delegate delivered an oration in a mixture of French, Spanish and Italian, winding up with the phrase, “the ladies of Italy I embrace them all”; with appropriate gestures he gave this same sentiment on subsequent occasions and invariably brought down the house. “One touch of nature makes the whole world kind,” as the poet has it, or should have it, if he did not.

**MENÜ.**

**PRANZO AI DELEGATI UFFICIALI ESTERI DELL' II CONGRESSO INTERNAZIONALE DI MEDICINA E FARMACIA MILITARE.**

**Lista delle Vivande.**

Pasta Reale in Brodo Sublime.
Pesce Adriatico Bollito - Salsa Majonese.
Medaglioni di Prosciutto in Bella Vista.
Pollardine Arrosto alla Romana.
Insalata dell'Aventino.
Bombà Napoletana. Dolce dei Cesari.
Frutta di Sicilia. Caffè - Liquori.

**Vini:**

Bianco dei Casteli, Chianti Rosso,
Spumante Cinzano Secco.

Castello dei Cesari,
Roma, 28 Maggio, 1923.

*(To be continued.)*

**TRAVEL.**

**FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.**

**By Colonel S. F. Clark.**

*Army Medical Service (R.P.)*

III

The great world of our boyhood has become very small now. The fascinating, mysterious blank in the centre of the map of Africa, with its dotted lines marking the possible course of possible rivers, has given place to a complete chart, and the iron horse now runs to time-table where Livingstone and Stanley traversed virgin ground. The white man has been even to the poles and to Thibet, and though this shrinkage of the globe has robbed travel of much of its former glamour, yet it still has a charm, no matter how well beaten the track that we follow may be.

One of the last parts of Africa to be explored was Somaliland, and in the scramble for territory in that continent England, France and Italy each established a sphere of influence there. The British portion begins almost due south of Perim, and extends eastwards for 400 miles, forming the southern border of the Gulf of Aden. It does not reach Cape Guardafui, which the Italians possess, and its depth varies from eighty to
over 200 miles. I was stationed at Aden in 1891-93, and so heard a good deal about this country, and even landed on its shore. The interior is a vast plateau, of a fairly uniform height of about 3,000 feet, and optimists at Aden would at times babble of a future in which they saw sanatoria in these uplands. The rainfall is about eight inches per annum, and this enables a few of the coastal rivers to reach the sea occasionally, but most of them perish in the attempt, from lack of volume.

In my time Somaliland was a big game hunter's paradise, for it seemed to be full of lions, antelopes of all kinds, and other varieties of rifle-fodder, including elephants. Shooting parties used to arrive from England and India, and many officers of the Aden garrison spent leave on the other side of the Gulf, so it is probable that game is scarce by this time. Lions seemed to be as plentiful as rabbits in England, and every now and again a hunter got mauled fatally by one of them. I remember one officer returning with a claw mark on his leg, and scratches on his rifle—souvenirs of an encounter at very close quarters. The Somali shikarris had the reputation of standing by their employers in tight corners like this, and using a spare rifle, muzzle to hide. One young officer had a great story about being pursued by an infuriated elephant, which pulled him off his pony, but lost him by letting him fall into a ditch so full of long, high grass that the angry beast could not locate him to finish him off. The narrator held that his escape was due either to the elephant's trunk being slippery after eating wet grass, or else to his own body being slimy with the profuse perspiration of funk.

Two impecunious subalterns, whose expedition was on an extremely modest scale, had beginners' luck, for their total bag was one oryx, but its horns were of record length:

Intercourse between our nation and Somaliland began about a century ago—through the East India Company and the Government of India. The Khedive of Egypt formerly claimed jurisdiction over the whole coast as far as Cape Guardafui, and in 1874 he garrisoned certain posts in what is now British Somaliland, but ten years later he withdrew his troops on account of the activities of the Mahdi, so England occupied the abandoned coast ports in order to safeguard the approach to the Suez Canal. After that, various Protectorate treaties were signed, and the country was administered by Bombay via Aden up to 1898, when the Foreign Office took it over, but in 1905 it fell to the share of its present administration, the Colonial Office.

Many of us will remember how fighting occurred in 1901-03 between British Forces—mainly natives—and the "Mad Mullah," in which we suffered severe losses, but finally cleared the country and established military posts in the interior, in addition to those on the coast. In 1909, however, the same Mullah appeared again, and began raiding in the interior. The British Government considered that the effort that would be necessary to occupy the whole of the Hinterland effectively was not
worth while, and in 1910 it contented itself by holding the coast by means of the garrisons at Berbera, Bulhar, and Zaila. In my time these places were held by detachments of the Indian Infantry Regiment at Aden.

