

The Sultan, Rabah Zobeir, Africa's Greatest Champion

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his will. Invading his stronghold in the Sahara with his picked horsemen, less than a thousand in number, he sternly offered him the alternative of an alliance or a war to the death. Senussi chose the former and a marriage was made between his daughter, Hadjia, and Fad-el-Allah, Rabah's son and heir. To test Senussi's faith and to alienate him from the French, Rabah ordered Senussi to massacre a French expedition led by Commander Crampel. This he did, turning over the captured arms and ammunition to Rabah.

As to the other ruler this was a black man, the famous Mahdi, who, with his able lieutenant, Osman Digna, captured Khartoum, set the Sudan ablaze, and threatened to sweep Christianity and the European out of Northeast Africa. Five years before, the Mahdi, wishing probably to be supreme in the Sudan, had sent for Rabah on the pretext of negotiating an alliance with him, but it is said, really to put him to death. Rabah started for the Mahdi's territory, but learning of the other's supposed intentions, turned back. On the other hand, the alleged plot, it is said, was really a scheme of the English to keep the two black leaders from uniting.

With the influence of the Senussi behind him, Rabah decided to begin the building of his empire by attacking the Wadal kingdom. His strength was only a thousand horsemen, but superbly drilled, well-disciplined, inured to hardships, and uncontaminated by dissipation of any kind.



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each was worth ten of the enemy as will soon be seen. Rabah, at all times, avoided a large army with its consequent trouble of feeding. A small force of picked men, he knew by experience, was far better.

Rabah Rout the Wadal People

Attacking the Wadal, he swept through their vastly larger army like a thunderbolt. His next mark was Sultan Gourang of the Baghirmi. On the pretext that Gourang had welcomed the French, Rabah laid siege to his capital, Mainhaffa, captured it after five months siege, and took 30,000 slaves. Reorganizing Gourang's kingdom, he replaced him on the throne as his vassal.

After this, he attacked the warlike Sakara, defeated them, and annexed their land, then captured Kreich and Dar Banda.

His next prey, he audaciously decided, should be Bornu, with its army of 80,000.

The Bornuese, at this period (1893), were, as a writer describes them, fat and taciturn. Owners of a rich and fertile land, they loved ease; following a long period of peace their military qualities had atrophied. Nearly all the great commands in their army were in the hands of former captives, and most of their warriors were of the slave class. Politics and public affairs interested them little. Most of their wealth came from trade, their two largest cities, Kuka and Dikoa, having large markets and a great number of shops to which came hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of the adjoining regions of Africa.

Owned Collection of Watches

As to the Sultan, Hashem, with his four splendid palaces, he was quiet and easy-going preferring the company of his books, his favorite wives (of whom he had 400), and his prime minister. His hobby was watches, of which he had a remarkable collection, most of them gifts from rich merchants and visitors to his kingdom.

Between Sultan Hashem's territory and that of Rabah's lay that of Sultan Salah. Rabah, sending a rich present to Salah, offered to make an alliance with him. The latter, in good faith, came to meet him, but Rabah, seizing him, loaded him with chains, which threw such consternation among Salah's people that they quickly surrendered their capital, Leogane.

Hashem, seeing his danger, sent an army of 15,000 men against Rabah. The latter, attacking this force with 2,000 of his redoubtable cavalry, routed it, after a terrific three-hour battle, and captured its commander, Tahar. Another army sent against Rabah met the same fate. But weakened by his losses, Rabah retreated to the south to recruit his forces, returning with 9,000 men.

Decapitates Enemy Killer

Hashem was now for surrender, but his nephew, Kiara, opposing the idea, killed Hashem, and placing himself at the head of the army, went to meet Rabah. A great battle ensued, in which Rabah was repulsed. That iron ruler, furious at his first defeat, had all his generals brought before him and sentenced them to

one hundred lashes each, including his favorite son, Fad-el-Allah, after which he ordered them to attack the enemy. The Bornuese, not expecting an attack so soon, were utterly routed, and the forces of Rabah swept into Kuka, the capital. Kiara, captured, was given the alternative of mutilation or death. He bravely chose the latter, and his head was struck off on the spot.

Rabah's victories, together with his power over the Senussi, created a stir in England, France, Belgium and Italy, all of whom had territory adjoining Rabah's empire. France, with her troubles with Samory in West Africa, saw in Rabah a special danger, while the English were busy with the forces of Osman Digna in the Sudan. France sent an expedition under Commander Bretonnet against him, but meeting Bretonnet at Togbao in 1899, Rabah defeated him, killed Bretonnet, and captured all his arms and ammunition. Turning south, he defeated a German expedition in similar style, both victories increasing his prestige tremendously.

Had Infant Children Branded

Unable to reach him directly, the French incited the Baghirmi to rebel, and gave them arms. Rabah, learning of it, marched against his vassal Gourang, killed 3,000 of his men, captured his wives, and took all his portable property.

Rabah, now with a territory as large as all Western Europe, set himself to the task of its consolidation. As was said, he would leave the sultans who pleased him on their thrones, and the chiefs he trusted, in power. All new-born children, however, he caused to be marked on the cheek with "the sign of Rabah"—two parallel lines with a vertical one, like the letter H, turned on its side.

Bornu, he re-organized. In the place of the old feudal system he established a military dictatorship. He strengthened the army, re-built the towns, improved the commerce, and generally increased the wealth of the country.

