

TELLS OF KING MENELIK

W. H. Ellis Gives Description of Visit to Abyssinia's King.

African Monarch Prepared to Welcome Consul Skinner and Americans Generally.

William H. Ellis, the first American to visit King Menelik of Abyssinia at his court, returned to this country yesterday on the steamship Majestic with glowing accounts of the African country, and of the great wealth within its borders. Mr. Ellis passed Consul Skinner, who is on a Government mission to King Menelik, on Nov. 23 while the Consul had still about 570 miles to go to reach the capital of the country. Mr. Skinner was at the time in the first Abyssinian town beyond the end of the railroad, called Dira-Doura, and organizing his caravan of forty-two camels, thirty mules, and provisions for his entire party. Each marine who is with the Consul was provided with a mule. All the men were in the best of health.

Mr. Ellis said last night that he was sorry that the Consul's party had taken the desert route instead of the one overland because, going through the desert, the men had to go for ten days at a time without water, and the conditions were not favorable for a healthy march.

While Mr. Ellis was with the King he told of a mission which would soon reach the capital of Abyssinia under the American flag, and that it was coming to arrange a treaty which would help trade and was not coming to try to get land. The King was overjoyed, and said: "I will welcome them in God's love. That is what I long for—connection with a nation that is not looking to get some of my territory."

Referring to the criticisms of the policy of this country in sending a guard of United States marines with Consul Skinner, Mr. Ellis said: "It would have meant disgrace for this Government and failure if they had been sent in any other way. Every European nation that has sent a mission into Abyssinia has sent at least 100 soldiers along with it, a full suite, and in most cases a band. They also send from ten to twenty thousand dollars worth of presents. It is a custom of the country which has held since the times of the Queen of Sheba when she visited Solomon."

The presents which Mr. Ellis carried with him were four times as great in value as those sent by the Government, and he received in return presents of far greater value than those which he gave.

Mr. Ellis was interested in the development of the negro years ago, and started a cotton farm in Mexico with negroes as laborers. For a time the farm succeeded, but suddenly met an unfortunate end. He then turned his attention to Africa as a place to help the black race, and finally decided to get in touch with King Menelik, and started enterprises in Abyssinia to help the negro and at the same time help himself. For many years he studied the country, and gained a knowledge of the language. He became acquainted with the Crown Prince, and some time ago received an invitation from the King to visit the country and assist Menelik and his people.

Mr. Ellis continued:

"I was the guest of King Menelik from the time I crossed his frontier, on Oct. 16. In my party were my nephew, Carlos Eliseo Starns; my secretary, Capt. Bunto Silvan, and two servants, besides my bodyguard. Everything was done for our comfort, and a palace was set apart in which we were to reside during our stay. I met the King at his court, and received me on that occasion alone. When we met again it was at a feast arranged for me, at which 7,000 chiefs and freemen ate raw meat, but at which I was provided with a regular American dinner.

"The feast was served in a great hall, in which the King's seat was divided from the rest by curtains so that none could see him eat. Suddenly all of the people rose, and I, too, stood up. I asked why they left their seats, and was told that the King was washing his hands and that it was a custom of the country for all of the guests to rise while he performed this function.

"At the dinner a drink called titch was served. It is made from cider and red pepper and ferments like beer. Pipes run all through the building carrying the liquor, and when one wishes a drink he goes to one of the numerous taps and draws his liquor.

"The hall was decorated with the beautiful works taken from the temple of the Queen of Sheba. During the dinner a court jester made remarks in which the only word I could catch was 'American,' at which all of the chiefs applauded loudly. After the King had washed his hands the curtain was drawn aside and I was introduced to all of the chiefs by the King. I was asked to make a speech, and said in part, 'As our American motto is, America for Americans, Monroe Doctrine, so I hope your motto will soon be "Africa for Africans, Menelik Doctrine, and Europe for Europeans."

"The King caught me by the hand, and with tears in his eyes asked me to repeat. After the feast we went to the palace, where the King asked me to tell him about the greatest men America has produced. I told him that Washington saved his country from the English, Lincoln set the black man free and united the country, and Roosevelt is making a hoop about the country to keep it united.

"Brave men," commented the King, "and I admire brave men. All Kings as your Roosevelt ought to be brave men. The King ought always to be a fighter lest the devil come and steal his sheep." I presented the King with a picture of the President at San Juan, and another of the black troops at the battle of Santiago. The King said he had heard of Andrew Carnegie and his gifts for the education of the black man. "I ask God to bless and protect such brave men as he," said the King, and he then asked for a photograph, but as I had none I promised to send him one as soon as I should arrive here.

