is a long and difficult round-about track to Obok, but it is not used by caravans.

Railway.—It is rumoured that a proposition to connect Jibouti and Harrar by railway was lately discussed in Paris, with what result it is not known.

TRADE.

Imports.—Spirits, silk, soap, perfumery, fire-arms.

Exports.—Ivory, gold, coffee.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH BENGAL INFANTRY.' [22r] (48/76)

22

27

The ivory trade is entirely in the hands of French traders, through whom Menelek repaid his loan of 2,000,000 lire to the Italian Government.

Jibouti exports to Aden and Obok, and commerce is carried on with France direct through the latter place.

The Aden trade registration returns for 1891-92 shew:—

	£
Imports from Jibouti	13,193
Exports to Jibouti	19,608
Total	34,801

Jibouti a free port.—In order to compete successfully with Zaila for the Harrar and Abyssinian trade, Jibouti has been made a free port, no duties being levied.

Political.—Jibouti was visited by Ras-Makonen, Governor of Harrar, and adopted son of Menelek, king of Abyssinia, in the end of 1893. He was received by Mons. Lagarde, Governor of Obok, and the arrangements for keeping open the Harrar-Jibouti road were discussed.

King Menelek has an agent in Jibouti, named Osman.

TOWNS.—TAJOURA.

27 miles south-west of Obok.

135 miles from Aden.

1,325 miles from Suez.

It is situated on the beach in an amphitheatre surrounded by hills, its aspect being very dreary.

In former days this was the most important sea-port of the Danakil tribes, this being the starting point of caravans trading with Harrar and Shoa.

Lately, however, the development of Jibouti with its better harbour, and easier communications, has diverted some of the Shoa trade to the Esa country.

The Town.—The town of Tajoura has lately (1894) been quite destroyed by fire, nothing remaining except two stone mosques at the extremes of the town, and an outlying fortlet. The town, which formerly consisted of about 100 wooden huts, built so close together as almost to touch each other, will doubtless have been rebuilt by now, as the destruction of the temporary Danakil habitations is quickly remedied by building others.

The Fort.—The small fort stands on a small eminence at the back of the town, and commands it within easy rifle range. It is surrounded by a wall and was occupied in 1880 and 1884 by an Egyptian garrison, and later on in September 1888 by the Russian Atchinoff and his Cossacks.

Water.—There is a well of sweet water about half a mile from the village, the water being about 15 to 16 feet below the surface. The Egyptians procured good water by sinking wells 10 feet deep in the fort enclosure.

The Harbour.—The harbour is a very indifferent one. It is formed by a gap in the shore reef which here extends about 200 yards off-shore, immediately outside of which, no bottom is found at a depth of 40 fathoms.

The harbour is like a horse-shoe in shape and about one cable wide.

There is 10 fathoms of water inside, but the anchorage is very unsafe, with barely sufficient room for a vessel to swing.

It is only during the easterly winds that native crafts can lie here, for during the south-west monsoon it is extremely dangerous, and native crafts are obliged to take shelter at Ras-Ali.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [22v] (49/76)

28

The best anchorage off Tajoura is in 14 fathoms, about half a mile outside the reef which forms the harbour, with the centre of the town bearing north-north-west.

Tribe.—The town is in possession of the Assoba sub-tribe, the Governor being Bourhan-Abubekr.*

Tribe.

The population varies between 500 and 2,000, according to the season of the year.

Arms.—About 300 rifles (breech and muzzle-loading) were bought in 1888 by the natives from the French traders at Obok, the rifles being brought over in sailing boats. As Europeans are not allowed by the terms of the Brussels Act to supply rifles to natives, the French Government has quite lately sent orders to the colony to stop the traffic.

Trade.—The natives of the interior assemble here annually in the months of January and February, for the purpose of trade.

Trade.

Native crafts of about 70 tons bring over cloth, dates, and rice from Aden, and carry back sheep, hides, and the products of Shoa. Others coast along to Zaila and Berbera, and a direct trade is also carried on with Mokha and Jeddah.

Sheep are exported to Aden in the months of August, September, October, and November, at which season the prevailing winds are favourable.

The trade returns with Aden shew a decline since 1879.

Major Hunter gives the value of the imports and exports into and from Tajoura for that year as Rs. 72,363. In 1883-84 the imports had decreased by about Rs. 7,500, whilst the exports remained about the same, the total amounting to Rs. 64,802. The trade has probably since 1884 still further diminished.

Industries.—The only industry at Tajoura is the manufacture of mats and palm leaf baskets.

Industries.

The latter, which are either plain white, or dyed in various colours, are taken to Obok and sold to passengers on the Messageries steamers.

Supplies.—Sheep, goats, and clarified butter are obtainable in the season during which pasture is obtainable in the neighbourhood. At other seasons supplies must be drawn from the interior, and may be difficult to obtain.

Supplies.

Communications.—There are two caravan routes into the interior; they both skirt the sea as far as Sagallo, and thence strike inland past the head of Gubbet-Kharab, the first going direct to Gondar in Abyssinia, a distance of 452 miles, and the other, a branch road going *via* the Wollo Galla country, to Shoa, 370 miles. These routes, as also that to Obok, are described in chapter IX.

Communications.

Defence.—A gun-boat could protect the place from attack by land, if able to remain at anchor in the harbour.

Defence.

Slave-trade.—Tajoura was not long ago an important slave mart, Christian slaves being brought down from Shoa (stolen or bought from the natives), a 22 days' march, and after a short rest marched over land to Raheita, 6 days' march. From Raheita they were exported to Hodeida or Jeddah.

Slave-trade.

In 1888, although the French flag was flying at Tajoura, the traffic in slaves was still flourishing.

One hundred slaves of both sexes arrived from the interior in September. The ruling prices at Tajoura were—girls, 60 to 70 dollars; boys, 50 dollars. On arrival at Hodeida girls were sold for 125 dollars and boys for 75 dollars. As the cost of passage across the Red Sea was only 5 dollars a head, the trade was an extremely profitable one.

* NOTE.—*Vide* foot note 1, Chapter VII, Political.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [23r] (50/76)

29

LOYI-ADA.

*Situation, The British Boundary, French Guard-house, Hills, Defensible
Position, Garrison, Water, Supplies.*

Loyi-Ada is situated in the depth of a bay immediately westward of Ras-Gomehli sand-spit, called Mersa Dalwakteah. There is good anchorage, in 4 fathoms, about 1 mile off shore, but the approaches are beset with sunken reefs. *Loyi-Ada* is distant about 17 miles from Zaila, and 14 miles from Jibouti, being nearly half-way between the two places, which are both visible from the surrounding hills.

Beyond the fact that this is the British-French boundary, and that the French have a guard-house here, the place has no further importance. There is no trade or harbour, and there is very little traffic along the road from Zaila to Jibouti.

The British Boundary.—The frontier is marked by a solitary palm-tree standing on the low sandy shore, about 70 yards eastward of some brackish wells.

French Guard-house.—On a low coral plateau, whose foot is washed by the sea, there is a stone house distant about 300 yards north-west by west from the tree.

This is the French guard-house. It is built on the sea face of an enclosure surrounded by a wall about 9 feet high, built of rough coral stone cemented together.

The building is square and two stories high, the walls of the upper room being loopholed, the loopholes being about 11 feet above the ground.

This room is entered from below by means of a removeable ladder placed against the house from the inside of the enclosure.

An arched doorway pierces the sea-ward wall of the house, and a smaller one the eastern face of the court-yard. Both doors are of wood. The upper room has two square windows, which can be blocked up.

The house is surrounded on the Zaila side by thorn jungle.

The ground is fairly flat on this side, but inland where the Jibouti road (distant, say, 200 yards from the house) is met with, there is a tract covered by loose trap pebbles and boulders.

Hills.—Inland there are successive ranges of hills running parallel to the shore, distant about one and-a-half miles from the guard-house. They end about 3 miles in the Zaila direction. On the highest part, on a hill called San-Darrhé about 300 feet high, the French have arranged a look-out post, whence the road in both directions can be watched.

Defensible position.—The extremity of the hills towards Zaila would afford a suitable position for barring the road to a force coming from Zaila. There are some detached rocks connected by broken ground with the hills, covered with thorn jungle, the ground in front on the Zaila side being fairly flat and open.

Garrison.—The house is usually garrisoned by a small party of native irregulars, Sudanese and Somalis from Jibouti, (say 10 men).

A French subordinate officer takes up his quarters in the upper room whenever it is considered desirable to stop the traffic between Zaila and Jibouti, as in the case of cholera.

Water.—Besides the wells already mentioned there are others about 200 yards on the Jibouti side of the house. The water is brackish but drinkable.

Supplies.—None, but can with difficulty be procured from the Esa.

Fire-wood.—Plentiful.

8

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [23v] (51/76)

30

VILLAGES.

Sagallo, Ambabu, Aussa.

Besides the towns already mentioned, Sagallo (10), and Ambabu (80) inhabitants, are the only inhabited points on the coast. They have already been described in Chapter III.

Sagallo, Ambabu.

Occasionally scattered parties of Danakil may be found here and there along the sea shore, but they have no permanent villages, and only drive their flocks down to the coast when pasture is scarce in the interior.

Lake Assal is a tribal centre. Its commercial value has already been commented upon in Chapter III.

Aussa.

In ancient days Aussa was a settlement of considerable importance, a mid-way trading depôt between the coast and the interior. Constant tribal feuds, however, destroyed the town, and now it is simply a large tribal centre of the Mudaito, on the borders of the lake, and resorted to at certain seasons by various Esa and Afar tribes, who here exchange their caravan wares and keep a sort of fair.

