

The Route from Suakin to Berber

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THE ROUTE FROM SUAKIN TO BERBER.

THIS route, estimated by General Gordon during his rapid passage over it in 1874 as about 288 miles in length, and found by Major Prout in his careful reconnaissance in 1875 to be about 255 to 260 miles, is one presenting great and peculiar difficulties to the march over it of a large body of troops; especially between the months of March and November, when the heat is excessive, and when those troops may be required to deal, during the march, with hostile forces.

Starting at sea-level at Suakin, it ends at an altitude of about 1,240 feet on the Nile, at Berber, after having attained at one point an altitude of nearly 3,000 feet.

In its entire length it is practically, *for a large force*, a barren, treeless, waterless desert, but quite different for a small detachment of a few hundred men with their necessary animals. For a large force (say, 5,000 to 10,000 men) the water used by men and horses must in some manner be transported with them or in advance of them.

The wells and water-holes on the whole line may be quickly named and described, as follows: at about 2 miles from Suakin are the wells which furnish water to the town; and here a good supply for a large force may be had. The next water is at El Hundouk, about 9 miles out. These wells furnish partly sweet and partly brackish water, sufficient for about 250 men and 500 animals. At about 17 miles out are the wells of O-Taon, with capacity for, say, 250 men and their horses. In the valley of Sinkat, at about 23 miles, 200 men with 500 animals can usually be supplied by shallow water-holes, which are called the wells of Hambouk; and it is probable, that, by using care, this result might be doubled. Sinkat, nearly 1,000 feet above sea-level, was, in former times of peace and good government, used as a summer residence by the richer merchants of Suakin.

At about 40 miles from Suakin, the wells of Kissibil can furnish good water for a small party, say, a general officer with his staff and escort; and thence on, no water is found until Wady Haratree is reached, at about 64 miles out. Here 600 men and as many animals can drink. Eleven miles farther on, an equally good supply is found at the wells of Salalaat.

The next supply worth mentioning is the well of Abd-el-Hab, where perhaps two battalions might be supplied. This excellent well is $97\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Suakin. At El Ariab, about

118 miles from Suakin, there are three large wells, well constructed, and furnishing good water, in quantity large enough for two or three battalions, with a fair proportion of animals,—a strategic point which should be held by a permanent garrison if the road is to be used.

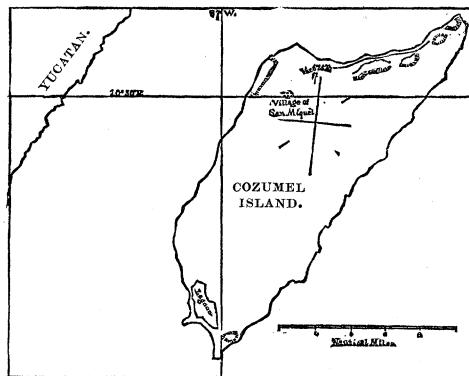
From El Ariab to O-Baek, a distance of nearly 60 miles, no water is found; and even at O-Baek the supply is very disappointing to thirsty marchers, since it is hardly sufficient for a battalion with its animals, and is often brackish. Thence on, the route is in blank desert until within six miles of Berber.

Thus it is seen that on the eastern half of the route there is scant supply of water for the advanced guard of a strong division, while on the western half there is practically no water until within six miles of Berber. Throughout the line, cannon and wagons can be drawn with little difficulty; but the eastern half passes frequently through narrow and tortuous defiles, which an active and intelligent enemy would render extremely dangerous to a marching force.

