and a weasel-like animal which hunts in packs. Ostriches are found in the open plains; the rivers swarm with crocodiles, but hippopotami are rare. Birds of prey are numerous and include eagles, vultures, kites, ravens and the carrion stork. Among game birds are three varieties of bustard, guinea fowl, partridges, sand grouse and wild geese. Snakes are common, an adder, a variegated rock snake and a black snake called *muss* being those most dreaded. Mosquitoes are rarely troublesome; gadflies, and a large spider *(hangeyu),* which spins a web resembling golden silk, are common, as are scorpions and centipedes. Termites rear sharp pointed "hills,” often over 20 ft. high. A species of lizard grows nearly 4 ft. long.

*Inhabitants.—*The Somali belong to the Eastern (Ethiopic) Hamitic family of tribes, of which the other chief members are the neighbouring Galla and Afar, the Abyssinian Agau and the Beja tribes between the Nubian Nile and the Red Sea. They have been identified with the people of Punt, who were known to the Egyptians of the early dynasties. The Somali, however, declare themselves to be of Arab origin, alleging their progenitor to have been a certain Sherīf Ishak b. Ahmad, who crossed from

Hadramut with forty followers about the 13th century. Other traditions trace their origin to the Himyaritic chiefs Sanhāj and Samamah, said to have been coeval with a King Afrikus, who is supposed to have conquered Africa about a.d. 400. These legends should perhaps be interpreted as pointing to a

series of Arab immigrations, the last two of which are referred to the 13th and 15th centuries. But these intruders seem to have been successively absorbed in the Somali stock; and the Arabs never succeeded in establishing permanent communities in this region. Their influence has been very slight even on the Somali language, whose structure and vocabulary are essentially Hamitic, with marked affinities to the Galla on the one hand and to the Dankali (Afar) on the other.

The present Somali peoples are possessed of no general type. They are not pure Hamites, and their physical characteristics vary considerably, showing signs of interbreeding with Galla, Afar, Arabs, Abyssinians, Bantus and Negroes. They are a