For a description of places in the interior, vide Chapter IX.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [24r] (52/76)

31

CHAPTER VI.

Commerce, Communications, Transport, and Supplies.

Commerce.—The commercial importance of the French possessions is due to the fact that the Gulf of Tajoura is the natural outlet for the trade of Shoa and Harrar, over both of which districts, the Italians claim to have established a protectorate.

The Danakil of Tajoura have traded with Shoa since very ancient times, taking with them Indian and European textile fabrics, steel, copper, zinc, tin, silver, hardware, beads, and salt, and returning to the coast with hides, skins, ivory, musc, gold dust, and coffee.

Shoa is situated about 217 miles in the interior, and is the most fertile province of Abyssinia. Harrar is situated about 200 miles from Tajoura, and 124 miles to the south-east of Ankober in Shoa.

The town, which is at an elevation of over 5,500 feet, is in the centre of fertile and cultivated highlands. It contains about 20,000 inhabitants, and covers 120 acres of ground. Education is widely spread, and nearly all children are taught to read and write Arabic.

It was captured by Menelek II, King of Shoa, in 1887. Owing to the movements of Abyssinian armies through the country, the cultivators have become unsettled, and the coffee plantations, for which Harrar was once famous, have been allowed to run to waste, also cattle disease has lately caused great ravages. Thus the trade with the coast has in recent years somewhat declined.

Harrar will, however, with its natural advantages, doubtless regain its old importance as soon as the district has had time to recover from the effects of the recent Abyssinian invasion.

Up to the present Zaila in the British protectorate has possessed the greater part of the trade of Harrar owing to its better maritime communications. Caravans are always certain of disposing of their goods at Zaila, or of being able to quickly ship them to Aden, whereas Jibouti creates but a small demand, and there are innumerable delays in despatching goods to Europe. The French are, however, making great efforts to secure the Harrar trade, and with the advantages that Jibouti possesses as a harbour over Zaila, it is probable that they will succeed in diverting trade from the latter port. The effects of Jibouti's competition might be counteracted for a time, provided that more water could be found on the Zaila-Harrar road.

There are at present about twenty-two traders settled in the French coast towns, of which number seven are Frenchmen, the remainder being Arabs or Greeks. Eighteen carry on trade at Obok, the rest are at Jibouti.

Trade is almost entirely carried on by barter, cloth or salt being the favourite medium of exchange. In the interior debased Egyptian piastres are, with the Marie-Theresa dollars, the only coinage in general use, sixteen of the former going to one of the latter.

The Indian rupee is sometimes taken in the interior, and is generally current on the coast.

At Obok the French have lately been endeavouring, with some success, to introduce their own silver coinage.

The weights and measures in use at Harrar are also in force at the coast. They are as follows:—

20½ inches	= 1 cubit (Harrar).
23 "	= 1 cubit (Egyptian).
39 "	= 1 metre (French).
16½ "	= 1 English or Egyptian pound.
30½ "	= 1 Harrar pound.
44½ "	= 1 Oke.
20 Harrar lbs.	= 1 Farasilah = 37½ English pounds.
8 Okes	= 1 Karawana = 22 Do.
1 Sakort	= 5½ English pounds.

The measurement of liquids is very arbitrary.
(Vide also Towns).

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [24v] (53/76)

32

Communications.—The first great obstacle to commerce is the want of speedy, safe, and cheap means of communication between the interior fertile districts and the coast.

There is a wide tract, which must be crossed, composed for the greater part of volcanic rock, and rolling boulders, where water is scarce and the heat excessive.

There are no made roads. The routes are simply rough tracks along which transport animals can walk in single file, and as no attempt is ever made to clear the loose stones off the track, it is everywhere bad, except when it happens to cross a sandy tract.

In the passes and gorges near the coast, animals have to struggle over great boulders, and up steep and dangerous crevices in the rocks.

All routes are rendered more or less dangerous owing to the robbing propensities of the nomad tribesmen, who are constantly fighting amongst themselves. It is usual to recruit an Abyssinian escort at Jibouti.* These Abyssinians are Christians, and make the escorting of Caravans a profession. They are however subjects of Menelek and must return to Abyssinia if required. They carry fire-arms, and subsist when on escort duty on rice, boiled with mutton or clarified butter, as do also the Danakil.

The Jibouti-Harrar route is the best in the French possessions as regards water-supply, and is used by most of the caravans trading between the interior and the coast. There is a regular system of Police posts, and the road is consequently fairly safe.

The track is, however, very fatiguing, owing to the rocky nature of the country through which it goes.

The French attempted to improve it, and had already made a good road as far as Hyabili, 5 miles from Jibouti, when the work was stopped by the Esa-Somalis, who having a monopoly of the pack transport, feared that the construction of a road capable of bearing wheeled traffic would endanger their means of livelihood.

Should the French eventually succeed in completing the road as far as Harrar, it is probable that the decline of Zaila with its bad harbour and scanty pasture will only be a matter of time. Zaila at present has only been slightly affected by the competition of Jibouti, the reason being that the Zaila-Harrar route although waterless is less difficult than the winding Jibouti route and is moreover two days shorter. Also Zaila has regular steam communication with Aden. Somalis are very conservative, and having been used from childhood to the Zaila route, it will take some time to change their habits.

Railway.—At one time it was thought that the best route from the French possessions to Shoa would be found *via* Aussa and the Hawash river, which it was proposed to navigate.

A railway project connecting Aussa lake and Tajoura (a distance of 65 miles) was discussed at Paris, and an Engineer officer proceeded up the course of the Hawash from its junction with the Aussa lake, to make a survey and report on the feasibility of putting steamers on the river. His report, however, was unfavourable, and the project was dropped.

Transport.

Transport.—Each tribe has the monopoly of the transport through its own territory.

On starting from the coast, either Esa or Danakil camels, or donkeys must be employed until the Galla highlands are reached. Galla animals, either camels, donkeys, or mules, according to the state of the road, must then be employed; also an Abban or Protector must be engaged from amongst the tribesmen, who will be responsible for the safe conduct of the caravan. Erer, or Errur, on the Shoa road is a large Dankali centre, where Somali camels must be exchanged for Dankali animals. It takes ten days to exchange 200 camels, owing to the rapacity of the Danakil.

* NOTE.—The Russian traveller Léontiew succeeded in obtaining the services of 60 Abyssinian and Danakil in March 1895.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [25r] (54/76)

33

Camels can be bought or hired at the coast in large numbers. Donkeys are also obtainable, but not so readily, and mules are rare, and only found on the coast when a caravan happens to have arrived from Shoa.

Camels.—Camels generally carry about 400lbs. They never get grain, but manage to live on what they can pick up by the way, and they can go for 10 days without water.

The hire of a camel from Jibouti to Gildessa, the Galla frontier, is Rs. 20, and thence to Harrar Rs. 4. The services of the Abban are paid for at the rate of Rs. 2 per camel.

Horses.—There are no horses on the coast, but they are bred in large numbers by the Gallas, and Somalis near Harrar. None, however, except amongst the Barsub-Somalis, exceed 13'3 hands in height. In appearance they resemble Cape horses. All north-east African horses, or rather ponies, are as sure-footed as mules. They can live on next to nothing, and can go without water for three or four days without being sensibly distressed. Money is not cared for, and the purchaser of horses should come provided with the various articles of barter used by traders, such as cotton goods (plain, dyed, and coloured), glass beads, brass, copper, iron, lead, tin, zinc, and steel, salt, sugar, and woollen goods. Horses vary in value from 15 to 100 dollars.

Mules.—Mules are not reared by the Galla tribes near Harrar; they come from the direction of Abyssinia. A mule when obtainable can generally be purchased for thirty dollars.

The French proposed to purchase horses and mules in Harrar, and Shoa, and march them down to the coast to be exported to Tonquin for service in that country.* Abyssinian mules are sometimes brought to Zaila and can be bought for from 30 to 60 Rupees.

Donkeys.—Donkeys carry about 180 lbs. They are hardy and cost about Rs. 12 on the coast. At Harrar asses are very numerous, and, owing to the abundance of fodder, they are always in good condition. A first-rate animal can be bought for Rs. 11.

Supplies.

—The supplies obtainable on the coast have been dealt with in "Towns."

The tribes in the interior live chiefly on meat and milk, and consequently possess great numbers of camels, sheep and goats, and also some cattle, but they have no other supplies.

There are no fixed villages as each tribe wanders in an orbit of its own, according to the season of the year and the state of the pasturage.

Consequently, supplies of live stock, milk, and clarified butter are only forthcoming when friendly tribes happen to be grazing their flocks in the vicinity of caravan routes. As soon as the Abyssinian, or Harrar highlands are reached, supplies of fowls, eggs, sheep, etc., become abundant.

* NOTE.—Since going to Press information has been received that two French Officers have been sent out from France to buy 1,000 mules at Obok for the Madagascar expedition.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [25v] (55/76)

34

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL.

Historical.—*The Suez-canal and its influence on politics.*—When it became evident that the Suez-canal would soon be a reality, those European powers who possessed interests in the East, became anxious to secure strategical points in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Great Britain took possession of Perim, Italy occupied Assal, and France obtained a footing on the shores of the Gulf of Tajoura at Obok.

The Treaty of 1862.—By a treaty dated at Paris, the 11th March 1862, the Dankali Chief Dini-Ahmed-Abubekr, claiming to be Chief of Raheita, ceded to the French Government for 10,000 dollars the port of Obok, together with the coast line from Ras-Doumeirah to Ras-Ali.

The French flag was run up at Obok in the presence of Captain Buret, and the crew of his vessel, on the 20th May 1862.