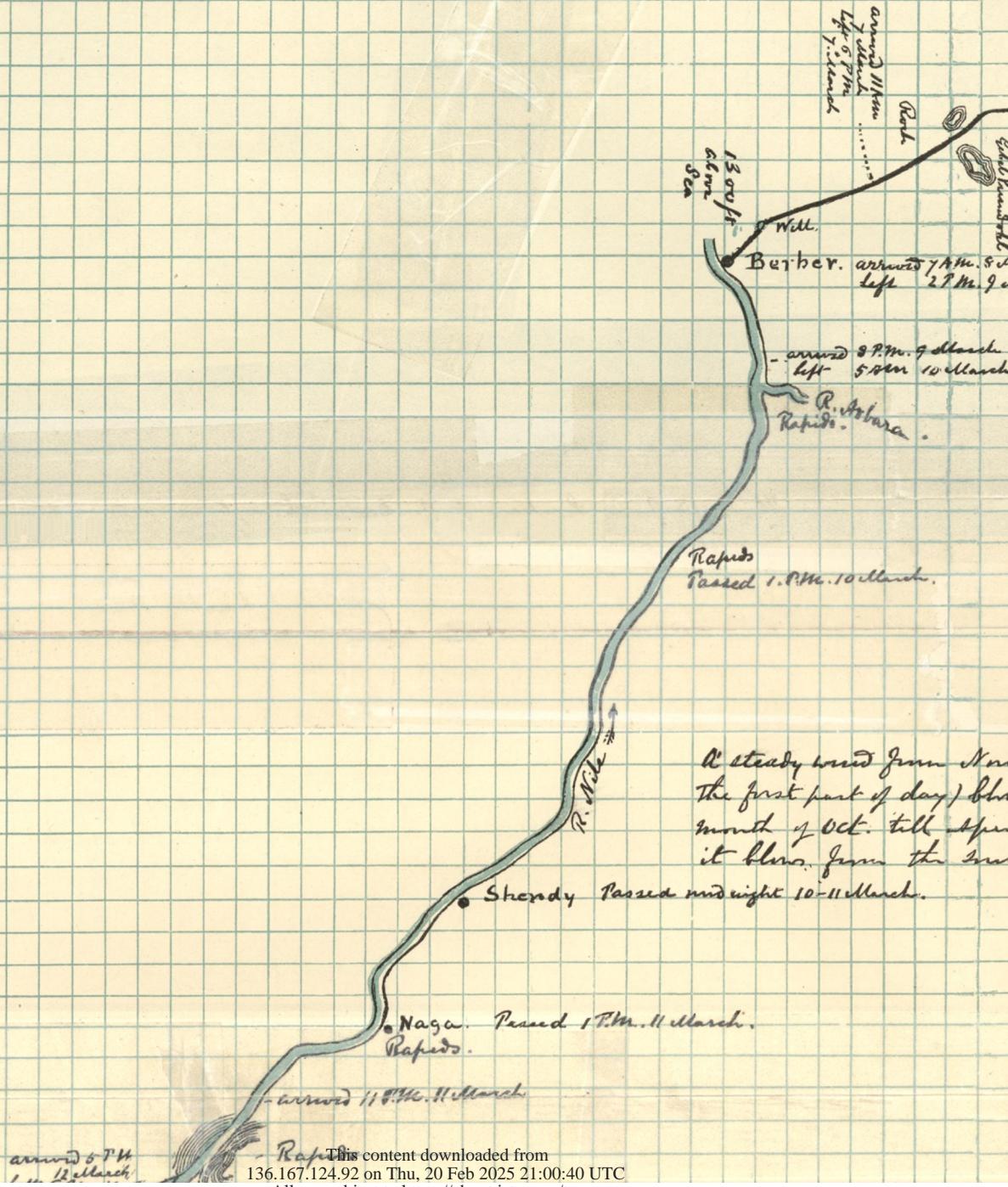
C. P. STONE.

