



Sudan Tales: Reminiscences of Wives in the Sudan Political Service, 1926-56

Rosemary Kenrick

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‘These recollections of some Sudan Political Service wives’, writes A.R. Walmsley in his foreword, ‘touch not only on the horrors but also on the compensations which made their experience so rewarding, above all the camaraderie of the Service and the sterling qualities of the Sudanese people. This is no ordinary history, but an absorbing account of everyday things in a world which has now disappeared where, for fifty years, labouring in extreme conditions, a tiny foreign élite could run a vast country in preparation for its independence.’

Reminiscences of British wives in Sudan between 1926-56 narrated in this collective work encompass the hectic, tragic, adventurous, and above all the comedy of women capable of enduring what cannot be cured. ‘Once, while waiting for my husband to appear for lunch at 2.30, I glanced across at our water jug. A very large rat was standing on its hind legs, freely lapping. On B.’s return I said, “I’m afraid I can’t stay married to anyone who has rats drinking his drinking water. I am leaving you.” B. replied, “How actually will you leave?” Lacking a camel or any other practical transport to the railhead five hundred miles away, that put a stop to the conversation.’

ROSEMARY KENRICK, wife of the former Assistant Adviser to the Governor-General ,on Constitutional and External Affairs, lived as a Sudan Political Service wife in Talodi (1945-6), Rashad (1946-9), Omdurman (1949-53), and Khartoum (1953-5).

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