"The King spoke to me at length on his fight for independence, and said: 'Abyssinia will always be independent, but we will welcome all nations who will help us develop the country in Christianity and civilization, especially you Americans who are born in independence.'

"Abyssinia is the richest country on the earth in gold, silver, copper, iron, rubies, and I understand diamonds. There are great quantities of coal within two days of the capital, but nothing has yet been developed.

"The field of American trade in Abyssinia is practically unlimited. There is a great deal of American manufactured stuff used there, in fact the Abyssinian has discarded his leather clothes, and now stands robed in American cotton goods, but all of it passes through three or four hands, and finally reaches the Abyssinian at about four times the real value.

"The country is just as safe for a foreigner as Broadway is. It is policy to carry a gun and to let the natives see it, but one never has any occasion to use it. The climate there is similar to that of Switzerland, the land going all the way from desert to high mountains. The soil is the richest on the earth, and experiments which have been made with it show that all things will grow well there."

Mr. Ellis brings a personal letter, which he will show to President Roosevelt, written by the King, a translation of which reads:

He has conquered, the Lion of the Tribe of Judaea, Menelik II., King of Kings, Emperor of Ethiopia.

To William H. Ellis:
Peace be with you.

As in love and friendship you have come from the far America to visit me, and my Kingdom, and how earnestly you have told me of how all nations ought to live in love, peace, and independence, to which I agree.

And—of the greatness, grandness and prosperity of your country; and how it loves Christianity and independence. For all this truth, I and all my chiefs and subjects thank you.

So often as you and all Americans come to visit me and my country we will accept you in love: our aim is one—Christianity and independence.

And now may God bless you and your country and bring you safe in health and peace to your home. And also soon return you to meet me again.

Done at Addis Ababa, this the 7th (17th) day of November 1896. (1903.) in the year of our salvation.

CAMILLE WEIDENFELD LOSES.

Appellate Division of Supreme Court Confirms Dismissal of Actions Against Stock Exchange Officials.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, sitting in Brooklyn, has decided adversely to Camille Weidenfeld, the broker, who was suspended by the Board of Governors of the Stock Exchange some time ago. Mr. Weidenfeld brought an action for reinstatement, and another action against

the Secretary of the Board of Governors for \$100,000 damages for libel.

Both of these actions were dismissed at trial term. Mr. Weidenfeld appealed, and the Appellate Division has sustained the court below.

AGREEMENTS WITH UNIONS.

Employers in Building Trades Able to Arrange Terms at Beginning of Year for First Time.

For the first time since yearly agreements between unions and employers in the building trades were initiated, about 50,000 workmen will go to work to-day under trade agreements beginning Jan. 1 instead of May 1, which up to now began the industrial year. This part of the plan of the Building Trades Employers' Association was kept in the background until it could be announced that a definite start had been made in introducing the new system.

The reason for this change is the uncertainty contractors and architects had in previous years in basing their estimates on the prevailing rate of wages if they were made before May 1.

The general arbitration board of the Building Trades Employers' Association had not received the returns from all the trades, but it was known that contracts for at least a year with the following skilled trades go into effect to-day.

Sheet Metal Workers' Union, wages \$4 a day.

Metal Lathers' Union (agreement to be signed this week), wages \$4 a day.

Hoisting Engineers' Union, wages \$5 a day.

Electrical Workers' Union, wages \$4 to \$4.50 a day; agreement to expire Jan. 14, 1905.

New York Housemiths' Union, wages \$4.50 a day.

Amalgamated Woodworkers, wages \$3 a day.

Pipe and Boiler Coverers' Union, wages \$4 a day.

Plumbers' Union, wages \$4.50 a day.

Steamfitters' Union, wages \$4.50 a day; agreement expiring Aug. 1, 1906.

Steamfitters' Helpers' Union, wages \$2.65 a day (agreement expiring Aug. 1, 1906).

The agreements of the bricklayers at \$5.20 a day; the plasterers, \$5 a day, and the marble industry, \$5 a day, expire May 1, 1904. The agreement of the elevator constructors, \$4.25 a day, expires April 1, 1904, and the agreement with the tile layers, \$5 a day, expires July 1, 1904. Under the arbitration agreement, however, there can be no strikes, and the wages for these trades to rule after May 1 have been practically fixed.

LATEST CUSTOMS RULINGS.

Classification of Enamel White and French Chalk Determined—

Other Decisions.

General Appraiser I. D. Fischer yesterday handed down a decision sustaining a protest by E. Aspinall and others of New York on the classification of eighteen importations of "enamel white." The Collector assessed it at 35 per cent. as a varnish. The importers' claim was that it was a "pigment ground in oil" and dutiable at 1 1/4 cents a pound.

