

The Congo and Coasts of Africa eBook

The Congo and Coasts of Africa by Richard Harding Davis

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Page 1

THE CONGO AND COASTS OF AFRICA

I

THE COASTERS

No matter how often one sets out, "for to admire, and for to see, for to behold this world so wide," he never quite gets over being surprised at the erratic manner in which "civilization" distributes itself; at the way it ignores one spot upon the earth's surface, and upon another, several thousand miles away, heaps its blessings and its tyrannies. Having settled in a place one might suppose the "influences of civilization" would first be felt by the people nearest that place. Instead of which, a number of men go forth in a ship and carry civilization as far away from that spot as the winds will bear them.

When a stone falls in a pool each part of each ripple is equally distant from the spot where the stone fell; but if the stone of civilization were to have fallen, for instance, into New Orleans, equally near to that spot we would find the people of New York City and the naked Indians of Yucatan. Civilization does not radiate, or diffuse. It leaps; and as to where it will next strike it is as independent as forked lightning. During hundreds of years it passed over the continent of Africa to settle only at its northern coast line and its most southern cape; and, to-day, it has given Cuba all of its benefits, and has left the equally beautiful island of Hayti, only fourteen hours away, sunk in fetish worship and brutal ignorance.

One of the places it has chosen to ignore is the West Coast of Africa. We are familiar with the Northern Coast and South Africa. We know all about Morocco and the picturesque Raisuli, Lord Cromer, and Sheppard's Hotel. The Kimberley Diamond Mines, the Boer War, Jameson's Raid, and Cecil Rhodes have made us know South Africa, and on the East Coast we supply Durban with buggies and farm wagons, furniture from Grand Rapids, and, although we have nothing against Durban, breakfast food and canned meats. We know Victoria Falls, because they have eclipsed our own Niagara Falls, and Zanzibar, farther up the Coast, is familiar through comic operas and rag-time. Of itself, the Cape to Cairo Railroad would make the East Coast known to us. But the West Coast still means that distant shore from whence the "first families" of Boston, Bristol and New Orleans exported slaves. Now, for our soap and our salad, the West Coast supplies palm oil and kernel oil, and for automobile tires, rubber. But still to it there cling the mystery, the hazard, the cruelty of those earlier times. It is not of palm oil and rubber one thinks when he reads on the ship's itinerary, "the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Bight of Benin, and Old Calabar."

One of the strange leaps made by civilization is from Southampton to Cape Town, and one of its strangest ironies is in its ignoring all the six thousand miles of coast line that lies between. Nowadays, in winter time, the English, flying from the damp cold of



London, go to Cape Town as unconcernedly as to the Riviera. They travel in great seagoing hotels, on which they play cricket, and dress for dinner. Of the damp, fever-driven coast line past which, in splendid ease, they are travelling, save for the tall peaks of Teneriffe and Cape Verde, they know nothing.

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When last Mrs. Davis and I made that voyage from Southampton, the decks were crowded chiefly with those English whose faces are familiar at the Savoy and the Ritz, and who, within an hour, had settled down to seventeen days of uninterrupted bridge, with, before them, the prospect on landing of the luxury of the Mount Nelson and the hospitalities of Government House. When, the other day, we again left Southampton, that former departure came back in strange contrast. It emphasized that this time we are not accompanying civilization on one of her flying leaps. Instead, now, we are going down to the sea in ships with the vortrekkers of civilization, those who are making the ways straight; who, in a few weeks, will be leaving us to lose themselves in great forests, who clear the paths of noisome jungles where the sun seldom penetrates, who sit in sun-baked "factories," as they call their trading houses, measuring life by steamer days, who preach the Gospel to the cannibals of the Congo, whose voices are the voices of those calling in the wilderness.

As our tender came alongside the *Bruxellesville* at Southampton, we saw at the winch Kroo boys of the Ivory Coast; leaning over the rail the Soeurs Blanches of the Congo, robed, although the cold was bitter and the decks black with soot-stained snow, all in white; missionaries with long beards, a bishop in a purple biretta, and innumerable Belgian officers shivering in their cloaks and wearing the blue ribbon and silver star that tells of three years of service along the Equator. This time our fellow passengers are no pleasure-seekers, no Cook's tourists sailing south to avoid a rigorous winter. They have squeezed the last minute out of their leave, and they are going back to the station, to the factory, to the mission, to the barracks. They call themselves "Coasters," and they inhabit a world all to themselves. In square miles, it is a very big world, but it is one of those places civilization has skipped.

Nearly every one of our passengers from Antwerp or Southampton knows that if he keeps his contract, and does not die, it will be three years before he again sees his home. So our departure was not enlivening, and, in the smoking-room, the exiles prepared us for lonely ports of call, for sickening heat, for swarming multitudes of blacks.

In consequence, when we passed Finisterre, Spain, which from New York seems almost a foreign country, was a near neighbor, a dear friend. And the Island of Teneriffe was an anticlimax. It was as though by a trick of the compass we had been sailing southwest and were entering the friendly harbor of Ponce or Havana.



