

## IN FAR AWAY ETHIOPIA

By Francisco Carballo\*

THE daily papers are full of news regarding the war going on between the Italians and the Ethiopians in Ethiopia, and perhaps you are anxious to know more about this country and the causes of the war.

By referring to the map of Africa in your geography book, you will find that Ethiopia, or Abyssinia as it is still named on old maps, is in the northeastern part of the continent. Its area is more than thrice as large as that of the Philippines, but its population is estimated at twelve million only.

The country is in the tropics but its climate is tempered by its mountains and plateaus. The land is rich in natural resources consisting of minerals; such as, gold, iron, coal, oil, and potash, and water power which are little or less developed. In the cultivated valleys sugar cane, cotton, coffee, and rubber are produced, and on the cooler highlands grain, fruit, tobacco, and potatoes are raised. Cattle graze on the highland slopes. Kafa, a province in Ethiopia, is said to be the home of the coffee plant and there it still grows wild in abundance. It found its way to the different parts of the world through Arab merchants and travelers who were among the early consumers of coffee. The chief exports are coffee, beeswax, hides, and skins. Cotton cloth and salt are the leading imports.

The people are a mixture of whites and blacks. Seventy dialects are spoken in the country, but Amharic is the official language. The ruling people, who number about five million, have been Coptic Christians since 330 A. D. The remaining seven million are Moslems and pagans. Their emperor, Haile Selassie, claims descent from Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, who visited King Solomon of Palestine whose wis-



dom and wealth were known far and near. Besides his name, which means "Power of the Trinity," he also bears other titles; as, Negus Negusti or King of Kings, Conquering Lion of Juda, and The Elect of God.

Education is not general and the masses of the inhabitants are illiterate and superstitious. Recent visitors to Ethiopia have observed that slavery still exists there although she was recognized as a member of the League of Nations on her enacting an anti-slave trade law.

The capital, Addis Ababa, which means New Flower, is connected with Djibouti in French Somaliland on the Gulf of Aden by 784 kilometers of railroad built and administered by the French. Outside of the capital there are practically no roads and people go about on difficult trails and dangerous caravan routes.

But Ethiopia has been invaded by Italy, sad to say, they are both Christian and members of the League of Nations. "What are they fighting for?" we ask.

Some of the reasons given by Italy are as follows:

1. She wants to avenge her defeat by the Ethiopians at Aduwa in the war of 1896.
2. She wants to get even with the Ethiopians for alleged insults committed against Italian citizens.

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3. She wants to acquire additional territory for her surplus population.
4. She wants to develop the resources of the country for commercial reasons.
5. She wants to civilize the Ethiopians and abolish slavery.

Haile Selassie, speaking for Ethiopia on the other hand, says that—

1. She is determined to maintain the freedom of her people and will not stand for Italian incursions into her territory, cost what it may.
2. She wants to have a seaport either on the Red Sea or on the Indian Ocean to facilitate her commercial relations with the outside world. She is hemmed in on the east by Eritrea, French-, British-, and Italian Somaliland, which formerly formed a part of Ethiopia.

The League has tried to prevent Italy from invading Ethiopia by calling her attention to provisions of the covenant regarding self-determination and manner of settling disputes between member nations but Mussolini is obstinate and he has invaded the

country without even declaring war formally. And although the league has agreed on sanctions against Italy she cannot be dissuaded from her well-planned conquest. These sanctions are arrangements whereby the contracting nations agree not to sell Italy anything or provide her any means which may aid her in pushing the war. According to the papers the Italians with their superior war machinery and with the help of Askaris and Ethiopian deserters have already occupied Aduwa, Adigrat, Aksum, and Makale in northern Ethiopia and are strengthening their position for an offensive towards Gondar near Lake Tsana, the source of the Nile so important to the British. In the south Walwal and Gorraheh have already been taken. The Ethiopians, however, despite their lack of a well-disciplined army and modern implements of war are offering stiff resistance.

War is a terrible thing as it causes great loss of life and property, but as long as selfishness cannot be curbed among nations, the strong will always prey upon the weak. The whole idea, of course, is against the laws of humanity and civilization. Let us hope that the League of Nations will finally succeed in ending the Italo-Ethiopian war to the satisfaction of the nations concerned and for the interest of world peace.

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