There are plenty of Somalis in Aden, but nothing will induce them to enter domestic service. They are a race of tall, thin men, with small heads, which are covered with "bobbed" hair of a strong "ginger" shade. This colour is due to the habit of plastering the head with lime, for the purpose, it is said, of killing the fauna that roam in the hair. Their full dress is the "tobe"—a large, white sheet, in which they envelop themselves—and enormous sandals of ox-hide. They usually carry a long thin stick, and are a talkative, quick-tempered, independent race, and fiercely resent any attempt to strike or ill-use them.

A ship of the Royal Indian Marine was always based on Aden, and in October, 1892, I got leave to sail in the "Mayo" on one of her periodical trips round the neighbourhood. The only other passengers were the Port officer and his wife who were having a holiday cruise like myself, and an artillery subaltern who was after big game. A night's run of 150 miles, due south, brought us to Berbera—the capital of British Somaliland—which possessed a lighthouse and several large buildings. The subaltern landed at once, but the other three of us waited for the cool of the evening, when the Port officer—a sailor—sailed us ashore in one of the ship's boats on a "sailor's wind." It seems that this is the name given to a breeze blowing at right angles to one's course, so that it is just as easy to sail back again as to get there. The sailor has such a contempt for a soldier at sea that he has uttered his last word in regard to ease of seamanship when he considers that even a soldier could manage a boat in a breeze like that. There is no lower depth of comparison to be plumbed.

We saw the British representative, who told us a thing that was gratifying to our national pride. He said that when a Britisher went on a shooting expedition into the interior, he left a sum of money at Berbera in charge of the speaker, and the Somalis whom the sportsman hired were quite ready to be paid by cheques on Berbera, even if they were discharged miles away; but all foreigners had to produce hard cash in payment of their followers.

We soon wandered out of the town and found some nomadic natives who kept ostriches, and who followed the meagre rains in search of food for their stock. They lived in small, bee-hived-shaped wigwams, which were made of grass mats spread on a wooden framework, and were very portable. A white woman was evidently a rarity in these parts, for the Port officer's wife caused a great furore among these wandering people, and was stared at and mobbed like Royalty in our own land.

The Somalis are said to agree with the character in the play, the "Mikado," who held that feminine beauty should not be judged by the face only, and who draw attention to the attractiveness of her left elbow;
for they are credited with appraising the comeliness of their maidens in direct ratio with the protuberance of their gluteal muscles.

We sailed at sunset, and about noon next day arrived at Perim—the well-known island at the southern end of the Red Sea. I suppose everybody in the Service knows the yarns about how we are said to have forestalled the French in the occupation of this place, and how an O.C. troops at Perim once signed innumerable blank forms and returns, and then went off to England on his own, while his faithful clerk completed the documents and sent them in as required.

If the first of these stories is true, the incident happened in 1857, when we annexed the island, but British troops occupied it in 1799-1801, on account of the presence of the French in Egypt.

Our ship entered the very good harbour on the south side of the island, and we were amused to see great stacks of coal at undefended Perim, as we knew that there was very little of this commodity at Aden, with its strong forts and its substantial garrison. It had been brought thousands of miles to a place where it would have to be set on fire to save it from capture, when another ninety-six miles would have given it the security of Aden. Still, in times of peace, the geographical position of Perim is undeniably more convenient for the coaling of mercantile ships than that of Aden.

We went on shore and noticed that there was plenty of coral about, and soon found that the going in the interior was very rough, over large rocks and stones. We visited two lighthouses and the quarters of the solitary British officer who commanded the fifty men of the native infantry detachment who formed the garrison. He was all packed up in hopes of getting leave home, and was evidently a high-class optimist, for a year afterwards I heard that he was still packed up, still waiting to get to England.

Early next morning we sailed for Zaila, a post near to the boundary of French Somaliland, and after a ten hours' run, and having passed many shoals and coral reefs, cast anchor there a long way from the shore. We landed and were interested to note that the houses were built of large, squared blocks of coral, and that the military detachment lived in a strong zareba. Here we took on board Captain Swayne and his brother, who spent the years from 1886 to 1892 making surveys of the country. They were credited with knowing more about Somaliland than anybody else, and one of them afterwards commanded the troops in the 1901-03 fighting, and was also at one time British Commissioner in the Protectorate. These two men could tell many a quaint story, and our ship returned to Berbera to land them there. We did not visit Bulhar, the third of our occupied ports on this coast, but it has only an open anchorage for shipping. We put our distinguished passengers ashore and then headed for Aden, which we reached at 7 a.m. on the 7th inst. I got into harness again at once, for I spent the next twenty-four hours in attendance on a case in the Staff Quarters.
Flotsam and Jetsam

IV.