Mr. Fischer also sustained a protest by George W. McNear of San Francisco on ground "French chalk," which was assessed at 1 cent a pound as chalk. The claim was for 20 per cent. as an unenumerated manufactured article. The claim was sustained on the ground that the so-called "French chalk" is a hydrated silicate of magnesia, while the chalk of commerce is a native soft carbonate of lime.

A third decision of Mr. Fischer partially sustained a protest by L. D. Bloch & Co. of New York on the classification of miniature beer steins, which were assessed at 60 per cent. as earthenware. Entry was claimed for those without covers as toys at 35 per cent. and for those with covers at 45 per cent. as manufactured articles in chief value of metal. The claim on the steins with covers was sustained.

Judge Henderson M. Somerville sustained a protest by A. Cuneo and others of New York against the assessment of 30 per cent. duty on orange and lemon boxes made from wood of American origin from Palermo, Messina, Sorrento, Catania, and Carrini.

TRADE CONDITIONS.

General trade conditions are reviewed by Bradstreet's as follows:

Clearance sales by retailers and jobbers have furnished about all the activity noted in distributive trade in a week usually quiet, and devoted largely to stock taking and inventories. Holiday business closed with a rush and a volume of trade equal in most cases to the best heretofore recorded. Cold weather has aided the distribution of provisions and seasonable goods.

Liquidation on the late advance has been a check to further strength in wheat and discouraging to export trade, but small supplies, lighter than expected receipts, tales of crop damage in Russia and Argentina, a smaller than expected total wheat crop estimate by the Government, and, above and beyond all, war talk and reported heavy buying of flour by Japan in Minneapolis, prevent any real weakness. Corn has been strongly held, the Government report indicating 2,244,000,000 bushels, compared with 2,250,000,000 bushels indicated by Bradstreet's on Oct. 10, being a source of strength. Provisions have been higher on light receipts of hogs and cattle and reported heavy foreign buying at the West for the Orient.

Cold weather helped prices of country produce, and, alone of the speculatively dealt-in commodities, coffee strengthened on continued good buying and bullish crop advices.

High prices of raw material cloud the goods market, and while the mills are generally busy, the "at value" nature of the sales for forward delivery checks new business. Stocks of goods are small, and held down to low limits. Wool is steady and a fair business is in sight. Woolen goods remain in good shape.

Wheat, including flour, exports for the week ending Dec. 31 aggregate 2,015,236 bushels, against 2,335,608 bushels last week, 3,334,206 bushels this week last year, 4,818,471 bushels in 1901, and 3,914,301 bushels in 1900. For twenty-six weeks of the cereal year they aggregate 86,123,708 bushels, against 129,055,227 bushels in 1902, 145,221,135 bushels in 1901, and 93,894,987 bushels in 1900. Corn exports for the week aggregate 925,085 bushels, against 816,054 bushels last week, 2,537,542 bushels a year ago, 270,236 bushels in 1901, and 4,470,521 bushels in 1900. For twenty-six weeks of the present cereal year they aggregate 23,640,507 bushels, against 10,602,437 bushels in 1902, 19,326,533 bushels in 1901, and 65,240,308 bushels in 1900.

Business failures for the five days ending with Dec. 30 number 209, against 243 last week, 202 in the like week in 1902, 268 in 1901, 299 in 1900, and 237 in 1899.

IMPORTS OF DRY GOODS.

Imports of dry goods at the Port of New York for the week were valued at \$2,741,743, as against \$2,038,656 for the previous week and \$3,347,698 for the corresponding week last year. The value of the dry goods marketed was \$2,671,998, as against \$2,038,542 for the previous week and \$3,091,789 in the corresponding week last year.

Merchandise Values Advanced.

Heavy advances of values were announced yesterday by the United States General Appraisers on several importations. Among the heaviest were those by General Appraiser Howell on 500 dozen mother of pearl rosaries entered at 1.50 francs and advanced to 2.25 francs a dozen. Two hundred dozen entered at 2.50 francs were advanced to 3.50 francs. The exporter was Mansour Bethlehem. General Appraiser Lunt advanced 175 kilos of tomato paste from Natale Genora, Palermo, from .40 to .70 lire per kilo.

The Bovic Brings Kronland's Freight.

All of the freight carried by the steamship Kronland at the time she lost her rudder at sea and had to put into Queenstown was brought here yesterday on the White Star Line steamship Bovic, which arrived from Liverpool and Queenstown. The Kronland is now in dry dock at Queenstown and will be put on her regular run between here and Antwerp as soon as her rudder is replaced.