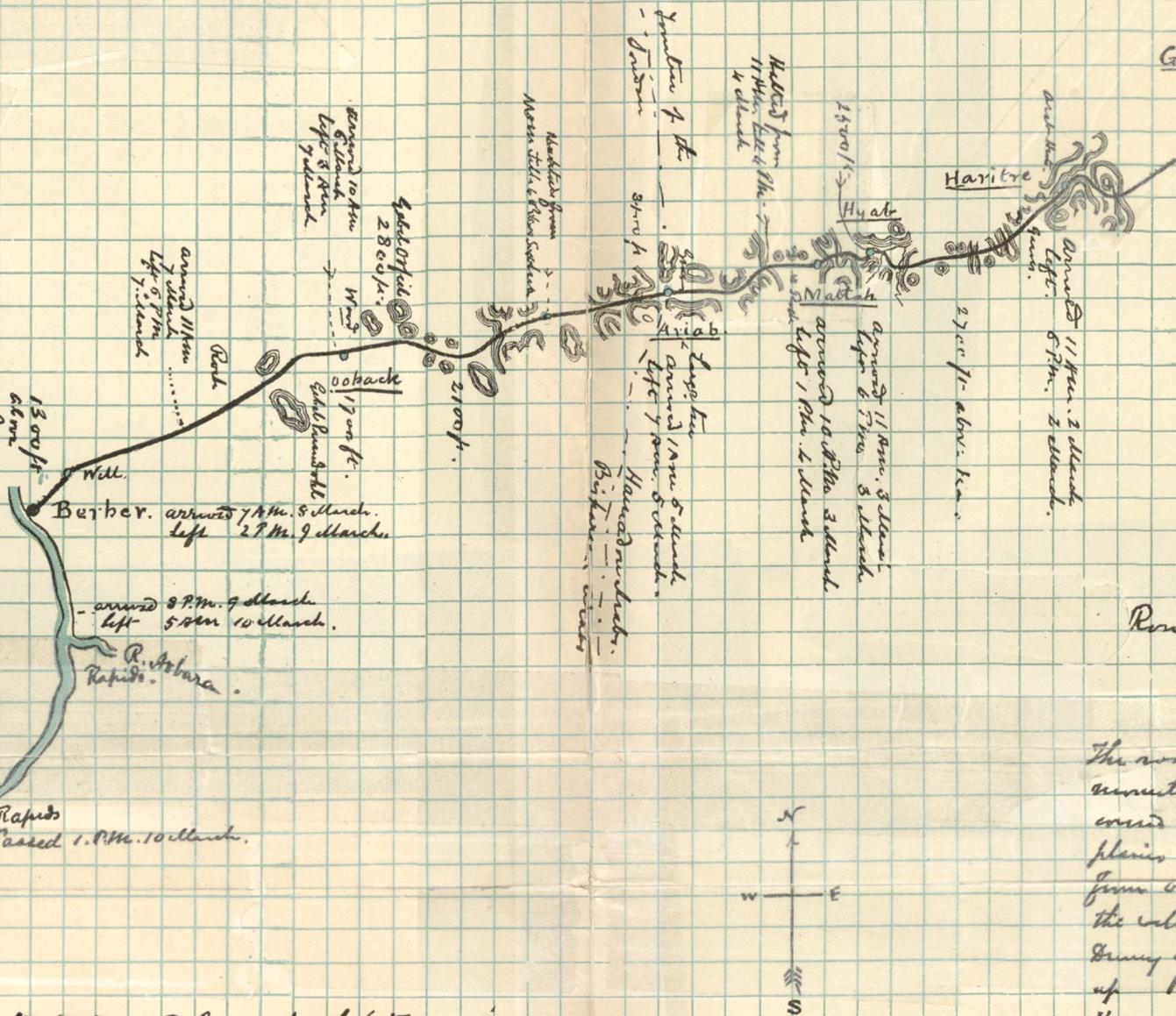
THE ISLAND OF COZUMEL.

DURING the night of Jan. 22 last, the U.S. fish-commission steamer Albatross was anchored off the northern end of the island of Cozumel, on the east coast of Yucatan, and on the 23d steamed along the western side of the island to an anchorage off the village of