It cannot be a common occurrence for officers travelling on duty to find themselves at Jeddah, shipmates with pilgrims for Mecca, but I had this unusual experience in 1903. In that year I was tour-expired in Hong-Kong, and was directed to return to England in the Blue Funnel ship "Antenor," in charge of an officer and two men who were, shall we say, eccentric. The mail steamers refused to have them, but the cargo boat was not so particular, and the arrangement suited me as it meant a free passage for my wife and young son. We had a deck cabin forward, the invalid officer had one nearer the stern, while the two men and the conducting party were accommodated mostly up the forecastle way. They were a motley collection of all ranks and arms of the service, ranging from an artillery sergeant-major to a gunner who was being sent home for discharge as worthless and incorrigible—the result of an unslakable thirst. As this man arrived on the ship in a penniless condition, he gave no trouble until the last lap of the voyage, while the others were decent, steady, time-expired N.C.O.s and men, and included an R.A.M.C. corporal as special attendant on the officer.

After glancing at the cabin we did a hurried re-pack on the deck, to reduce the number of packages to go into it—an operation which I had foreseen long before—and on January 21 we steamed off for Singapore, which was duly reached without any "fire or other unusual occurrence" happening. We stayed there for nearly a week, taking in tobacco, and one of my batch kindly insisted on putting us up in his bungalow. This was the one station in the world that I had always dreaded, and my luck was in when I probably just missed it for Hong-Kong. I found it laid down in King's Regulations that the Officer Commanding troops on a ship must report himself at all garrisons touched at, so it was with a subdued feeling of importance that I presented myself at Headquarters and was received by the General Officer Commanding. The only visible result was the appearance of a "red cap" at the wharf that evening.

After all the tobacco was on board, most of the remaining space was filled with Moslems of both sexes who were bound for Mecca. Some of the women were of the veiled class, and they vanished at once somewhere into the bowels of the ship, and were seen no more until they emerged at Jeddah. The remainder bivouacked about the decks and were a never-ending source of interest to us. Many had brought coops of chickens with them for food, and before decapitation it was their custom to pluck all the feathers off an inch or so of the neck of the doomed bird to give the knife free play. It reminded us of the toilette for the guillotine that one reads of. One day a prepared victim got away, and ran along the top of the awnings pursued by a young native armed with a blade quite eighteen inches long. When it saw that escape was hopeless, the intelligent bird scored off
its owners by plunging into the sea and so depriving them of the meal, which was doubtless partaken of by a shark instead.

Our next port was Penang and, as this was my birthplace, I was naturally intensely interested in seeking out the house that I was born in and places that I remembered. We stayed here for two days, but malaria kept me on board the second day, on which the number of our pilgrims—170—was completed.

We were the last pilgrim ship of the season, and there was a prolonged counting of heads by shore officials, who finally declared that there was one passenger in excess of the number allowed to be carried. A luckless oldish individual was fixed upon as the odd man out, and he was ordered on shore, but as he refused to go the boatswain lifted him up, bore him down the gangway ladder, threw him bodily into a handy native boat, and shied his luggage after him. The man then burst into tears, and anybody who can realize his feelings will sympathize with him. The journey to Mecca had doubtless been the lode star of his life for many years, during which he had scraped and saved to pay the cost, and we can imagine his feeling of exultation when he found himself actually on board the ship that was going to that portal of paradise. How his heart must have broken then, when he was ignominiously flung back into a cold world, with his castles in the air falling around him in ruins.

We steamed from here without a stop until we cast anchor at Jeddah, and it was a mystery to me why a fine ship with a valuable cargo was sent to such a hair-raising place. As we approached the land coral reefs appeared everywhere. They lay in rows like long walls parallel with the shore, as far as the eye could reach, with several wrecks upon them, while other reefs were scattered about all over the place, some of them above the water and some a few feet below it. What struck me as curious and opposed to one's preconceived ideas, was the fact that the water over the submerged reefs was not white but looked muddy. There was a fearsome collection of these muddy-looking patches all around, great and small, and I got a bad shock when the captain showed me the chart of the way in, especially as it indicated one reef, apparently right in the channel, which was named after a sister ship that had once struck it. At this moment the fact that my baggage was not insured caused me an acute feeling of remorse, and since then I have never gone to sea with unprotected effects.

A small Turkish war ship was anchored between the shore and the main reef wall, and we were told that she had lain there so long without ever raising her anchor, that the reefs now enclosed her completely and shut her off from ever getting to the open again. As everything movable on board had probably been sold by the captain, and as some pay for all hands, including the dead, doubtless came along occasionally, and as no questions were ever asked concerning cruises, gun practice, or awkward things like that, it is quite probable that contentment reigned on board.