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Santa Cruz, the port town of Teneriffe, like La Guayra, rises at the base of great hills. It is a smiling, bright-colored, red-roofed, typical Spanish town. The hills about it mount in innumerable terraces planted with fruits and vegetables, and from many of these houses on the hills, should the owner step hurriedly out of his front door, he would land upon the roof of his nearest neighbor. Back of this first chain of hills are broad farming lands and plateaus from which Barcelona and London are fed with the earliest and the most tender of potatoes that appear in England at the same time Bermuda potatoes are being printed in big letters on the bills of fare along Broadway. Santa Cruz itself supplies passing steamers with coal, and passengers with lace work and post cards; and to the English in search of sunshine, with a rival to Madeira. It should be a successful rival, for it is a charming place, and on the day we were there the thermometer was at 72 deg., and every one was complaining of the cruel severity of the winter. In Santa Cruz one who knows Spanish America has but to shut his eyes and imagine himself back in Santiago de Cuba or Caracas. There are the same charming plazas, the yellow churches and towered cathedral, the long iron-barred windows, glimpses through marble-paved halls of cool patios, the same open shops one finds in Obispo and O'Reilly Streets, the idle officers with smart uniforms and swinging swords in front of cafes killing time and digestion with sweet drinks, and over the garden walls great bunches of purple and scarlet flowers and sheltering palms. The show place in Santa Cruz is the church in which are stored the relics of the sea-fight in which, as a young man, Nelson lost his arm and England also lost two battleflags. As she is not often careless in that respect, it is a surprise to find, in this tiny tucked-away little island, what you will not see in any of the show places of the world. They tell in Santa Cruz that one night an English midddy, single-handed, recaptured the captured flags and carried them triumphantly to his battleship. He expected at the least a K.C.B., and when the flags, with a squad of British marines as a guard of honor, were solemnly replaced in the church, and the midddy himself was sent upon a tour of apology to the bishop, the governor, the commandant of the fortress, the alcalde, the collector of customs, and the captain of the port, he declared that monarchies were ungrateful. The other objects of interest in Teneriffe are camels, which in the interior of the island are common beasts of burden, and which appearing suddenly around a turn would frighten any automobile; and the fact that in Teneriffe the fashion in women's hats never changes. They are very funny, flat straw hats; like children's sailor hats. They need only "U.S.S. Iowa" on the band to be quite familiar. Their secret is that they are built to support baskets and buckets of water, and that concealed in each is a heavy pad.

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[Illustration: Mrs. Davis in a Borrowed "Hammock," the Local Means of Transport on the West Coast.]

After Teneriffe the destination of every one on board is as irrevocably fixed as though the ship were a government transport. We are all going to the West Coast or to the Congo. Should you wish to continue on to Cape Town along the South Coast, as they call the vast territory from Lagos to Cape Town, although there is an irregular, a very irregular, service to the Cape, you could as quickly reach it by going on to the Congo, returning all the way to Southampton, and again starting on the direct line south.

It is as though a line of steamers running down our coast to Florida would not continue on along the South Coast to New Orleans and Galveston, and as though no line of steamers came from New Orleans and Galveston to meet the steamers of the East Coast.

In consequence, the West Coast of Africa, cut off by lack of communication from the south, divorced from the north by the Desert of Sahara, lies in the steaming heat of the Equator to-day as it did a thousand years ago, in inaccessible, inhospitable isolation.

Two elements have helped to preserve this isolation: the fever that rises from its swamps and lagoons, and the surf that thunders upon the shore. In considering the stunted development of the West Coast, these two elements must be kept in mind—the sickness that strikes at sunset and by sunrise leaves the victim dead, and the monster waves that rush booming like cannon at the beach, churning the sandy bottom beneath, and hurling aside the great canoes as a man tosses a cigarette. The clerk who signs the three-year contract to work on the West Coast enlists against a greater chance of death than the soldier who enlists to fight only bullets; and every box, puncheon, or barrel that the trader sends in a canoe through the surf is insured against its never reaching, as the case may be, the shore or the ship's side.

The surf and the fever are the Minotaurs of the West Coast, and in the year there is not a day passes that they do not claim and receive their tribute in merchandise and human life. Said an old Coaster to me, pointing at the harbor of Grand Bassam: "I've seen just as much cargo lost overboard in that surf as I've seen shipped to Europe." One constantly wonders how the Coasters find it good enough. How, since 1550, when the Portuguese began trading, it has been possible to find men willing to fill the places of those who died. But, in spite of the early massacres by the natives, in spite of attacks by wild beasts, in spite of pirate raids, of desolating plagues and epidemics, of wars with other white men, of damp heat and sudden sickness, there were men who patiently rebuilt the forts and factories, fought the surf with great breakwaters, cleared breathing spaces in the jungle, and with the aid of quinine for themselves, and bad gin for the natives, have held their own. Except for the

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trade goods it never would be held. It is a country where the pay is cruelly inadequate, where but few horses, sheep, or cattle can exist, where the natives are unbelievably lazy and insolent, and where, while there is no society of congenial spirits, there is a superabundance of animal and insect pests. Still, so great are gold, ivory, and rubber, and so many are the men who will take big chances for little pay, that every foot of the West Coast is preempted. As the ship rolls along, for hours from the rail you see miles and miles of steaming yellow sand and misty swamp where as yet no white man has set his foot. But in the real estate office of Europe some Power claims the right to “protect” that swamp; some treaty is filed as a title-deed.

As the Powers finally arranged it, the map of the West Coast is like a mosaic, like the edge of a badly constructed patchwork quilt. In trading along the West Coast a man can find use for five European languages, and he can use a new one at each port of call.

To the north, the West Coast begins with Cape Verde, which is Spanish. It is followed by Senegal, which is French; but into Senegal is tucked “a thin red line” of British territory called Gambia. Senegal closes in again around Gambia, and is at once blocked to the south by the three-cornered patch which belongs to Portugal. This is followed by French Guinea down to another British red spot, Sierra Leone, which meets Liberia, the republic of negro emigrants from the United States. South of Liberia is the French Ivory Coast, then the English Gold Coast; Togo, which is German; Dahomey, which is French; Lagos and Southern Nigeria, which again are English; Fernando Po, which is Spanish, and the German Cameroons.

