



The Mission, The: Life, Reign and Character of Haile Selassie I

By Hans Wilhelm Locket

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Haile Salassie I was born with the qualities of a ruler - intelligence, energy and self-discipline - but had to wage a long dynastic struggle to obtain ascendancy. As Emperor he captured world attention first as the victim of Italian fascist oppression, and in the post-war years as an elder statesman of Africa and the movement of non-aligned states. In 1974 the age-old Christian empire of Ethiopia was overthrown in a revolution, and in the years since his fall and death, Haile Selassie has not fared well at the hands of commentators. The author, who for 20 years was head of the research division in the National Library of Ethiopia, offers a reassessment. He analyzes the early influences on the Emperor, the development of his character, and the part this played in his later successes and failures. While never fully secure in the seat of power, he fought to educate his people and modernize his state. On balance his career is seen as an enlightened and honourable one, contrary to legend, and his fall as a tragedy.

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