Just when I was wondering if it was time to look up some life-belts, a boat reached us, and an Arab therein announced himself as the pilot. As
we had come from plague-infected Hong-Kong, the local port orders forbade him, or anybody else, to come on board, but, as soon as the boat was made fast, our new friend slipped up and made his way to the bridge. His boat had a good mast, and to hoodwink any watchers on shore, one of its crew took up his position at the masthead and pretended to be conning the ship from there. When we got as close in as the real pilot dared to go without fear of detection, he returned to his boat by a devious route, taking cover as much as possible behind ventilators, passengers, etc., and then relieved his double at the top of the mast and carried on his duties. We presently cast anchor and transferred our pilgrims to shore boats which came out to receive them. The veiled women emerged from their seclusion, and an astonishing amount of luggage was put out. Several large trunks seemed to be full of water—presumably for the overland journey which now faced the pilgrims—but they leaked woefully in the slings of the derricks: in fact the water streamed out of them, so that they very soon must have been as dry as America is alleged to be.

My recollections of Jeddah are dim, as I took no notes, but it seems to me to have looked like any other Eastern port—buildings along the shore, mosques, sand and glare. It was a race between us and the sun as to who got out first, but with the help of the pilot we cleared all the dangers—including a submerged rock whose exact locality was said to be uncertain—just before darkness fell. I suppose it was easy to the pilot, but how our big ship got out of that circle of reefs has ever been a marvel to me.

Our next stop was at Suez, where we lay well away from the shore while a disinfecting lighter came alongside and fumigated all the crew and their effects. The passengers, my lot, were lined up, and had their pulses felt by a French doctor—suppressed amusement being apparent when he took hold of the invalids, but they did not give themselves away. No chance of going ashore here or at Port Said, where we coaled; and then we were off for our next port, Amsterdam.

Although our ship was in every respect a British one, she was on the Dutch register and flew Dutch colours—for reasons apparent to shipping people—and our cargo of tobacco was consigned to Holland. Off the coast of Portugal and in the Bay of Biscay we encountered as severe a gale as I ever care to meet on the waters. The seas were tremendous, and to a landsman appeared to be genuinely “mountains high,” with abyssmal troughs between the waves. Our upper deck cabin had one of the trumpet-mouthed nautical ventilators on its roof, hardly below the level of the bridge, and on one night of the gale a rush of sea water came down it and flooded the cabin over a foot deep. I had to get up, rescue all the boots, etc., that were floating about and bale the water out. We were driven off our course towards France and passed one or two great liners outward bound that were clawing their way out to escape destruction on the northern coast of Spain.

The gale eventually blew itself out, and we reached Ymuiden safely,
where we found a ship canal cut right through to Amsterdam on the Zuyder Zee. We passed right along it and spent a week at the last-named city, unloading our cargo. As the Boer war had not been long over, I thought it would be interesting to both the citizens of Amsterdam and to ourselves to take my men for a walk through the town in uniform, but the captain did not encourage the idea, so those who had mufti used it, and the sailors rigged out those who hadn’t any. It was difficult to get into the picture galleries as my son was always too young to be admitted, and though I raised his age by a couple of years successively at each one as I tumbled to the game, it was of no use as the doorkeepers did the same thing in regard to the minimum age necessary to gain entrance.

The only one of the escort to whom I refused shore leave was the worthless and incorrigible gunner, but as our ship lay alongside the wharf for her whole length he slipped off by night by some channel other than the gangway, in clothes borrowed from one of the crew. He had made some money on the voyage by doing washing and meant to give his chronic thirst a treat for as long as his coin lasted. I did not bother about him until it was getting time for our departure, when I talked of going to the British Consul to get him to obtain the good offices of the police to find my man, but the R.A.M.C. corporal said that he knew where he was, so he was told to go and fetch him. Next morning my friend was in his bunk as if he had never left it, but his earnings had gone to the last penny and he looked very washed out. I had him up at orderly room but was puzzled how to punish him. A fine could not be collected, he had no pay to be stopped, cells or confinement to barracks were out of the question, so I told him that, as his absence had put extra duty on better men than himself, he must be on practically permanent sentry duty over the invalids until we reached England, but he thereupon spiked my guns by informing me that he had already arranged to do this. I felt that there was no more to be said.

We had a fog in the Channel, missed the tide at Gravesend, where I handed over the officer, disembarked everybody else at Tilbury on March 12, and took the other two invalids to Netley, where I was hospitably entertained and put up for the night.

Fifteen years afterwards the officer I had landed and myself appeared before the same medical board. He did not seem to recognize me and I said nothing to him, but the odds against such a meeting taking place must be long ones.