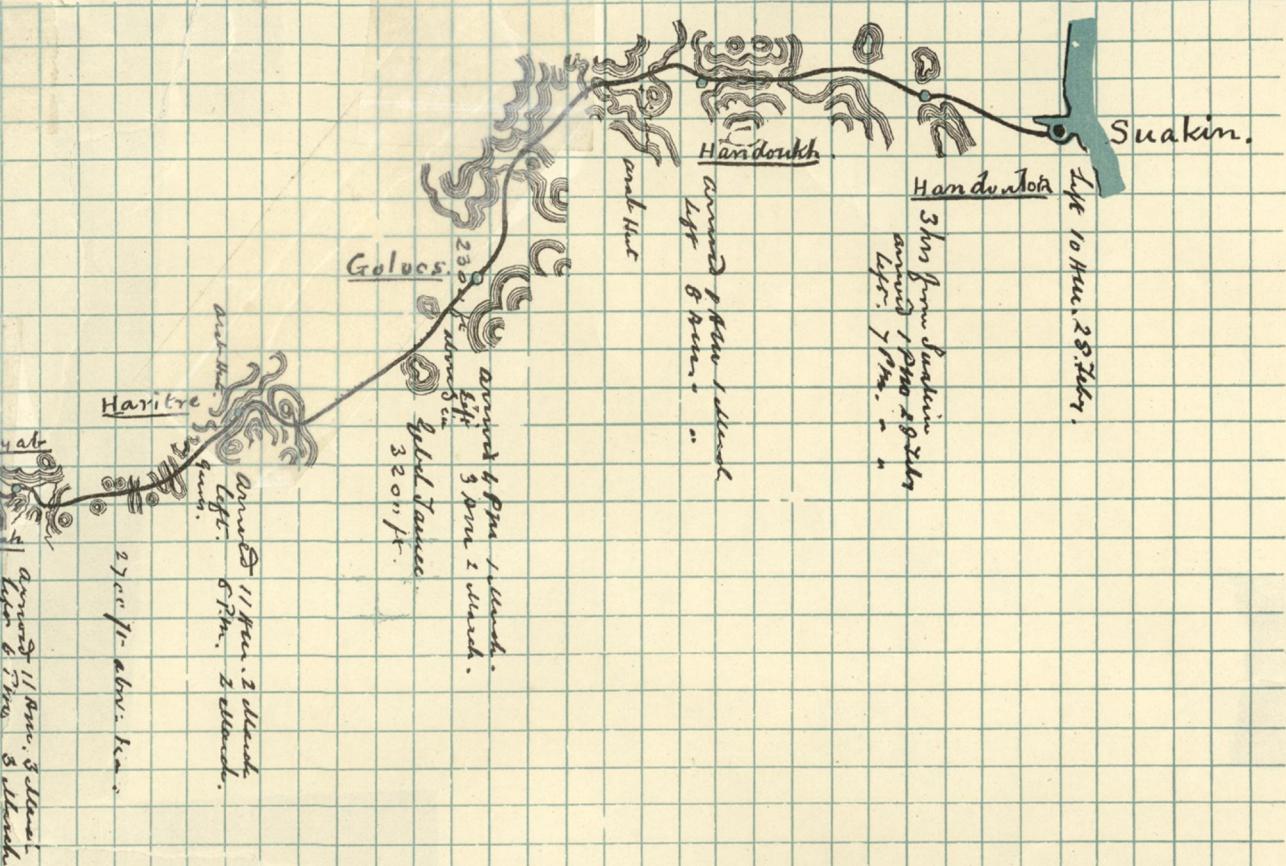
San Miguel, four miles from its north-west end. The naturalists went ashore next day in two divisions,—a shore party and a seining party, the latter aided by men from the ship. Both were remarkably successful, the birds collected





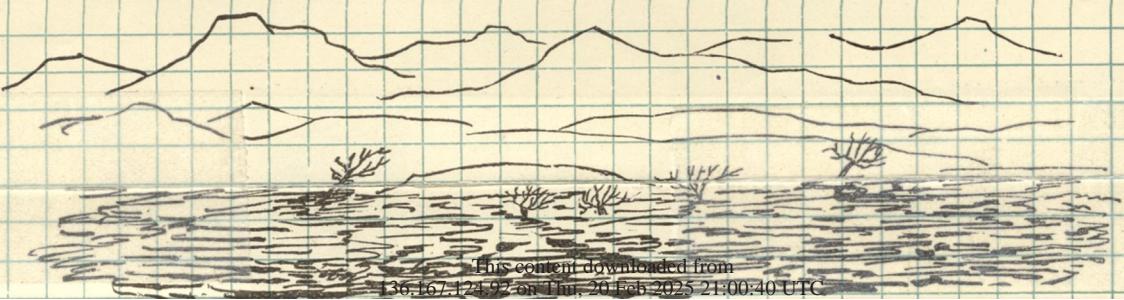
A steady wind from North (stronger in the first part of day) blows from the month of Oct. till April after which it blows from the south from May till Sept. and night 10-11 March.