The coast line of these protectorates and colonies gives no idea of the extent of their hinterland, which spreads back into the Sahara, the Niger basin, and the Soudan. Sierra Leone, one of the smallest of them, is as large as Maine; Liberia, where the emigrants still keep up the tradition of the United States by talking like end men, is as large as the State of New York; two other colonies, Senegal and Nigeria, together are 135,000 square miles larger than the combined square miles of all of our Atlantic States from Maine to Florida and including both. To partition finally among the Powers this strip of death and disease, of uncountable wealth, of unnamed horrors and cruelties, has taken many hundreds of years, has brought to the black man every misery that can be inflicted upon a human being, and to thousands of white men, death and degradation, or great wealth.



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The raids made upon the West Coast to obtain slaves began in the fifteenth century with the discovery of the West Indies, and it was to spare the natives of these islands, who were unused and unfitted for manual labor and who in consequence were cruelly treated by the Spaniards, that Las Casas, the Bishop of Chiapa, first imported slaves from West Africa. He lived to see them suffer so much more terribly than had the Indians who first obtained his sympathy, that even to his eightieth year he pleaded with the Pope and the King of Spain to undo the wrong he had begun. But the tide had set west, and Las Casas might as well have tried to stop the Trades. In 1800 Wilberforce stated in the House of Commons that at that time British vessels were carrying each year to the Indies and the American colonies 38,000 slaves, and when he spoke the traffic had been going on for two hundred and fifty years. After the Treaty of Utrecht, Queen Anne congratulated her Peers on the terms of the treaty which gave to England “the fortress of Gibraltar, the Island of Minorca, and the monopoly in the slave trade for thirty years,” or, as it was called, the *asiento* (contract). This was considered so good an investment that Philip V of Spain took up one-quarter of the common stock, and good Queen Anne reserved another quarter, which later she divided among her ladies. But for a time she and her cousin of Spain were the two largest slave merchants in the world. The point of view of those then engaged in the slave trade is very interesting. When Queen Elizabeth sent Admiral Hawkins slave-hunting, she presented him with a ship, named, with startling lack of moral perception, after the Man of Sorrows. In a book on the slave trade I picked up at Sierra Leone there is the diary of an officer who accompanied Hawkins. “After,” he writes, “going every day on shore to take the inhabitants by burning and despoiling of their towns,” the ship was becalmed. “But,” he adds gratefully, “the Almighty God, who never suffereth his elect to perish, sent us the breeze.”

The slave book shows that as late as 1780 others of the “elect” of our own South were publishing advertisements like this, which is one of the shortest and mildest. It is from a Virginia newspaper: “The said fellow is outlawed, and I will give ten pounds reward for his head severed from his body, or forty shillings if brought alive.”

At about this same time an English captain threw overboard, chained together, one hundred and thirty sick slaves. He claimed that had he not done so the ship’s company would have also sickened and died, and the ship would have been lost, and that, therefore, the insurance companies should pay for the slaves. The jury agreed with him, and the Solicitor-General said: “What is all this declamation about human beings! This is a case of chattels or goods. It is really so—it is the case of throwing over goods. For the purpose—the purpose of the insurance, they are goods and property; whether right or wrong, we have nothing to do with it.” In 1807 England declared the slave trade illegal. A year later the United States followed suit, but although on the seas her frigates chased the slavers, on shore a part of our people continued to hold slaves, until the Civil War rescued both them and the slaves.

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As early as 1718 Raynal and Diderot estimated that up to that time there had been exported from Africa to the North and South Americas nine million slaves. Our own historian, Bancroft, calculated that in the eighteenth century the English alone imported to the Americas three million slaves, while another 2,500,000 purchased or kidnapped on the West Coast were lost in the surf, or on the voyage thrown into the sea. For that number Bancroft places the gross returns as not far from four hundred millions of dollars.

All this is history, and to the reader familiar, but I do not apologize for reviewing it here, as without the background of the slave trade, the West Coast, as it is to-day, is difficult to understand. As we have seen, to kings, to chartered "Merchant Adventurers," to the cotton planters of the West Indies and of our South, and to the men of the North who traded in black ivory, the West Coast gave vast fortunes. The price was the lives of millions of slaves. And to-day it almost seems as though the sins of the fathers were being visited upon the children; as though the jujū of the African, under the spell of which his enemies languish and die, has been cast upon the white man. We have to look only at home. In the millions of dead, and in the misery of the Civil War, and to-day in race hatred, in race riots, in monstrous crimes and as monstrous lynchings, we seem to see the fetish of the West Coast, the curse, falling upon the children to the third and fourth generation of the million slaves that were thrown, shackled, into the sea.

The first mention in history of Sierra Leone is when in 480 B.C., Hanno, the Carthaginian, anchored at night in its harbor, and then owing to "fires in the forests, the beating of drums, and strange cries that issued from the bushes," before daylight hastened away. We now skip nineteen hundred years. This is something of a gap, but except for the sketchy description given us by Hanno of the place, and his one gaudy night there, Sierra Leone until the fifteenth century utterly disappears from the knowledge of man. Happy is the country without a history!

Nineteen hundred years having now supposed to elapse, the second act begins with De Cintra, who came in search of slaves, and instead gave the place its name. Because of the roaring of the wind around the peak that rises over the harbor he called it the Lion Mountain.