After this the place was occasionally visited by French ships of war, but no attempt was made to occupy the ceded territory until after the Franco-Prussian war.

Effects of the Franco-Prussian War.—During the war, England as a neutral power, excluded French ships of war from the port of Aden. The inconvenience this caused the French brought home to them the desirability of securing a convenient port of their own, safe from attack, where their ships proceeding to Indo-China and Madagascar would always be certain to obtain coal and supplies.

Obok in 1881.—Attention was in consequence turned to the development of Obok. Experts were sent out from France to examine the harbour, and French merchants were encouraged to engage in commerce with Abyssinia. The colony was delimited in 1881.

First colonists.—Shortly afterwards, in 1882, Monsieur Arnoux and 14 other French traders disembarked at Obok, and set up ware-houses for the storage of arms, and other articles of commerce. These first arrivals were followed six months later by Mons. Paul Soleillet and five others, and, in order to establish a regular commercial connection, a line of steamers commenced running between Marseilles and Bassorah in the Persian Gulf, calling on the way at Obok, and Muscat.

Failures.—The colonists did not prosper, however, and one company failed after another.

Hostility of the Tribes.—The Danakil at first friendly, as time went on became hostile. The position of the colonists became so insecure that they were obliged to intrench themselves. The fortified Soleillet tower was built. Finally, a Danakil marauder having been shot in the station, an open rupture ensued. The colonists were attacked, and the ware-houses plundered of their arms. Mons. Arnoux was killed; the remainder of the colonists escaped to Aden. Some time later Mons. Soleillet was murdered whilst conducting a trading caravan to Shoa.

After this, French interest in Obok appears to have gradually died out.

Influence of the Tonquin War.—It was revived, however, in 1883 by the state of affairs brought about by recent events in Indo-China.

A war in that quarter appeared to be imminent. Obok became absolutely necessary as a coaling station. The French Government hastened to send three thousand tons of coal there (in 1884).

As the colony, however, did not afford the necessary supplies, and moreover appeared to have no commercial future before it, it was decided to extend the limits of the French possessions southward along the shores of the Gulf of Tajoura.

* NOTE.—The text of the French 1862 Treaty, as also that of the subsequent treaties relative to the cession of Tajoura, Ambabu, Sagallo, and Gubbet-Kharab, is given in F. D. Secret E., February 1886, Nos. 232-247. The year 1862 saw the commencement of French enterprise in Indo-China when Annam was ceded to France.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [26r] (56/76)

35

About this time French plans were favoured by the course of events in Egypt.

Evacuation of the Somali Coast by Egypt.—Egypt, in 1884, owing to internal difficulties, withdrew her garrisons from Harrar and the Somali Coast, (including the town of Tajoura).

England thereupon occupied Berbera, Bulhar, and Zaila, and France occupied Tajoura, Sagallo, and Gobad, and later on, in 1885, Ambabu and Gubbet-Kharab.

Great efforts were made to develop the trade of the colony, and various treaties were arranged with chiefs in the interior.

Obok a Penal Settlement.—In order to supply the labour which the Danakil were unwilling to supply, the colony was made a penal settlement, and the land on which the Soleillet tower now stands was taken up for the purpose.

The first batch of convicts from Reunion, Cochin China, and Algeria, numbering about 100, arrived early in 1887.

Owing to the insufficient strength of the guard, thirty-six escaped. Twenty-eight were recovered through the help of the Danakil. The remainder for a long time wandered about the district robbing caravans, and became a standing menace to the colonists. These men were finally accounted for, most of them being killed by the Danakil. The French Government, however, decided not to prosecute the experiment any further, and proposed to withdraw the convict establishment from Obok. There were still some Algerian convicts here, however, in 1895.

Continued Failure.—In spite of all efforts, there was no improvement in the commercial outlook of the colony. Of the two routes leading from Tajoura to the interior, the first, that going *via* Aussa to Shoa, was practically closed by the attacks of the Sultan of Aussa's people; the second route, to Gondar in Abyssina, was too long and too difficult, and was also dangerous owing to the unfriendly attitude of the Danakil.

Supplies were, even after the acquisition of Tajoura, totally insufficient to meet the requirements of the shipping, and it was seen that the position could only be improved by tapping the resources of Somali-land proper, in the direction of Zaila.

Dongarita Incident.—Attempts were therefore made to obtain a footing at Dongarita, a creek on the coast between Zaila and Berbera in the possession of the Jibril Abokr section of the Habr Awal tribe.

This tribe being under the protection of Great Britain, protracted negotiations ensued between the two powers, and finally, in February 1887, an understanding was arrived at by them in the matter of their respective claims upon the Somali Coast.

Anglo-French agreement of 1887-1888.—The British protectorate is admitted to extend from the 49th degree of east longitude to a point at the Loyi-Ada wells situated on the coast about half-way between Zaila and Jibouti, whence the line dividing the English and French protectorates runs to Abbaswein, Biyo Kaboba, Gildessa and Harrar; the islands of Mushah and Bab are included in the French protectorate by a convention settled in 1888.

Neither Government is to attempt any interference across the line of division thus defined between them. The caravan route from Zaila to Harrar *via* Gildessa is to remain open to all commerce.

Both Governments undertake to adopt all necessary measures for the suppression of the slave-trade, and to prohibit the importation of powder and arms into the territories subject to their respective influence. Neither country is to occupy Harrar,* and each reserves to itself the right to oppose any third powers' obtaining possession of that district.—(*Aitchison's Treaties.*)

NOTE.—Turkey, who had taken possession of Zaila, Tajoura, and the Somali Coast in 1848, sold these possessions to her vassal Egypt in 1874 for £15,000 additional tribute. The Khedive, Ismail Pasha, thus obtained control over the routes connecting the Egyptian province of Harrar with the sea, and also a coast line of 730 miles from Babel-Mandeb to Cape Guardafui and Ras Hafun. Egyptian garrisons were placed in Berbera, Zaila, and Tajoura, and in 1881 the Egyptian flag was run up at Obok, but was subsequently removed by the French.

*NOTE.—Harrar after its evacuation by the Egyptians, became an independent state under a ruler of the former dynasty. In 1887, however, it was captured by King Menelek II of Shoa, and it has since then remained in his possession.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [26v] (57/76)

36

POLITICAL.

*French relations with Italy, Russia, Abyssinia, the Tribes. Trade in arms.
Slave-trade.*

French relations with Italy.—The French hinterland is undefined owing to the position lately taken up in Abyssinia by Italy.

In 1881, the Italian Commissary of Assab, under orders from Rome, concluded a treaty with Sultan Reheiti-Bérégame, placing his territory under Italian protection. *no - [unclear] v. French [unclear] & DM's memo. 7.12.98*

On the 5th July 1882 Assab and its territories were decreed an Italian Colony.

On the 22nd May 1883 Italy concluded a commercial treaty with the King of Shoa, by which Italian goods entering and leaving Shoa became liable to a 5 per cent. import and export duty only, *ad valorem*.

Italy occupied Massowah in 1884, and at once interested herself in Abyssinian affairs. The pretensions of King Menelek of Shoa were supported, and when he became Negus of Abyssinia, he signed a treaty placing his country under Italian protection. He has, however, since repudiated the treaty and repaid an Italian loan of 2,000,000 lire through French merchants. Italy however, supported by some of the European powers, declines to withdraw her protection, and the matter is still unsettled.

France makes reservations in recognizing the Italian protectorate over Abyssinia and Harrar, claiming the liberty of action granted her by the Anglo-French agreement of 1887.

On the 16th of May 1884, the Dankali Chief of Aussa, Mohammed Hanfuli (described as Chief of all the Danakil), agreed to allow Italian goods to pass through his territories to and from Abyssinia, free of all transit charges.

According to French accounts, the Sultan of Aussa is now an Italian protégé, and receives a regular salary. His territories include Lake Aussa, and stretch right across from the Sultan of Raheita's territories on the north, till they touch the Esa Somalis on the south, thus dividing the territories of the Sultans of Tajoura, and Laita, from Abyssinia, and Harrar. The Sultan of Raheita is an Italian protégé, and the Sultan of Laita is wavering between the French, and the Italians, and appears to be receiving money from both. Thus the French are completely debarred from the possibility of extending their territories towards the interior, Mohamed Hanfuli's territories lying astride of the road to Shoa and Harrar. He appears to be now actively hostile to the French, and lately planted the Italian Flag at Lake Assal, and on Jebel Gudeh. The French however caused the flag to be removed, claiming that both these places were within the lands of their protected Chief, the Sultan of Tajoura. As a matter of fact, Lake Assal is a disputed possession between the latter and the Sultan of Laita. The latter actually occupies the country on the borders of the lake.

Relations with Russia.—Russia, equally with those other powers who possessed interests in the East, had for sometime past desired to obtain a revictualling station in the Gulf of Aden for her pacific squadron. Attempts were made to come to a favourable understanding with Abyssinia, whose national Church is identical with the Greek Church. In 1878 a Cossack leader named Atchinoff took possession of Tajoura and Sagallo, but he and his Cossacks were turned out by the French, and his action was repudiated by the Russian Government. It has since been stated that the French are not averse to ceding Tajoura to Russia, with the hope of successfully combating Italian influence in Abyssinia through the medium of the Greek Church. At the present moment Russian officers are travelling in Abyssinia, and presents have been sent to Menelek.

Relations with Abyssinia.—French relations with Harrar and Abyssinia appear to be on a good footing.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [27r] (58/76)

37

Mons. Chefneux took presents to Menelek and to Ras Makonen in 1893, returning by way of Errur. He appears to have had some trouble with the tribes.