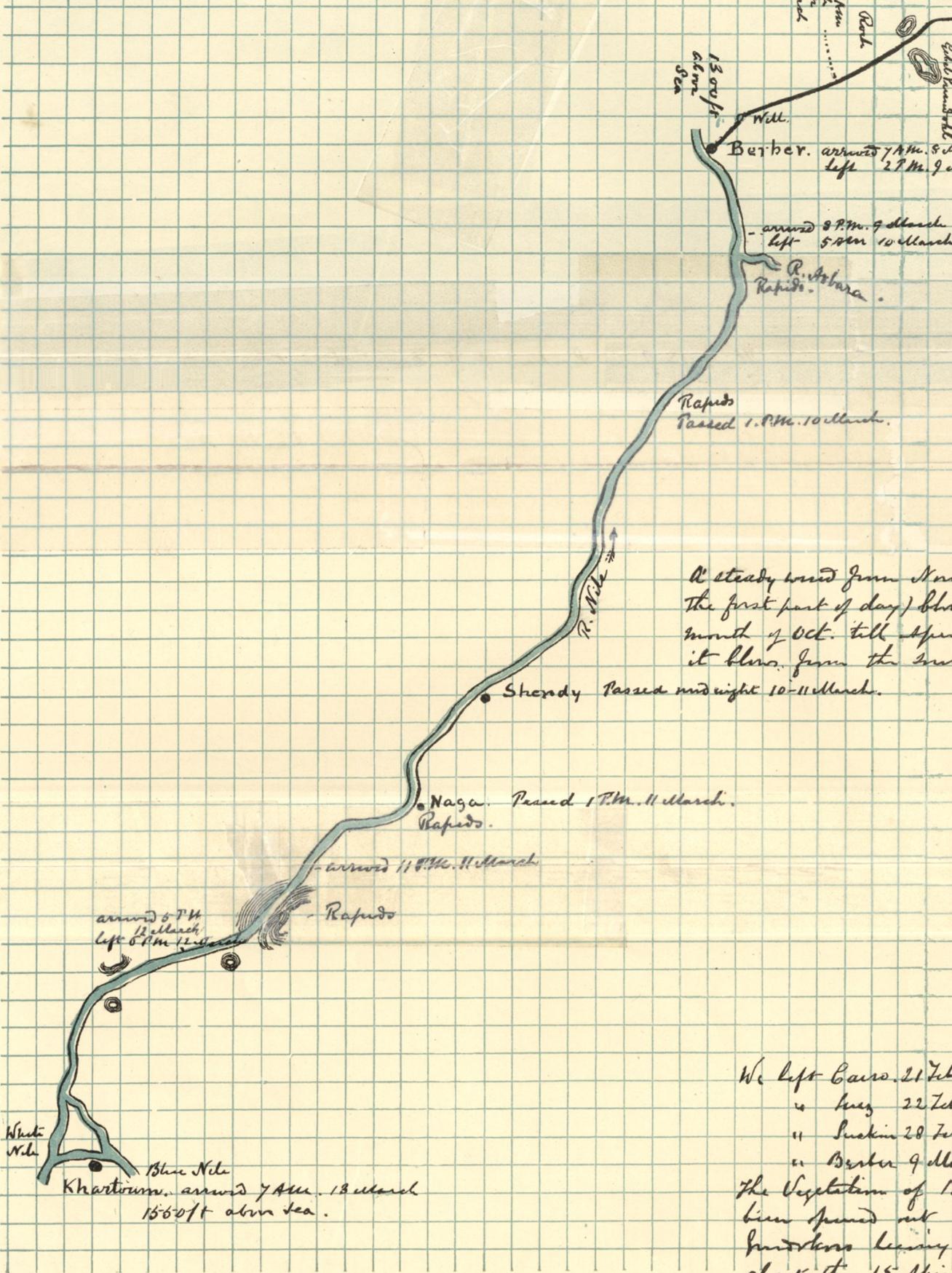
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Route from Gaukien to Khartoum
28 Feb to 13 March
Scale $\frac{1}{425000}$

The road from Lashkar to Bokhar is through an arid
uninhabited country, as far as Aresh it is sparsely
covered with dwarf trees of stunted growth. The wide
plains are partly sand, and partly black loam; the stone
from Aresh to Bokhar the plain is generally sandy.
The wells are more like cisterns in the bed of rivers
Druny Nari, being always full but they are soon silted
up. Price of Camel Hiss from Lashkar to Bokha $1\frac{1}{2}$ Rps..
Price of Boat from Bokha to Khetzoon 7 or 8 Rps. The
Nile rapid are dangerous to pass at night. Packages for
Camels ought to weigh about 150 or 120 lbs. The climate
is very dry, hot during day & cold at night.