After the fifteenth century, in a succession of failures, five different companies of "Royal Adventurers" were chartered to trade with her people, and, when convenient, to kidnap them; pirates in turn kidnapped the British governor, the French and Dutch were always at war with the settlement, and native raids, epidemics, and fevers were continuous. The history of Sierra Leone is the history of every other colony along the West Coast, with the difference that it became a colony by purchase, and was not, as were the others, a trading station gradually converted into a colony. During

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the war in America, Great Britain offered freedom to all slaves that would fight for her, and, after the war, these freed slaves were conveyed on ships of war to London, where they were soon destitute. They appealed to the great friend of the slave in those days, Granville Sharp, and he with others shipped them to Sierra Leone, to establish, with the aid of some white emigrants, an independent colony, which was to be a refuge and sanctuary for others like themselves. Liberia, which was the gift of philanthropists of Baltimore to American freed slaves, was, no doubt, inspired by this earlier effort. The colony became a refuge for slaves from every part of the Coast, the West Indies and Nova Scotia, and to-day in that one colony there are spoken sixty different coast dialects and those of the hinterland.

Sierra Leone, as originally purchased in 1786, consisted of twenty square miles, for which among other articles of equal value King Naimbanna received a "crimson satin embroidered waistcoat, one puncheon of rum, ten pounds of beads, two cheeses, one box of smoking pipes, a mock diamond ring, and a tierce of pork."

What first impressed me about Sierra Leone was the heat. It does not permit one to give his attention wholly to anything else. I always have maintained that the hottest place on earth is New York, and I have been in other places with more than a local reputation for heat; some along the Equator, Lourenco Marquez, which is only prevented from being an earthen oven because it is a swamp; the Red Sea, with a following breeze, and from both shores the baked heat of the desert, and Nagasaki, on a rainy day in midsummer.

But New York in August radiating stored-up heat from iron-framed buildings, with the foul, dead air shut in by the skyscrapers, with a humidity that makes you think you are breathing through a steam-heated sponge, is as near the lower regions as I hope any of us will go. And yet Sierra Leone is no mean competitor.

We climbed the moss-covered steps to the quay to face a great white building that blazed like the base of a whitewashed stove at white heat. Before it were some rusty cannon and a canoe cut out of a single tree, and, seated upon it selling fruit and sun-dried fish, some native women, naked to the waist, their bodies streaming with palm oil and sweat. At the same moment something struck me a blow on the top of the head, at the base of the spine and between the shoulder blades, and the ebony ladies and the white "factory" were burnt up in a scroll of flame.

[Illustration: A White Building, that Blazed Like the Base of a Whitewashed Stove at White Heat.]

I heard myself in a far-away voice asking where one could buy a sun helmet and a white umbrella, and until I was under their protection, Sierra Leone interested me no more.

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One sees more different kinds of black people in Sierra Leone than in any other port along the Coast; Senegalese and Senegambians, Kroo boys, Liberians, naked bush boys bearing great burdens from the forests, domestic slaves in fez and colored linen livery, carrying hammocks swung from under a canopy, the local electric hansom, soldiers of the W.A.F.F., the West African Frontier Force, in Zouave uniform of scarlet and khaki, with bare legs; Arabs from as far in the interior as Timbuctu, yellow in face and in long silken robes; big fat “mammies” in well-washed linen like the washerwomen of Jamaica, each balancing on her head her tightly rolled umbrella, and in the gardens slim young girls, with only a strip of blue and white linen from the waist to the knees, lithe, erect, with glistening teeth and eyes, and their sisters, after two years in the mission schools, demurely and correctly dressed like British school marms. Sierra Leone has all the hall marks of the crown colony of the tropics; good wharfs, clean streets, innumerable churches, public schools operated by the government as well as many others run by American and English missions, a club where the white “mammies,” as all women are called, and the white officers—for Sierra Leone is a coaling station on the Cape route to India, and is garrisoned accordingly—play croquet, and bowl into a net.

When the officers are not bowling they are tramping into the hinterland after tribes on the warpath from Liberia, and coming back, perhaps wounded or racked with fever, or perhaps they do not come back. On the day we landed they had just buried one of the officers. On Saturday afternoon he had been playing tennis, during the night the fever claimed him, and Sunday night he was dead.

That night as we pulled out to the steamer there came toward us in black silhouette against the sun, setting blood-red into the lagoon, two great canoes. They were coming from up the river piled high with fruit and bark, with the women and children lying huddled in the high bow and stern, while amidships the twelve men at the oars strained and struggled until we saw every muscle rise under the black skin.

As their stroke slackened, the man in the bow with the tom-tom beat more savagely upon it, and shouted to them in shrill sharp cries. Their eyes shone, their teeth clenched, the sweat streamed from their naked bodies. They might have been slaves chained to the thwarts of a trireme.

Just ahead of them lay at anchor the only other ship beside our own in port, a two-masted schooner, the *Gladys E. Wilden*, out of Boston. Her captain leaned upon the rail smoking his cigar, his shirt-sleeves held up with pink elastics, on the back of his head a derby hat. As the rowers passed under his bows he looked critically at the streaming black bodies and spat meditatively into the water. His own father could have had them between decks as cargo. Now for the petroleum and lumber he brings from Massachusetts to Sierra Leone he returns in ballast.



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Because her lines were so home-like and her captain came from Cape Cod, we wanted to call on the *Gladys E. Wilden*, but our own captain had different views, and the two ships passed in the night, and the man from Boston never will know that two folks from home were burning signals to him.

Because our next port of call, Grand Bassam, is the chief port of the French Ivory Coast, which is 125,000 square miles in extent, we expected quite a flourishing seaport. Instead, Grand Bassam was a bank of yellow sand, a dozen bungalows in a line, a few wind-blown cocoanut palms, an iron pier, and a French flag. Beyond the cocoanut palms we could see a great lagoon, and each minute a wave leaped roaring upon the yellow sand-bank and tried to hurl itself across it, eating up the bungalows on its way, into the quiet waters of the lake. Each time we were sure it would succeed, but the yellow bank stood like rock, and, beaten back, the wave would rise in white spray to the height of a three-story house, hang glistening in the sun and then, with the crash of a falling wall, tumble at the feet of the bungalows.