The old city of Dikoa he remodelled. Colonel Gentil, a French commander, says of it: "This second city is really very beautiful. Reconstructed entirely by Rabah, who made it his capital, Dikoa, is without a doubt, one of the most elegant centers, as well as the most populous of Central Africa. The palaces of Rabah, Niebe, and Fad-el-Allah are especially distinguished by their grand appearance."

Of Rabah's palace he says: "With the carpets covering the floor, the seats, the rich cushions, and the bed with its costly coverings, the apartments had an air of distinction. I had the impression of being in some old manor of the Middle Ages."

"I brought from Dikoa the impression of something great, of an intensity of life, and a movement of population such as I had not seen before in Africa."

Continues to Defeat France

In the intervening years, Rabah continued to repulse the French, killing among others, the French commander De Behagie. France prepared another expedition against him to which Le Temps of Paris objected

editorially, saying: "It is necessary to remember that we are going to meet Rabah and not Rabah, us. He is in his own empire and is defending himself."

Another expedition, commanded by Colonel Gentil and composed largely of Senegalese sharpshooters, invaded Rabah's territory. Rabah fortified himself on a hill, cut away the trees and brush to allow the play of his field-pieces, and awaited the French. When both met in October, 1899, Rabah won a complete victory, although the Senegalese performed prodigies of valor. Colonel Gentil retreated into French territory, where he joined his forces with that of two other expeditions, Violet and Chanoine.

Rabah Foully Killed

Rabah now went into German territory, leaving the major portion of his army in Bornu. The French thought it a favorable moment to attack him, and getting permission from the chief, entered the territory in which Rabah was.

Both forces met at Kussuri, where Rabah had fortified himself on a hill. The French pitched thousands of shells into his fort. Rabah fought until his ammunition gave out, then he sallied out to give battle. A terrible carnage ensued. The French commander, Lamy, was killed. Rabah, badly wounded, withdrew into the bushes. A deserter from his army, fighting with the French, recognizing Rabah, shot him through the head, killed him, and cutting off his head, took it to Commander Gentil.

"This man," says Gentil, "whose bloody head was lying at my feet, was very brave and from the manner in which he had defended himself, deserved to have had his life spared."

When Gentil finally entered Bornu, he was full of admiration for the government that Rabah had instituted. "It shows me," he said, "that in the work of organization I am going to undertake, I will do well to be inspired by the methods of Rabah."

Was Brutal Disciplinarian

Rabah had the reputation of being very hard and austere. It is said that one day, seeing an amulet around the neck of one of his wives, who was asleep, he cut the thread, and opening the amulet, found an undecipherable inscription inside. Taking it to one of his learned men, he bade him read it. The latter, knowing that the woman was one of Rabah's favorite wives, replied flatteringly:

"Your majesty, it means good for both you and her." By this charm she holds your love."

Rabah replied wrathfully: "What do you mean that seeking to have power over me is good for me?" And he ordered both the learned man and his wife to be put to death.

Rabah was simply and solely a product of war. He lived in an environment in which only the toughest could survive. His early treatment was not likely to soften him either,

nor was the treachery of the English and Egyptian commanders in capturing his master, and in killing his master's son. He knew only too well of the fate that awaited him should he fall into the hands of any of his numerous enemies, black or white.

Rabah Lived Simply

Rabah lived and dressed simply. Dujarric, in the story of his life, describes him as "very tall, raw-boned and dry, endowed with herculean force and possessing all the characteristic traits of the great African conquerors; remarkable intelligence, great political ability, indomitable will, and a courage that stood all tests. . . . A born ruler of men, he held great sway over his soldiers and his people. His qualities as an organizer were especially revealed after his conquest of the Baghirmi. . . . Rabah can best be compared to one

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SUGGESTIONS TO THE HOME GARDENER

GROW GREENS AND SALADS

Greens and salads should form a part of the dietary of every family each day throughout the year. They are highly palatable, satisfy the appetite, and furnish the bulky foods which are so necessary. Most of all, they are filled with minerals, salts, and vitamins which are so essential for the blood, nerves, bones and teeth. Fortunately greens and salads are very easily grown, no matter whether they are the warm crops such as mustard and cress, or the cold crops such as endive and lettuce. Parsley, chard, spinach, kale and cabbage are all easy to grow.

Many of those who have not had gardens for years will have them this year. Many thousands of farm boys who have been living in the city are now back on the old homestead, and

probably several times that number of city men will see to it that at least a few seeds are planted in their particular bit of soil. Those who are not fortunate enough to be working full time, will find an opportunity during their spare hours to do more planting than they have done for a long time. Later on their tables will be enriched with fresh vegetables that they perhaps could not afford to have unless they had grown them.

OWN YOUR OWN GARDEN

Try having a garden this year—whether you live in the country, in a town, or a city. Of course, the size of the garden will vary, but you will be surprised at what you can grow even in a tiny plot of ground not over ten or twenty feet square. A bed of lettuce or parsley which may be

plucked for months may be grown in a few square feet of soil. As a matter of fact parsley beds are quite often covered with early snows so that the little garnish finds itself packed away in the coolest, freshest kind of a refrigerator imaginable. Many housewives get their day's supply of parsley by brushing aside the snow and plucking the fresh stalks.

If anyone in your home is not working six days a week, his or her spare time may well be put into a little garden. The corn, beans, peas, tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, beets, and other vegetables grown will go a long way toward making summer and autumn dinners appetizing and healthful.

By all means take advantage of whatever ground is available and grow a few tasty vegetables for your own family.