Ras Makonen, Governor of Harrar, visited Jibouti in March 1893, when arrangements were made by Mons. Lagarde,* Governor of Obok, with a view to securing the safety of the route to Harrar and thence to Shoa, and a system of police posts at regular intervals was inaugurated.

It is stated that in 1892-93 Jibouti was offered to Abyssinia as a French protected port, an offer which Makonen declined.

Relations with the Tribes.—French relations with the tribes have never been good and appear now to be strained owing to their proposed action in the matter of road making, the

Assal Lake concession, and the degradation of the Dankali Chief Abubekr. (Note 1.) *Vide also Chapter III, Assal Salt Lake.*

The chief cause of disagreement appears to be that native prejudices are not sufficiently respected, and that the French do not work sufficiently through the natives.

Trade in Arms.—Arms have been supplied to Harrar in large numbers, and this has caused considerable irritation to Italy.

Trade in Arms.

The natives in the neighbourhood of Obok and Tajoura, who were rich enough to afford it, found no difficulty in buying arms from the French, and the terms of the Brussels Act were constantly evaded. Lately, however, orders regulating the traffic, have been sent out from France (*vide also chapter V, Jibouti, Obok*).

Slave-trade.—The slave-trade flourished at Tajoura for some time even after the French obtained possession of the place.

Slave-trade.

Slaves were brought down from Abyssinia by Dankali traders to Tajoura, and thence marched overland to Raheita, whence they were shipped to Jedda and Hodeida. This traffic has now apparently ceased (*vide also chapter V, Tajoura*).

NOTE 1.—Abubekr, a Danakil of Tajoura, originally the Captain of an Arab coasting vessel, became Port Superintendent, and Governor of Zaila and Tajoura under the Turks, but subsequently fell into disgrace through the intrigues of Sharmarkay, and was ordered to Hodeida, where he was imprisoned.

He was liberated, however, through the good offices of Mr. Henri Lambert, French Vice-Consul at Aden. He returned to Zaila, and again became Governor of the town under the Egyptians. He and his family became notorious slave-dealers, and his conduct having been brought to the notice of the European powers, he lost his position. Attributing his downfall to the ill-will of the British Government, he, on going back to his tribe at Tajoura, did his best to damage British interests, and placed himself in the hands of the French. He and his sons were entrusted by them with the administration of a portion of their possessions, but the family have lately fallen into disgrace, and now purpose migrating to Aden (1894).

NOTE 2.—Mr. Arnoux killed in 1882.

Mr. Soleillet killed.

1885—Obok attacked unsuccessfully by the chief of Raheita.

1886—Mr. Lagarde, having been concerned in the abduction of a slave girl, was attacked at Tajoura, and towards the end of the year 7 sailors of the steamer *Pengouin* were set upon and murdered whilst getting water at Ambabu.

1886—Mr. Leon Barral was murdered between Obok and Shoa whilst conducting a caravan.

1887—Two French soldiers were attacked in the gardens at Obok, one of them being killed.

* NOTE 3.—Mons. Lagarde was away on a visit to France in April 1895.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [27v] (59/76)

38

CHAPTER VIII.

STRATEGICAL AND TACTICAL.

Strategical.—The strategical importance of the French possessions is due to their geographical position near the mouth of the Red Sea on the great trade route between Europe and the East, and to the fact that the island of Perim is within easy striking distance, its distance from Obok and Jibouti being much less than from Aden.

The French have lately drawn upon the resources of the colony in men and animals for the Madagascar expedition. 673 Somalis and a number (1,000?) of Abyssinian mules have been despatched to Mojunga.

Jibouti is a really good harbour and can be fortified. There is said to be coal in the neighbourhood, and the port will be invaluable in time of war as a coaling station. As long as French ships of war lie at Obok, Perim and the British trade passing the island are threatened, and Aden can not be denuded of naval defence. The French consider that the first steps that should be taken to improve Jibouti's strategical value, are to increase the amount of shipping, to reduce the price of coal and water, and to establish means of repairing large sea-going ships.

Cape Doumeirah.—As the French coast line reaches as far north as Cape Doumeirah, the French are at liberty to construct forts on the coast opposite Perim, to command the larger strait which is 9 miles wide. This strait is narrowed by coral reefs.

TACTICAL.

Tactical.—In discussing plans of attack on the French ports, it is assumed that Great Britain holds command of the sea; otherwise, instead of assuming the offensive, Great Britain would be obliged to direct her efforts to defending her own ports on the Somali Coast from French attacks.

Zaila could easily be reduced, if her sea communications were cut off, by any French force powerful enough to seize and hold the wells of Togosha, which are over 4 miles distant from Zaila in the Jibouti direction.

Zaila depends entirely on these wells for its water-supply.

Native levies.—The French at present possess at Obok and at Jibouti a native levy of about 200 men, 150 of whom are at Jibouti.* They are good fighting material, and would give us some trouble if the French should take it into their heads to raise more.

We have, on the other hand, besides our small garrisons on the coast, a camel corps of about 30 Somalis, which could be largely increased. The Esa could be employed as irregular infantry, as was done at Harrar. They are good fighting material, and would be invaluable as scouts.

The Jibril Abokr near Eilo would make good mounted infantry.

Obok cannot succour Jibouti.—There is no land communication between Obok and Jibouti, and a British gun-boat could easily interrupt the sea communications between the two places.

French Ports generally.—The tribes in the vicinity of the French ports could, it is probable, be induced to cut off the supplies of the French garrisons, and would, in the case of the French being shelled out of their ports, cut off their retreat into the interior.

In the present defenceless state of the French harbours, any English ship more powerful than the French guardship stationed at Obok (*vide* chapter V, Obok) could bombard either of the French ports and easily demolish the European buildings.

* But *vide* note † on page 22.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [28r] (60/76)

39

Obok.—As regards Obok, a British force could be landed at Cape Ras-Ali and marched along the top of the plateaux to the edge of the Obok valley, whence the town and shipping is entirely commanded, and field guns placed on the Plateaux des Pasteurs would render all buildings untenable.

The Danakil could be induced to consent to the landing of our troops.

Jibouti.—As regards Jibouti, a British force could be landed at Zaila and encamped at Togosha wells.

Between Zaila and Jibouti there is no obstacle in the way of the march of our troops, except the fortified French guard-house at Loyi-Ada. This house might be defended in a position 3 miles on the Zaila side, where the rocky nature of the ground and abundance of natural cover are advantageous to the defence; but the hills which here run parallel to the shore could be turned, and the guard-house itself could not resist even light guns, being commanded from the hills on the south. It could be bombarded from the sea by a vessel of light draft.

It would be advisable to raise a small body of Esa, as the march is entirely through their territory, and without this precaution they might view our movements with distrust.

Zaila.—As regards the landing of a large force at Zaila, there are considerable difficulties in the way, owing to the shallowness of the water in-shore, and the distance at which vessels must anchor.

Only row-boats can approach the pier.

The climate is comparatively unhealthy. Water is obtainable only at Togosha, over 4 miles distant.

Pasture for transport animals is insufficient.

The best plan would be to camp the troops at Togosha wells, and obtain camels at Berbera, Bulhar, and in the interior.

Camels should be marched, under the escort of some of the camel corps, to a point in the neighbourhood of Zaila where pasture is abundant (this varies with the time of year), and only marched into Zaila when the troops are ready to march.

Camels carry about 350 lbs., exclusive of saddles.

At Zaila there is a considerable trade with the interior in rice and dates. Consequently there are sufficient supplies of these articles, as also of sheep, for the immediate requirements of a force of say 500 men.

Firewood can be obtained from the islands outside Zaila harbour.

NOTE.—For a description of the French guard-house at Loyi-Ada, and the fortified light-house at Hyabill near Jibouti, *vide* chapter V, Jibouti, Loyi-Ada.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [28v] (61/76)

40

CHAPTER IX.

ROUTES IN DETAIL.

1. Obok to Tajoura, Abyssinia, Shoa, and Harrar.
2. Tajoura to Gondar.
3. Tajoura to Ankober.
4. Jibouti to Harrar.
5. Jibouti to Zaila.

Route No. I.

OBOK TO TAJOURA, ABYSSINIA, SHOA, AND HARRAR.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.					REMARKS.
	Stage.		Total.			
	M.	F.	M.	F.		
COUSSERAHLI ...	23	...	...	...		Time 10 hours. Three fresh water wells, the first at Allat-cilta or Atella (4½ miles), one and-a-half hours from Obok, and the other two at Tagareh (7½) and Mendoh (13 miles) from Obok. The sea coast is skirted for the first 8 hours; during the last two hours the path is up the bed of a torrent. Cousserahli is at the head of the torrent; there is a well of fresh water, and a small site for encamping. Mountains skirt the path inland.
TAJOURA ...	13	...	36	...		Time 8 hours, <i>vid</i> Adbuin. The path is difficult, and is over very rocky and mountainous ground, especially near Ras Duan. The last 8 miles is over better ground between the sea and the mountains. At Tajoura water is good and plentiful about 1½ miles from the village. Sheep can be obtained.

- (a) The track to Abyssinia follows Route No. II. It is very little used owing to attacks on caravans made by the Sultan of Aussa's people.
- (b) The track to Shoa follows Route No. III. To Ankober is 25 days' march for a caravan.
- (c) The track to Harrar follows that to Shoa (No. III) as far as Sobolla near Gobaad, thence it branches off south-eastward to Las-Hadaia, Malik, Sarman, Arro, Warof, Mulli, Dadab, Gildessa and so to Harrar—*vide* Route No. IV.

Route No. II.