We stopped at Grand Bassam to put ashore a young English girl who had come out to join her husband. His factory is a two days' launch ride up the lagoon, and the only other white woman near it does not speak English. Her husband had wished her, for her health's sake, to stay in his home near London, but her first baby had just died, and against his unselfish wishes, and the advice of his partner, she had at once set out to join him. She was a very pretty, sad, unsmiling young wife, and she spoke only to ask her husband's partner questions about the new home. His answers, while they did not seem to daunt her, made every one else at the table wish she had remained safely in her London suburb.

Through our glasses we all watched her husband lowered from the iron pier into a canoe and come riding the great waves to meet her.

The Kroo boys flashed their trident-shaped paddles and sang and shouted wildly, but he sat with his sun helmet pulled over his eyes staring down into the bottom of the boat; while at his elbow, another sun helmet told him yes, that now he could make out the partner, and that, judging by the photograph, that must be She in white under the bridge.

The husband and the young wife were swung together over the side to the lifting waves in a two-seated "mammy chair," like one of those *vis-a-vis* swings you see in public playgrounds and picnic groves, and they carried with them, as a gift from Captain Burton, a fast melting lump of ice, the last piece of fresh meat they will taste in many a day, and the blessings of all the ship's company. And then, with inhospitable haste there was a rattle of anchor chains, a quick jangle of bells from the bridge to the engine-room, and the *Bruxellesville* swept out to sea, leaving the girl from the London suburb to find her way into the heart of Africa.

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Next morning we anchored in a dripping fog off Sekondi on the Gold Coast, to allow an English doctor to find his way to a fever camp. For nine years he had been a Coaster, and he had just gone home to fit himself, by a winter's vacation in London, for more work along the Gold Coast. It is said of him that he has "never lost a life." On arriving in London he received a cable telling him three doctors had died, the miners along the railroad to Ashanti were rotten with fever, and that he was needed.

[Illustration: The "Mammy Chair" is Like Those Swings You See in Public Playgrounds.]

So he and his wife, as cheery and bright as though she were setting forth on her honeymoon, were going back to take up the white man's burden. We swung them over the side as we had the other two, and that night in the smoking-room the Coasters drank "Luck to him," which, in the vernacular of this unhealthy shore, means "Life to him," and to the plucky, jolly woman who was going back to fight death with the man who had never lost a life.

As the ship was getting under way, a young man in "whites" and a sun helmet, an agent of a trading company, went down the sea ladder by which I was leaning. He was smart, alert; his sleeves, rolled recklessly to his shoulders, showed sinewy, sunburnt arms; his helmet, I noted, was a military one. Perhaps I looked as I felt; that it was a pity to see so good a man go back to such a land, for he looked up at me from the swinging ladder and smiled understanding as though we had been old acquaintances.

"You going far?" he asked. He spoke in the soft, detached voice of the public-school Englishman.

"To the Congo," I answered.

He stood swaying with the ship, looking as though there were something he wished to say, and then laughed, and added gravely, giving me the greeting of the Coast: "Luck to you."

"Luck to *you*," I said.

That is the worst of these gaddings about, these meetings with men you wish you could know, who pass like a face in the crowded street, who hold out a hand, or give the password of the brotherhood, and then drop down the sea ladder and out of your life forever.

II

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

To me, the fact of greatest interest about the Congo is that it is owned, and the twenty millions of people who inhabit it are owned by one man. The land and its people are his private property. I am not trying to say that he governs the Congo. He does govern it, but that in itself would not be of interest. His claim is that he owns it. Though backed by all the mailed fists in the German Empire, and all the *Dreadnoughts* of the seas, no other modern monarch would make such a claim. It does not sound like anything we have heard since the days and the ways of Pharaoh. And the most remarkable feature of it is, that the man who makes

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this claim is the man who was placed over the Congo as a guardian, to keep it open to the trade of the world, to suppress slavery. That, in the Congo, he has killed trade and made the products of the land his own, that of the natives he did not kill he has made slaves, is what to-day gives the Congo its chief interest. It is well to emphasize how this one man stole a march on fourteen Powers, including the United States, and stole also an empire of one million square miles.

Twenty-five years ago all of Africa was divided into many parts. The part which still remained to be distributed among the Powers was that which was watered by the Congo River and its tributaries.

Along the north bank of the Congo River ran the French Congo; the Portuguese owned the lands to the south, and on the east it was shut in by protectorates and colonies of Germany and England. It was, and is, a territory as large, were Spain and Russia omitted, as Europe. Were a map of the Congo laid upon a map of Europe, with the mouth of the Congo River where France and Spain meet at Biarritz, the boundaries of the Congo would reach south to the heel of Italy, to Greece, to Smyrna; east to Constantinople and Odessa; northeast to St. Petersburg and Finland, and northwest to the extreme limits of Scotland. Distances in this country are so enormous, the means of progress so primitive, that many of the Belgian officers with whom I came south and who already had travelled nineteen days from Antwerp, had still, before they reached their posts, to steam, paddle, and walk for three months.

In 1844 to dispose amicably of this great territory, which was much desired by several of the Powers, a conference was held at Berlin. There it was decided to make of the Congo Basin an Independent State, a "free-for-all" country, where every flag could trade with equal right, and with no special tariff or restriction.

