

you if I converse with some of them out of curiosity." "By no means," replied Adelan; "as much as you please; but don't let them know where they can find you at Sennaar, or they will be in your house from morning till night, will eat up all your victuals, and then, in return, will cut your throat, if they can meet you upon your journey."

'I returned home to Sennaar, very well pleased with my reception at Aira. I had not seen, since I left Gondar, a man so open and frank in his manners, and who spoke, without disguise, what apparently he had in his heart.

'A few days after I had a message from the palace. I found the king sitting alone, apparently much chagrined, and in ill-humour. He asked me in a very peevish manner, "If I was not yet gone?" To which I answered, "Your majesty knows that it is impossible for me to go a step from Sennaar without assistance from you." He again asked me, in the same tone as before, "How I could think of coming that way?" I said, "Nobody imagined in Abyssinia, but that he was able to give a stranger safe conduct through his own dominions." He made no reply, but nodded a sign for me to depart; which I immediately did, and so finished this short, but disagreeable, interview.

'About four o'clock that same afternoon I was again sent for to the palace, when the king told me that several of his wives were ill, and desired that I would give them my advice, which I promised to do without difficulty, as all acquaintance with the fair sex had hitherto been much to my advantage. I must confess, however, that calling these the fair sex is not preserving a precision in terms. I was admitted into a large square apartment, very ill-lighted, in which were about fifty women, all perfectly black, without any covering but a very narrow piece of cotton rag about their waists. While I was musing whether or not these all might be queens, or whether there was any queen among them, one of them took me by the hand and led me rudely enough into another apartment. This was much better lighted than the first. Upon a large bench, or sofa, covered with blue Surat cloth, sat three persons clothed from the neck to the feet with blue cotton shirts.