TAJOURA TO GONDAR.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.		REMARKS.
	Stage.	Total.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
TAJOURA ...	...	...	
AMBABU ...	3½	3½	Road runs S.W. along the shore, passing the well of Tajoura. Water from well.
DULHULL ...	7	10½	Road runs S.W. along the sandy shore, then leaves it, passing through a mimosa forest. Then ford a creek 2 ft. deep, and return to shore. At Dulhull there is a F. W. stream, and a well. The hills behind it rise to 6,000 feet, and are bare and rocky.
SAGALLO ...	1½	12	Road runs S.S.W. along the shore. Water from a well.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [29r] (62/76)

29

41

ROUTE No. II—*contd.*

TAJOURA TO GONDAR—*contd.*

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.		REMARKS.
	Stage.	Total.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
			Road for 1 hour W.S.W. along the shore, then runs up a water-course, dry in summer, by a very bad road, and passes through the gorge of Galalafu, which is 300 yards long and about 30 broad, bordered by precipitous walls of black lava. In it there are several pools of water. It then emerges on to an extensive volcanic plain, inhabited by Bursane Bedouins, in which is Wardelihan.
WARDELIHAN (DAD DAHUE).	10	22	Descend from this plain by the Rah Isa, a deep ravine 400 to 500 feet below the level of the plain, and about 70 yards broad to the shores of the Ghubbei-Kharab. The road is difficult, very bad, and encumbered with débris. The ravine opens out at its mouth, and is a torrent in the rains. The passage takes 4 hours with camels. At Bulhatoo the water in the well is much impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, but good water would be found by digging. There is some dry yellow grass.
BULHATOO	7	29	Road runs W. by N. over a sheet of lava between the Ghubbei-Kharab and a ravine parallel to it.
DUFARER	4	33	Road runs S. (5½ hours) over an excessively rough country into a valley extending to the Salt Lake (Lake Assal). Aleek Shatan is a valley with a few palms and some small natural reservoirs of sweet but dirty water, to the left of the road.
ALEEK SHATAN	5	38	Road runs W. and S.W. between high and barren red hills to (7 miles) Haniphanta close to Lake Assal, the edges of which are covered with a white and dazzling crust of salt, which is sent into the interior. It is 400 to 500 feet above the sea, is surrounded by very lofty mountains and is 20 miles in circumference. Thence up a narrow ravine in which a stream flows a few inches deep. At Gungunta there are several pools of good water, and at the head of the ravine there are hot-water springs.
GUNGUNTA	10	48	Road a rugged path through a ravine and takes 4 hours. Aluli is 228 feet above the sea, and has several large sweet pools, covered with wild duck, excellent grass, and some dom-palms. Hence a route to Ankober to S.W.
ALULI	7	55	The above route is from the works of Johnston (1842) Isenberg and Krapf (1839), and Barker (1841). At about 30 miles pass Lake Abhebbad (6 miles long) to S. and about 10 miles further on Lake Dugod, on which, on the right bank of the river, Hawash at its mouth, is Aussa (Wiaito). No details available. Distance measured from official map of Abyssinia, on which this route is shown.
AUSSA	45	100	Road up left bank of Hawash to Arabalesa, 25 miles; River Melli, a tributary of the Hawash, crossed at 38 miles; pass Aganti at 50, Bakarsa at 62, and Taha at 74. All these are close to the river Hawash. At Taha the road begins to bend away from the river Kahab, passed at 85 miles, is about 5 miles from it. No details of road. Distances, &c., as above. There is an alternative route in a straight line from Aussa to the S. of this. It crosses the Hawash at Mieti, 15 miles above Taha, and passing by Dowe, joins the above route at Kallu.
ILALU	97	197	Road runs W. to Kullo, 20 miles, and here enters on the Worro Kullo valley, which is 10 to 15 miles broad, intersected by the Cherado river, a tributary of the Barhilo, and is bounded by ranges of hills. It is very fertile, well cultivated and watered, and very healthy. Large numbers of cattle are raised, and the valley is thickly populated. The principal villages are Kullo, Totola, Ancharo, and Dawe (Isenberg and Krapf). From Kullo the road runs 17 miles N.W. to Ancharo, a market place.

11

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [29v] (63/76)

42

ROUTE No. II—*contd.*

TAJOURA TO GONDAR—*contd.*

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.		REMARKS.
	Stage.	Total.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
ANCHARO	37	234	Road still in valley of Worro Kullo, runs 12 miles N. by W. to Moia, a town on a steep hill, in Tehuladere's country, which is inhabited by the Wulloo Gallas, a lawless lot of robbers, cruel and treacherous. About 5 miles E. of Moia is Lake Hzik, 45 miles in circle situated in a beautiful fertile valley with but little cultivation or trees, but much rich grass. It is very deep, and is surrounded by high mountains on the S. and E. On an island about 260 yards from the W. shore is a convent and village with 350 souls, opposite which is a village.—(<i>Isenberg and Kropf.</i>)
MOFA	12	246	Road to N. W. At 17 miles pass Adas. Here road turns to W., and at 21 miles crosses a tributary of the Bashilo. There is an alternative route between Ancharo and Jiffa, passing by Totola, from which there is a cross road to Mofa. From Jiffa road to S. to Ankober.
JIFFA	25	271	Road runs in W. direction to (24 miles) Korieb, beyond which the river Bashilo is crossed. Magdala, the fortress captured by the British in 1863, is 8 miles N.W. of Jiffa. No details. Distance as above.
DAONT	30	301	Cross Jedda river, a tributary of the Bashilo at 6 miles. At 27 miles reach Nege, and at 47 Ambadoro. Distance measured as above. The road runs through the hilly province of Telem, which is well watered and very fertile.—(<i>Gilbert.</i>)
AMBADORO	47	348	To Debra Tabor, the road winds about a good deal, passing through a mountainous and wooded country, abounding in elephants, rhinoceros, leopards, and hyenas, called Wolkaita.—(<i>Gilbert</i>) It is about 33 miles long. This was formerly Theodore's capital. It stands on four hills, the town being on one, the palace on the second. Guffit, a village in which the royal manufacturing establishments, &c., were erected, on the third, and a curious church on the fourth.—(<i>Winstanley.</i>)
DEBRA TABOR	33	381	Road through a very difficult and hilly country to Amoura Gedal, at the foot of a remarkable isolated rock, 300 feet high, and bare of vegetation. The village stands on an elevation and is built in a circle.
AMOURA GEDAL	12 (1 day).	393	Road through a level tract with low mountain ranges covered with shrubs. The Reb river is crossed 2 hours from Faag by a bridge (one of the few in Abyssinia) of brick, with 3 arches, and 20 feet wide. Faag is on the slope of a hill, and is divided into several fenced-off portions. Much cotton is cultivated in the vicinity.—(<i>Winstanley.</i>)
FAAG	17 (1 day).	410	The road to Emfras (on Lake Tsana, see Route 7) runs down a valley to the lake, with abundance of trees, and very picturesque. The people about here live in black cloth tents, about 6 feet high and 8 feet long, triangular in section. There are many villages and much traffic on this road.
EMFRAS	10 (1 day).	420	Hence to Gondar the road runs in a N. direction through the province of Dembea, which is flat, and produce the best wheat in Abyssinia. For the first 15 miles it runs along the lake side, and is bordered on the E. by wooded mountains. Gondar is the actual capital of Abyssinia, and contains 3,000 houses. The houses are mean and placed without any order. They are mostly circular, and have only a doorway. The castle of Gidem, the residence of the King, is composed of a large number of houses surrounded by a circular wall flanked by towers, but is very ruinous. A fine

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [30r] (64/76)

43

ROUTE No. II—concl'd.
TAJOURA TO GONDAR—concl'd.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.		REMARKS.
	Stage.	Total.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
GONDAR ...	32	452	church commands the town. Gondar stands on the Angereb river, which flows into Lake Tsana. Gondar derives vast supplies of grain from the provinces of Godjam, Damo, and Basso, which lie to the S. of Lake Tsana. Of them Gilbert says:—"These three districts form an immense plain of extraordinary fertility, containing prairies and magnificent pasturages, but not much wood." Grain is abundant, prices are low, and famine is unknown. Note.—In Abyssinia, as a rule, roads do not exist, the high-ways being marked merely by hoof-tracks. There are no caris or carriages in the country. Bridges are most rare, and rivers have to be forded or swum.—(Winstanley.)