The General Act of this conference agreed: "The trade of ALL nations shall enjoy complete freedom." "No Power which exercises or shall exercise Sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions shall be allowed to *grant therein a monopoly or favor of any kind in matters of trade.*" "ALL the Powers exercising Sovereign rights or influence in the afore-said territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of *the condition of their moral and material welfare, and to help in suppressing slavery.*" The italics are mine. These quotations from the act are still binding upon the fourteen Powers, including the United States.

For several years previous to the Conference of Berlin, Leopold of Belgium, as a private individual, had shown much interest in the development of the Congo. The opening up of that territory was apparently his hobby. Out of his own pocket he paid for expeditions into the Congo Basin, employed German and English explorers, and protested against the then existing iniquities of the Arabs, who for ivory and slaves raided the Upper



Congo. Finally, assisted by many geographical societies, he founded the International Association, to promote “civilization and trade” in Central Africa; and enlisted Henry M. Stanley in this service.

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That, in the early years, Leopold's interest in the Congo was unselfish may or may not be granted, but, knowing him, as we now know him, as one of the shrewdest and, of speculators, the most unscrupulous, at the time of the Berlin Conference, his self-seeking may safely be accepted. Quietly, unostentatiously, he presented himself to its individual members as a candidate for the post of administrator of this new territory.

On the face of it he seemed an admirable choice. He was a sovereign of a kingdom too unimportant to be feared; of the newly created State he undoubtedly possessed an intimate knowledge. He promised to give to the Dutch, English, and Portuguese traders, already for many years established on the Congo, his heartiest aid, and, for those traders still to come, to maintain the "open door." His professions of a desire to help the natives were profuse. He became the unanimous choice of the conference.

Later he announced to the Powers signing the act, that from Belgium he had received the right to assume the title of King of the Independent State of the Congo. The Powers recognized his new title.

The fact that Leopold, King of Belgium, was king also of the Etat Independant du Congo confused many into thinking that the Free State was a colony, or under the protection, of Belgium. As we have seen, it is not. A Belgian may serve in the army of the Free State, or in a civil capacity, as may a man of any nation, but, although with few exceptions only Belgians are employed in the Free State, and although to help the King in the Congo, the Belgian Government has loaned him great sums of money, politically and constitutionally the two governments are as independent of each other as France and Spain.

And so, in 1885, Leopold, by the grace of fourteen governments, was appointed their steward over a great estate in which each of the governments still holds an equal right; a trustee and keeper over twenty millions of "black brothers" whose "moral and material welfare" each government had promised to protect.

There is only one thing more remarkable than the fact that Leopold was able to turn this public market into a private park, and that is, that he has been permitted to do so. It is true he is a man of wonderful ability. For his own ends he is a magnificent organizer. But in the fourteen governments that created him there have been, and to-day there are, men, if less unscrupulous, of quite as great ability; statesmen, jealous and quick to guard the rights of the people they represent, people who since the twelfth century have been traders, who since 1808 have declared slavery abolished.

And yet, for twenty-five years these statesmen have watched Leopold disobey every provision in the act of the conference. Were they to visit the Congo, they could see for themselves the jungle creeping in and burying their trading posts, their great factories turned into barracks. They know that the blacks they mutually agreed to protect have been reduced to slavery worse than that they suffered from the Arabs, that hundreds of

thousands of them have fled from the Congo, and that those that remain have been mutilated, maimed, or, what was more merciful, murdered. And yet the fourteen governments, including the United States, have done nothing.



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Some tell you they do not interfere because they are jealous one of the other; others say that it is because they believe the Congo will soon be taken over by Belgium, and with Belgium in control, they argue, they would be dealing with a responsible government, instead of with a pirate. But so long as Leopold is King of Belgium one doubts if Belgians in the Congo would rise above the level of their King. The English, when asked why they do not assert their rights, granted not only to them, but to thirteen other governments, reply that if they did they would be accused of "ulterior motives." What ulterior motives? If you pursue a pickpocket and recover your watch from him, are your motives in doing so open to suspicion?

Personally, although this is looking some way ahead, I would like to see the English take over and administrate the Congo. Wherever I visit a colony governed by Englishmen I find under their administration, in spite of opium in China and gin on the West Coast, that three people are benefited: the Englishman, the native, and the foreign trader from any other part of the world. Of the colonies of what other country can one say the same?

As a rule our present governments are not loath to protect their rights. But toward asserting them in the Congo they have been moved neither by the protests of traders, chambers of commerce, missionaries, the public press, nor by the cry of the black man to "let my people go." By only those in high places can it be explained. We will leave it as a curious fact, and return to the "Unjust Steward."

His first act was to wage wars upon the Arabs. From the Soudan and from the East Coast they were raiding the Congo for slaves and ivory, and he drove them from it. By these wars he accomplished two things. As the defender of the slave, he gained much public credit, and he kept the ivory. But war is expensive, and soon he pointed out to the Powers that to ask him out of his own pocket to maintain armies in the field and to administer a great estate was unfair. He humbly sought their permission to levy a few taxes. It seemed a reasonable request. To clear roads, to keep boats upon the great rivers, to mark it with buoys, to maintain wood stations for the steamers, to improve the "moral and material welfare of the natives," would cost money, and to allow Leopold to bring about these improvements, which would be for the good of all, he was permitted to levy the few taxes. That was twenty years ago; to-day I saw none of these improvements, and the taxes have increased.