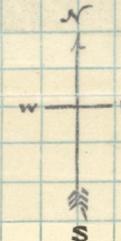
The scale of this map is about 11,325,000 or 21 miles to an inch.

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Rapids
passed 1 P.M. 10 March.

A steady wind from North (stronger in the first part of day) blows from the month of Oct. till April after which it blows from the south from May till Sept. and night 10-11 March.



A hand-drawn geological sketch on graph paper. The top part shows two irregular, wavy lines representing rock layers or profiles. The bottom part shows a large, roughly rectangular area filled with many short, horizontal lines, representing horizontal sedimentary structures like sandstone beds.

We left Cairo 21 Feb. arrived Suez 21 Feb
 " Isuz 22 Feb. " Suez 26 Feb
 " Suez 28 Feb. " Port Bellah
 " Port Bellah 9 March " Chertum 13 March

The vegetation of Bahri al Gazal having
 been spinned out we ought to be at
 Gondos lessing Kharatur on 22, March
 about the 15 April.

The distance by road from Stekin to Berba about 280 by road. Sheep to be bought en route.

MAP DRAWN BY GENERAL GORDON THIS CONTENT IS DOWNLOADED FROM
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Forward 11 P.M. 3 March
Arrived 6 P.M. 5 March
acc 11 above. Rem.

11 Mar. 2 Miles
6 P.M. 2 Miles.

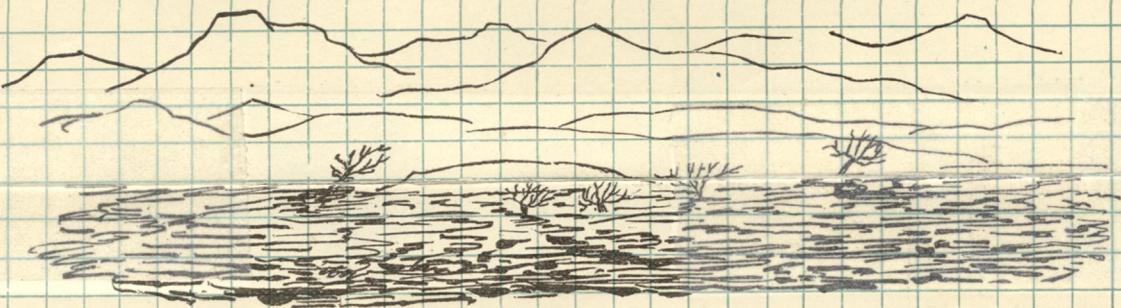
March.

Route from Suakin to Khartoum

28 Feb. to 13 March

Scale $\frac{1}{425000}$

The road from Suakin to Berber is through an arid mountainous country, as far as Asab it is sparsely covered with decaying trees of stunted growth. The wide plains are partly sand, and partly black loam. From Asab to Berber the plain is generally sandy. The wells are more like marshes in the bed of rivers. Dromy Nek, being always full low they are soon dried up. Price of Camel Hire from Suakin to Berber $1\frac{1}{2}$ Maf..
Price of Boat from Berber to Khartoum. 7 a & Naps. The Nile rapids are dangerous to pass at night. Packages for Camels ought to weigh about 150 or 120 lbs. The climate is very dry. hot during day & cold at night.



N.B. The worst part of journey between Suakin & Berber is the latter half, the wells being so far apart.

The stations are from Suakin 1. Handonba 3 hrs Wetone 1 3 hrs

2. Handonkh	10 hrs	"	2	8 hrs
3. Gulos	10 hrs	"	3	7 hrs
4. Hariture	10 hrs	"	4	7 hrs
5. Nyab	10 hrs	"	5	9 hrs
6. Mattah	8 hrs	"	6	3 hrs
7. Ariab	16 hrs	"	7	9 hrs
8. Ooback	24 hrs	"	8	28 hrs
9. Berber	24 hrs	"	9	32 hrs

The distance by road from Suakin to Berber about 288 miles by road. Sheep can be bought en route.

C.H.S.

SCIENCE, April 10, 1885.