Route No. III.
TAJOURA TO ANKOBER.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	STAGE.		TOTAL.		
	Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.	
ALLULI ...	68	0	68	0	See Route II. This route makes the distance 55 miles only; but as the road winds considerably, and there is considerable latitude as to choice of paths, both may be right. This route is taken from Barker's "Journey to Shoa, 1814," with notes from Johnston's "Travels in S. Abyssinia." Here Ankober road turns off to south from Gondar road.
BEDI KURROO RUFF ...	16	0	84	0	Road for 2 hours over a low broken hill range, then cross a dry water-course and the plains of Hender, Addi, Dowar, and Gurguddi, latter taking hours. Bedi Kurroo Ruff on a bare elevated plain. Water from a pool.
SUGGADERA...	8	0	92	0	Country of same desolate character. Suggadera in a valley with luxuriant vegetation. Water (impregnated with copper) from a pool.
MURRAH ...	4	0	96	0	In the bed of a watercourse. Water from a well, or by digging.
DUDDEE ...	15	0	111	0	Country of same character. Water from a pool.
GOBAAD ...	12	0	123	0	Country less desolate, and covered with coarse grass forming abundant food for camels. Stream of Gobaad 30 feet wide, 2 feet deep. It flows west into lake Ahibdad. Its valley has beautiful green sward and numerous mimosa trees.
SANKUL ...	4	0	127	0	Water from a pool.
SUGGAGIDAN ...	7	0	134	0	Road over a stony plain. No water. In a plain 30 mile long by 6 broad, bounded by flat-topped ridges 400 to 500 feet high. In the rains it is a morass, intersected by numerous watercourses.
DAWAYLAKA ...	9	4	113	4	Water from a pool. Road over a smooth level plain of yellow marl.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [30v] (65/76)

44

ROUTE No. III—*contd.*

TAJOURA TO ANKOBER—*contd.*

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	STAGE.		TOTAL.		
	Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.	
OOMERGOLLOOF ...	8	4	152	0	Road over same plain. Barker says "no water," but Johnston mentions a little stream with marshy banks in a ravine.
AMADOO ...	7	4	159	4	A narrow valley intersected with nalas 4-5 feet deep. Plenty of coarse grass. Water from a pool. Deer abound.
FIALOO ...	3	4	163	0	Water from a pool 1,605 feet above the sea.
BARURUDDA ...	15	0	178	0	Through a rich well-watered country to the large plain of Barurudda with excellent and abundant camel forage. Barker says "no water," Johnston mentions fresh green sward and large numbers of trees. He halted here 2 days, and says "Barurudda was too abundant of forage and water to admit of our leaving" after a day's halt only.
KILALLOO ...	12	0	190	0	Road excellent, over hard, dry clay, covered with high coarse grass. An oasis on a stream, at which all the herds of the neighbourhood rendezvous in the dry season. It is 1,542 feet above the sea.
WARAMILLI ...	7	0	197	0	Water from a pool.
NAGA-KOOMI ...	15	0	212	0	Through a long valley with a rich alluvial soil, much grass and many trees. No water.—(Barker.)
MEINHA TALLI ...	15	0	227	0	Immense herds of cattle about this place and in the valley of Hassanderah Kabeeh, through which a stream flows. Water from pools.
MADERA DUBBA ...	15	4	242	4	Over level country with high grass. No water. A few low mimosa trees.
SULTELLI ...	17	0	259	4	Country as in last march. No water (except a few stagnant pools). Little grass.
MAROO ...	13	0	272	4	Flat open country with mimosa trees and excellent grass. Water from a lake all the year round.
MOOLU ZUGHIR ...	13	0	285	4	Through dense bush for 2 hours, then more open country. Surface gently undulating with a few swamps. No water.
BURDUDDA ...	9	0	294	4	Through an undulating country, with dwarf mimosas, and much game. Water from a pool.
HAD (HOW) ...	15	0	309	4	Over a plain with a gentle ascent. No water.
HAWASH RIVER ...	11	0	320	4	Through a stony but densely wooded country. The river has luxuriant vegetation on its banks, and at the beginning of the rains (July) is about 50 yards broad and 8 feet deep, with precipitous banks 25 to 30 feet high. Water dirty and muddy, flowing 2 miles an hour. It is crossed on rafts of skins. In May it is only 2 or 3 feet deep, and can be easily forded.
AZBOTI ...	12	4	333	0	Over a large undulating plain passing a lake at 8 miles. No trees and some jungle. Water from a pool.
DATHARA ...	12	4	345	4	Over a gentle ascent, with numbers of small hills. Water from a stream 2,944 feet above the sea.
DINOMALI ...	5	0	350	4	Still ascending through a bare country with much grass and large herds of cattle. Then through a beautiful valley with fine forests. Water from a stream.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [31r] (66/76)

45

ROUTE No. III—*concl'd.*

TAJOURA TO ANKOBER—*concl'd.*

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	STAGE.		TOTAL.		
	Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.	
FARRI ...	1	4	352	0	A town on an elevation 200 feet high, surrounded by fields. Houses in groups, a market place in the centre. Much cultivation all round. Water from a stream.
ALIO AMBA ...	13	0	365	0	Through a rugged and difficult country up several ravines. Alio Amba is a village of 300 huts, on a flat-topped hill at right angles to the road. It is 5,271 feet above the sea.
ANKOBER ...	5	0	370	0	Road stony and very steep to Ankober, the capital of Shoa, 8,200 feet above the sea. It is stockaded all round. The surrounding country is highly cultivated, producing jowari, wheat, barley, and taff. The former grows to 15 or 18 feet high, the latter is made into bread. A market is held at Alio Amba every Friday, all kinds of grain, horses, mules, cattle, &c., being sold there. There was formerly much traffic in slaves with Harrar. Shoa is at present ruled by King Menelek. Since the Abyssinian War of 1867-68 he has completely conquered the Gallas' country lying to the north of Shoa, of which he is now undisputed suzerain, and in 1887 he conquered Harar.

Route No. IV.

JIBOUTI TO HARRAR.*

Post road to Harrar about 200 miles, a simple track over very rocky ground, but well watered. Post takes 5 days by mounted camel sowars; caravans take 17 days (Lieutenant Mashkof, 1892). This is the road by which most of the trade of the French possessions comes. The route strikes into the main Zaila-Harrar track at Biyo Kaboba.

The information concerning the first part of the road is very unreliable, and the routes shewn on existing maps are misleading. The first part of the route as far as Hyabili is a good made road, afterwards it is merely a track.

The first watering place after leaving Jibouti is Aitinubba distance about 10 miles; the next Bulli (5 miles), Airaba, Ugaz Robli, Ali Ada, Daheita, Hambuli. The road then appears to follow the Ambos Bia Kaboba track, the tracks meeting at the Hassein Gadecchi well. The remainder of the road is known from Captain Swayne's and Captain Fullerton's maps. The journey to Harrar from Jibouti is said to be two days longer than from Zaila *via* Hensa.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	Stage.		Total.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
HASSEIN GADEECHI OR MERMER.	70	0	70	0	The distance from Jibouti to Hassein Gadecchi may be taken roughly as 70 miles, taking 5½ days' marching. Running water plentiful in sandy river bed between trap plateaux 600 feet high.
ELLAN ...	13	0	83	0	Up by a rocky pass at the side of Mermer hill to a rolling plateau covered with loose stones, and thorn scrub. After passing some detached rocks called Goraley there is a gentle decline to Ellan torrent. The pass would require some hours' work before wheeled traffic could pass. On the plateau troops could march on both sides of the track. The Rer Furlabba (Esa) flocks graze on the plateau at certain seasons. Good camping-ground on the banks of Ellan torrent. Water is plentiful, but of doubtful quality.

* More information is required.

12

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [31v] (67/76)

46

ROUTE NO. IV—*contd.*
JIBOUTI TO HARRAR—*contd.*

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	Stage.	Total.			
GEYL-MAHADDI ...	10 4	93 4			For three miles a fair track over stony ground. Then the path enters a gorge between trap rock cliffs, and after 2½ miles of very bad going over trap rock boulders, it climbs to the top of the Dolosbo plateau. Here the going is very bad amongst loose trap boulders for a mile. Then there is a steep and narrow pass down to the Geyl Mahaddi sandy torrent. The wells are a little higher up; water good and abundant. Camping ground near a hill called So Madu. The Esa Madoba and Wheel Mosa generally pasture their flocks here. The path could be made practicable for wheeled transport only after several days' delay and much labour; water is obtainable in the Dolosbo gorge.
EYL DAGGAGO ...	14 0	107 4			Path generally along-side or in centre of Geyl Mahaddi and Haggagane torrents. Good and abundant water at Biya-Dadadan, in the latter torrent. The path ascends by a very rocky way to a plateau covered with small black boulders, and then over a bush covered plain to Daggago, 4 miles. At Daggago good and abundant water; wheeled traffic would be delayed some hours.
BIYO KABOBA ...	7 0	114 4			Path over bush covered stony plain down to bed of Esa Kal torrent, then up amongst high red rocks commanding the path on both sides to a pass overlooking Biyo Kaboba fort. The way down to the sandy river bed is then easy. Wheeled traffic would be delayed two hours. The remainder of the route is taken from Captain Phillip's Compilation of Captain Swayne's and Captain Fullerton's routes.

Continued on page 47.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH BENGAL INFANTRY.' [32r] (68/76)

ROUTE No. IV—contd
JIBOUTI TO HARRAR—contd.

In which territory.	Names of places.	STAGE.		DISTANCE.		Water.	Road and soil.	Supplies.	REMARKS.
		Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.				
Esa—Ad So- MALIS.	Biyo-Koboba	7	0	114	4	Along the route numerous rivers and ravines, from which water is obtainable in the rains. At Biyo-Koboba water always obtainable from wells.	Pathway as shown in Captain Swayne's reconnaissance, sketch, 1893.	Nil.	Biyo-Koboba. Camping-ground among trees; either on east or west bank of river. Hills 300 feet high; water always obtainable. River Jigiga is 80 yards to 150 yards wide; banks three to 4 feet high; bottom sand and small stones, heavy rain about two hours floods the river to the depth of one foot in the centre, but in about six hours most of the water sinks into the sandy soil.
	Goh, from Swayne's reconnaissance, 1893.	10	6	125	2	No water on the route. Only a small pool of rain water at Goh, water would usually have to be carried for whole force from Biyo-Koboba to Dabass.	Track level and sandy plain. (Rivers and nullahs unbridged).	Nil.	The Biyo-Koboba fort which overlooks the passes leading from Zaila to Gidessa stands on a steep hillock by the side of the Biyo-Koboba nala which is fringed with high thorn trees. It is garrisoned by about 15 Abyssinian or Harrari soldiers armed with Remington rifles. Biyo-Koboba is an Abyssinian outpost.
	Dabass, from Swayne's reconnaissance, 1893.	17	3	142	5	No water on route except at Dolei-malle, a wide sandy wadi, and there only during the rains. At Sal-Assele at Dabass nala, water in the rains only at Sal-Assele near here, there is always water in permanent wells.	Level and plain, rivers and nullahs (unbridged).	Nil.	Goh open plain, but small hills commanding camping ground on east side, water-supply bad, country level, and sandy, covered with small bushes and trees; good pasturage for camels. Presenting no difficulties. There is nothing to retard the usual rate of marching. At 5 mile cross a pathway to Afloh pass. At 5 miles 2 furlongs road passes D'ale, distant about 5 furlongs to east where a camp might be made. At 8 miles 7 furlongs cross Ali Benin river.