From the first they were so heavy that the great trade houses, which for one hundred years in peace and mutual goodwill bartered with the natives, found themselves ruined. It was not alone the export taxes, lighterage dues, port dues, and personal taxes that drove them out of the Congo; it was the King appearing against them as a rival trader, the man appointed to maintain the "open door." And a trader with

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methods they could not or would not imitate. Leopold, or the “State,” saw for the existence of the Congo only two reasons: Rubber and Ivory. And the collecting of this rubber and ivory was, as he saw it, the sole duty of the State and its officers. When he threw over the part of trustee and became the Arab raider he could not waste his time, which, he had good reason to fear, might be short, upon products that, if fostered, would be of value only in later years. Still less time had he to give to improvements that cost money and that would be of benefit to his successors. He wanted only rubber; he wanted it at once, and he cared not at all how he obtained it. So he spun, and still spins, the greatest of all “get-rich-quick” schemes; one of gigantic proportions, full of tragic, monstrous, nauseous details.

The only possible way to obtain rubber is through the native; as yet, in teeming forests, the white man can not work and live. Of even Chinese coolies imported here to build a railroad ninety per cent. died. So, with a stroke of the pen, Leopold declared all the rubber in the country the property of the “State,” and then, to make sure that the natives would work it, ordered that taxes be paid in rubber. If, once a month (in order to keep the natives steadily at work the taxes were ordered to be paid each month instead of once a year), each village did not bring in so many baskets of rubber the King’s cannibal soldiers raided it, carried off the women as hostages, and made prisoners of the men, or killed and ate them. For every kilo of rubber brought in in excess of the quota the King’s agent, who received the collected rubber and forwarded it down the river, was paid a commission. Or was “paid by results.” Another bonus was given him based on the price at which he obtained the rubber. If he paid the native only six cents for every two pounds, he received a bonus of three cents, the cost to the State being but nine cents per kilo, but, if he paid the natives twelve cents for every two pounds, he received as a bonus less than one cent. In a word, the more rubber the agent collected the more he personally benefited, and if he obtained it “cheaply” or for nothing—that is, by taking hostages, making prisoners, by the whip of hippopotamus hide, by torture—so much greater his fortune, so much richer Leopold.

[Illustration: A Village on the Kasai River.]

Few schemes devised have been more cynical, more devilish, more cunningly designed to incite a man to cruelty and abuse. To dishonesty it was an invitation and a reward. It was this system of “payment by results,” evolved by Leopold sooner than allow his agents a fixed and sufficient wage, that led to the atrocities.

One result of this system was that in seven years the natives condemned to slavery in the rubber forests brought in rubber to the amount of fifty-five millions of dollars. But its chief results were the destruction of entire villages, the flight from their homes in the Congo of hundreds of thousands of natives, and for those that remained misery, death, the most brutal tortures and degradations, unprintable, unthinkable.

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I am not going to enter into the question of the atrocities. In the Congo the tip has been given out from those higher up at Brussels to “close up” the atrocities; and for the present the evil places in the Tenderloin and along the Broadway of the Congo are tightly shut. But at those lonely posts, distant a month to three months’ march from the capital, the cruelties still continue. I did not see them. Neither, last year, did a great many people in the United States see the massacre of blacks in Atlanta. But they have reason to believe it occurred. And after one has talked with the men and women who have seen the atrocities, has seen in the official reports that those accused of the atrocities do not deny having committed them, but point out that they were merely obeying orders, and after one has seen that even at the capital of Boma all the conditions of slavery exist, one is assured that in the jungle, away from the sight of men, all things are possible. Merchants, missionaries, and officials even in Leopold’s service told me that if one could spare a year and a half, or a year, to the work in the hinterland he would be an eye-witness of as cruel treatment of the natives as any that has gone before, and if I can trust myself to weigh testimony and can believe my eyes and ears I have reason to know that what they say is true. I am convinced that to-day a man, who feels that a year and a half is little enough to give to the aid of twenty millions of human beings, can accomplish in the Congo as great and good work as that of the Abolitionists.

Three years ago atrocities here were open and above-board. For instance. In the opinion of the State the soldiers, in killing game for food, wasted the State cartridges, and in consequence the soldiers, to show their officers that they did not expend the cartridges extravagantly on antelope and wild boar, for each empty cartridge brought in a human hand, the hand of a man, woman, or child. These hands, drying in the sun, could be seen at the posts along the river. They are no longer in evidence. Neither is the flower-bed of Lieutenant Dom, which was bordered with human skulls. A quaint conceit.

The man to blame for the atrocities, for each separate atrocity, is Leopold. Had he shaken his head they would have ceased. When the hue and cry in Europe grew too hot for him and he held up his hand they did cease. At least along the main waterways. Years before he could have stopped them. But these were the seven fallow years, when millions of tons of red rubber were being dumped upon the wharf at Antwerp; little, roughly rolled red balls, like pellets of coagulated blood, which had cost their weight in blood, which would pay Leopold their weight in gold.



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He can not plead ignorance. Of all that goes on in his big plantation no man has a better knowledge. Without their personal honesty, he follows every detail of the "business" of his rubber farm with the same diligence that made rich men of George Boldt and Marshall Field. Leopold's knowledge is gained through many spies, by voluminous reports, by following up the expenditure of each centime, of each arm's-length of blue cloth. Of every Belgian employed on his farm, and ninety-five per cent. are Belgians, he holds the *dossier*; he knows how many kilos a month the agent whips out of his villages, how many bottles of absinthe he smuggles from the French side, whether he lives with one black woman or five, why his white wife in Belgium left him, why he left Belgium, why he dare not return. The agent knows that Leopold, King of the Belgians, knows, and that he has shared that knowledge with the agent's employer, the man who by bribes of rich bonuses incites him to crime, the man who could throw him into a Belgian jail, Leopold, King of the Congo.