32

ROUTE NO. IV—*contd.*
JIBOUTI TO HARRAR—*contd.*

In which territory.	Names of places.	Stages.		Distances.		Water.	Road and soil.	Supplies.	Remarks.
		Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.				
	Bosa	11	1	153	6	No water on route except in rainy season. At Bosa water in mla after in. Also some wells which contain water at all seasons.	Rough and stony, steep saddleback commences 43 miles, thence level and sandy soil up to Bosa mudais and rivers (unbridged).	Nil.	rate of marching; troops could move on both sides of the road. At 4 miles 6 furlongs passed Geyl Dabhal about 2 furlongs to east of the road where Swayne camped. At 10 miles 4 furlongs passed Dolei-nalis river, no water except in the rains. At 11 miles 4 furlongs passed Jibouti-kafila halting place, and then a place called Rolali.
	Gildessa	17	4	171	2	Obtainable on the route usual: by in river Garasleh. At Gildessa abundant all the year round.	Rough and stony, soil sandy.	Supplies obtainable.	48 Camping ground at Bosa, on gentle undulating ground; water scarce. After leaving Dabasa the track passes over a slightly rising country, very rough and stony. From Dabasa to 2 miles 6 furlongs 3 mla are crossed, which run into the Dabasa river to the west and from thence the ascent of a saddleback commences about 43 miles. It is steep and very bad in its ascent, and is not to be crossed until the evening. The track is very bad, and is not to be crossed until the evening. From the top of this saddleback the track crosses a level open plain; presenting no difficulties to Bosa. The saddleback mentioned above would retard the usual rate of marching 4 for Infantry and Cavalry for about 33 miles. At 9 miles at Gallan-leh pathway from Zala joins road. The town of Gildessa, which is in Abyssinian territory and is garrisoned by Abyssinians, consists of some hundreds of mat houses, with a few thatched ones. In the midst of the town is a stone zurliba some 60 yards square with walls 10 feet high having an opening 5 yards broad. There is an Abyssinian guard-house, on a round overlooking the two converging roads, from Harrar and from Abasa to Gildessa, on the west of this guard-house is the bed of the Tug Gildessa, along the side of which the track runs, there is running water in this river during the rains. Track passes along rough and stony country; bush and trees. At 4 miles the foot of

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [33r] (70/76)

mount Bur-salala is passed. At 7 miles 2 furlongs Garasi river; the descent to the river is steep but quite passable by field Artillery in its present condition. From Garasi the track is rough and stony but fairly level as far as Gildessa. The usual rate of marching would be retarded by 1/2. The ground on either side of the river is unsuitable for the movements of troops. At the crossing the river Garasi is about 20 yards wide banks 2 feet high. There is water in the river after rain. The northern bank is steep but a good ramp can be cut down to the waters edge; bottom sand and stones. On the north bank of river Garasi there is good open ground, where troops could be deployed to their order of march. At 15 miles 1 furlong river Gildessa about 100 yards wide at the entrance of the pass. Impassable for caravans during the rains. From this point the track passes up the bed of the river Gildessa to the west of the road.	Nil.	Track passes very rough and stony.	Obtainable all the year round in the river Gildessa, and on route from Shaik Serbar to Balawa.	6 181	9	Balawa, from Fullerton's Report.
A small village, with camping-ground; consisting of about 20 mud and brushwood huts, unsuited for defence, ground very rough, water good and abundant. For about 2 miles the track passes up the bed of the river Gildessa; the stream being continually crossed; bottom sand and stones; the marching being very difficult. The usual rate of track rises up a very steep bank, about 50 feet high, and passes along a very rough and stony country, all the village of Shaik Serbar is reached. At 5 miles passed Shaik Serbar consisting of about 20 mud and brushwood huts; unsuited for defence. From this village the route lies up the valley of the Gildessa river. It is rough and stony, and quite unfit for the movement of field Artillery up to Balawa.	Of all sorts in abundance.	Track is very steep and rough up to Egu, and thence to Harrar fairly easy-level ground.	Obtainable all along the route. Water abundant at Egu.	4 199	18	Harrar, from Fullerton's Report.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [33v] (71/76)

ROUTE No. IV—*concl'd.*
JIBOUTI TO HARRAR—*concl'd.*

In which territory.	Names of places.	Stage.		Distance.		Water.	Road and soil.	Supplies.	Remarks.
		Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.				
	Total miles	...	...	199	4				fairly easy-level ground; but a great deal in narrow cuttings. Troops could march on either side of the track. To Egn the rate of marching would be reduced 1/2; afterwards only slightly as far as Egn, the country is very rough and wooded, quite impassable for troops except Infantry in extended order. Afterwards to Harar grassy country gently undulating hills.

'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [34r] (72/76)

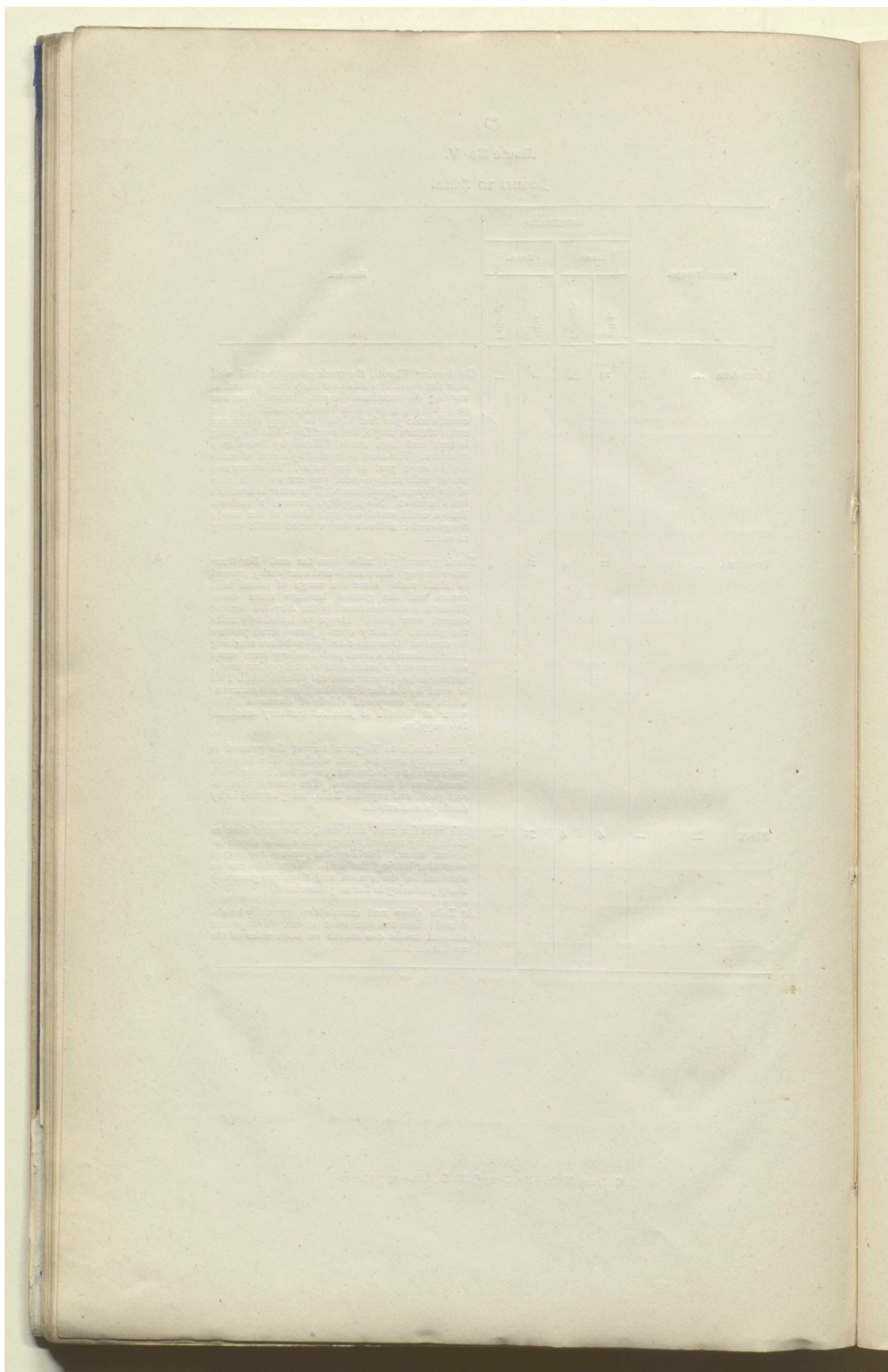
51

Route No. V.

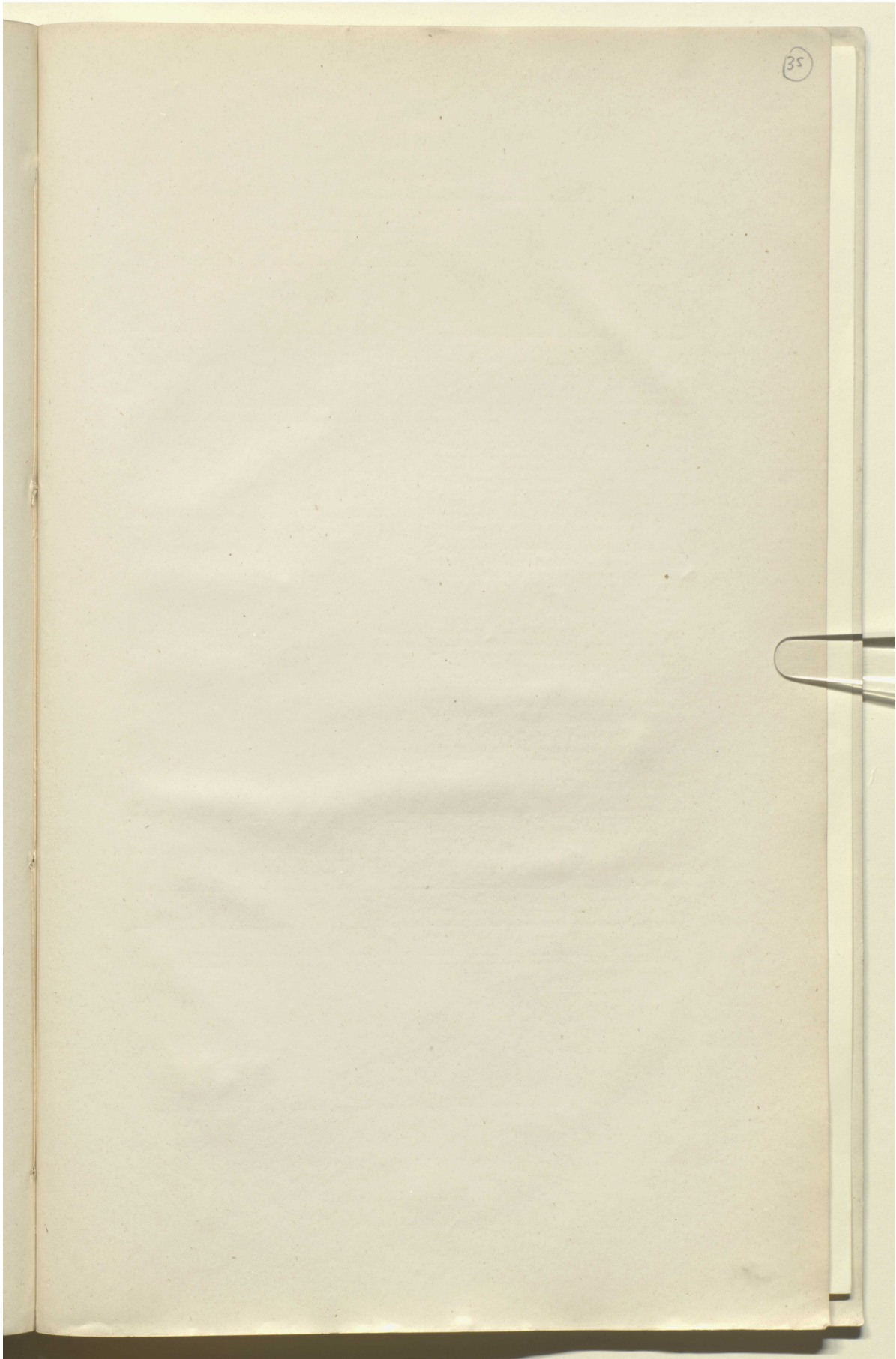
JIBOUTI TO ZAILA.

Names of stages.	DISTANCE.				REMARKS.
	STAGE.		TOTAL.		
	Miles.	Furlongs.	Miles.	Furlongs.	
LOYI-ADA ...	14	...	...	...	On leaving Jibouti, the track passes Amboli well near the town. It winds over fairly level ground at varying distance from the sea. Inland from one to three miles, are hills running parallel to the coast, about 300 feet high. In places there are strips of thorn jungle, and near Loyi-Ada the going is here and there made difficult by loose trap boulders. The coast is fronted by a reef of rocks dry in most part at low water. There are two sets of wells at Loyi-Ada, one set on each side of the French guard-house. The water is brackish but abundant. No supplies, firewood abundant. Troops could march on both sides of the road; the ground is difficult for wheeled traffic owing to rocks.
TOGOSHA ...	12	4	26	4	Track generally $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the sea. For three miles through thorn scrub and over rocky ground to Mulli rock. Here the range of inland hills ceases and the ground becomes more even. Water is sometimes found in the Aby-Ali torrent crossed near Mulli. Hence to Lahellu $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles the ground is fairly open. Jenass scrub pasture for camels. One and-a-half miles before reaching Lahellu there is a cross path leading from some salt heaps on the beach, next to an Egyptian house, to the Ambos Harrar road <i>via</i> Wurabili hill. This is used by the Rer Furlabba (Esa) salt caravans which are composed chiefly of donkeys. The water at Lahellu is plentiful but very brackish. No supplies. From Lahellu to Togosha torrent the ground is hummocky and the path winding. The Togosha wells are in a wide dry sandy river bed, fringed with broad, leaved Boli bushes. The water is plentiful and good, and supplies Zaila, being carried in by donkeys and camels.
ZAILA ...	4	4	31	...	Path over flat mud and sand, the ground close to Zaila being covered at high tide with a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet water. The Togosha gardens are passed soon after leaving the wells. Vegetables can be obtained in the season, and there are generally sheep pasturing in the neighbourhood. At Zaila sheep and camels can generally be obtained; firewood somewhat scarce. Troops and wheeled traffic can march on both sides of the road from Mulli.

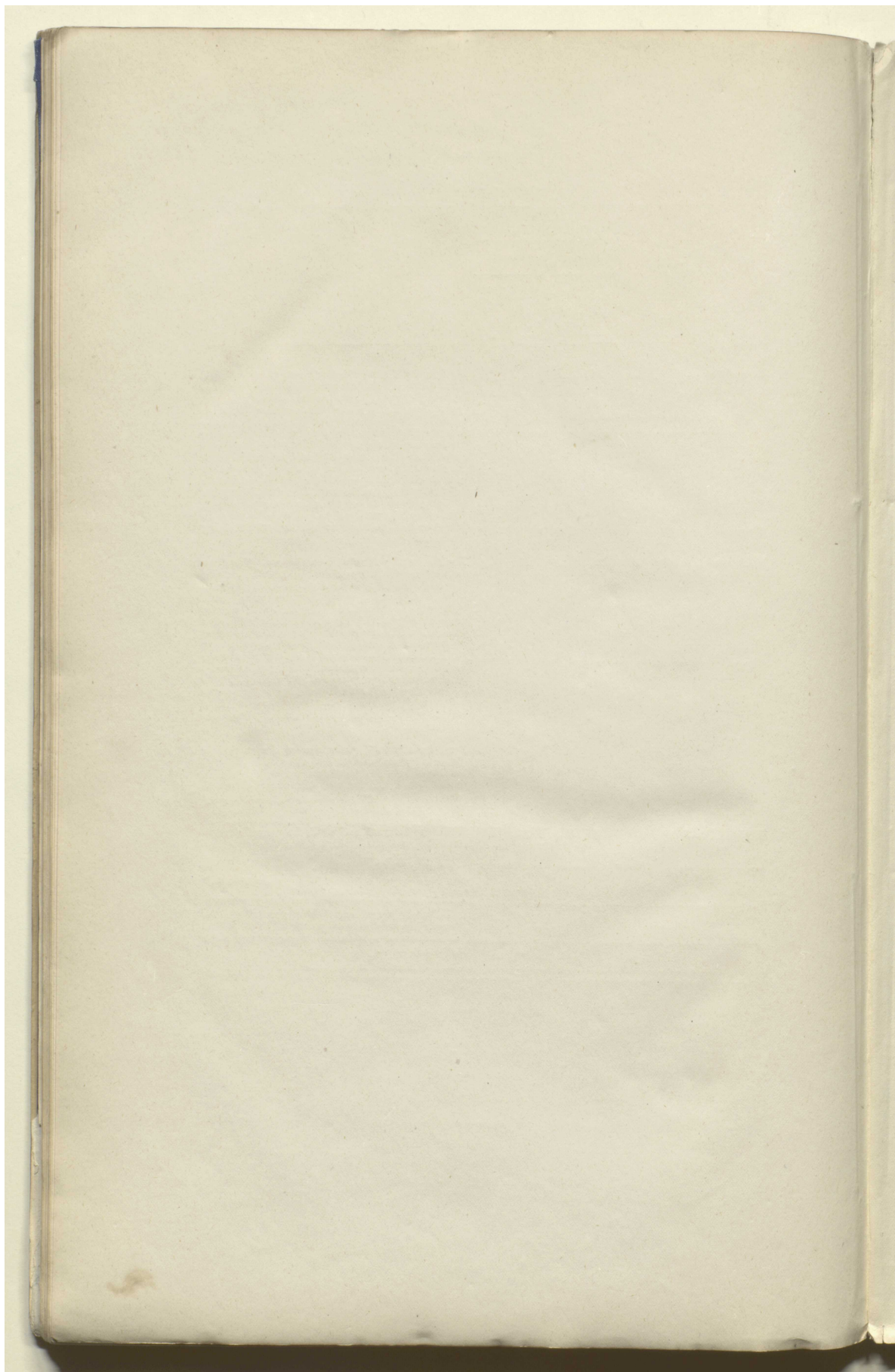
'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [34v] (73/76)



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [35r] (74/76)**



**'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [35v] (75/76)**



'FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN THE GULF OF ADEN. COMPILED BY CAPTAIN E.J.E SWAYNE, 16TH
BENGAL INFANTRY.' [back-i] (76/76)