The agent decides for him it is best to please both Leopolds, and Leopold makes no secret of what best pleases him. For not only is he responsible for the atrocities, in that he does not try to suppress them, but he is doubly guilty in that he has encouraged them. This he has done with cynical, callous publicity, without effort at concealment, without shame. Men who, in obtaining rubber, committed unspeakable crimes, the memory of which makes other men uncomfortable in their presence, Leopold rewarded with rich bonuses, pensions, higher office, gilt badges of shame, and rapid advancement. To those whom even his own judges sentenced to many years' imprisonment he promptly granted the royal pardon, promoted, and sent back to work in the vineyard.

"That is the sort of man for *me*," his action seemed to say. "See how I value that good and faithful servant. That man collected much rubber. You observe I do not ask how he got it. I will not ask you. All you need do is to collect rubber. Use our improved methods. Gum copal rubbed in the kinky hair of the chief and then set on fire burns, so my agents tell me, like vitriol. For collecting rubber the chief is no longer valuable, but to his successor it is an object-lesson. Let me recommend also the *chicotte*, the torture tower, the 'hostage' house, and the crucifix. Many other stimulants to labor will no doubt suggest themselves to you and to your cannibal 'sentries.' Help to make me rich, and don't fear the 'State.' '*L'Etat, c'est moi!*' Go as far as you like!"

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I said the degradations and tortures practised by the men “working on commission” for Leopold are unprintable, but they have been printed, and those who wish to read a calmly compiled, careful, and correct record of their deeds will find it in the “Red Rubber” of Mr. E.R. Morel. An even better book by the same authority, on the whole history of the State, is his “King Leopold’s Rule in the Congo.” Mr. Morel has many enemies. So, early in the nineteenth century, had the English Abolitionists, Wilberforce and Granville Sharp. After they were dead they were buried in the Abbey, and their portraits were placed in the National Gallery. People who wish to assist in freeing twenty millions of human beings should to-day support Mr. Morel. It will be of more service to the blacks than, after he is dead, burying him in Westminster Abbey.

Mr. Morel, the American and English missionaries, and the English Consul, Roger Casement, and other men, in Belgium, have made a magnificent fight against Leopold; but the Powers to whom they have appealed have been silent. Taking courage of this silence, Leopold has divided the Congo into several great territories in which the sole right to work rubber is conceded to certain persons. To those who protested that no one in the Congo “Free” State but the King could trade in rubber, Leopold, as an answer, pointed with pride at the preserves of these foreigners. And he may well point at them with pride, for in some of those companies he owns a third, and in most of them he holds a half, or a controlling interest. The directors of the foreign companies are his cronies, members of his royal household, his brokers, bankers. You have only to read the names published in the lists of the Brussels Stock Exchange to see that these “trading companies,” under different aliases, are Leopold. Having, then, “conceded” the greater part of the Congo to himself, Leopold set aside the best part of it, so far as rubber is concerned, as a *Domaine Prive*. Officially the receipts of this pay for running the government, and for schools, roads and wharfs, for which taxes were levied, but for which, after twenty years, one looks in vain. Leopold claims that through the Congo he is out of pocket; that this carrying the banner of civilization in Africa does not pay. Through his press bureaus he tells that his sympathy for his black brother, his desire to see the commerce of the world busy along the Congo, alone prevents him giving up what is for him a losing business. There are several answers to this. One is that in the Kasai Company alone Leopold owns 2,010 shares of stock. Worth originally \$50 a share, the value of each share rose to \$3,100, making at one time his total shares worth \$5,421,000. In the A.B.I.R. Concession he owns 1,000 shares, originally worth \$100 each, later worth \$940. In the “vintage year” of 1900 each of these shares was worth \$5,050, and the 1,000 shares thus rose to the value of \$5,050,000.

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These are only two companies. In most of the others half the shares are owned by the King.

As published in the "State Bulletin," the money received in eight years for rubber and ivory gathered in the *Domaine Prive* differs from the amount given for it in the market at Antwerp. The official estimates show a loss to the government. The actual sales show that the government, over and above its own estimate of its expenses, instead of losing, made from the *Domaine Prive* alone \$10,000,000. We are left wondering to whom went that unaccounted-for \$10,000,000. Certainly the King would not take it, for, to reimburse himself for his efforts, he early in the game reserved for himself another tract of territory known as the *Domaine de la Couronne*. For years he denied that this existed. He knew nothing of Crown Lands. But, at last, in the Belgian Chamber, it was publicly charged that for years from this private source, which he had said did not exist, Leopold had been drawing an income of \$15,000,000. Since then the truth of this statement has been denied, but at the time in the Chamber it was not contradicted.

To-day, grown insolent by the apathy of the Powers, Leopold finds disguising himself as a company, as a laborer worthy of his hire, irksome. He now decrees that as "Sovereign" over the Congo all of the Congo belongs to him. It is as much his property as is a pheasant drive, as is a staked-out mining claim, as your hat is your property. And the twenty millions of people who inhabit it are there only on his sufferance. They are his "tenants." He permits each the hut in which he lives, and the garden adjoining that hut, but his work must be for Leopold, and everything else, animal, mineral, or vegetable, belongs to Leopold. The natives not only may not sell ivory or rubber to independent traders, but if it is found in their possession it is seized; and if you and I bought a tusk of ivory here it would be taken from us and we could be prosecuted. This is the law. Other men rule over territories more vast even than the Congo. The King of England rules an empire upon which the sun never sets. But he makes no claim to own it. Against the wishes of even the humblest crofter, the King would not, because he knows he could not, enter his cottage. Nor can we imagine even Kaiser William going into the palm-leaf hut of a charcoal-burner in German East Africa and saying: "This is my palm-leaf hut. This is my charcoal. You must not sell it to the English, or the French, or the American. If they buy from you they are 'receivers of stolen goods.' To feed my soldiers you must drag my river for my fish. For me, in my swamp and in my jungle, you must toil twenty-four days of each month to gather my rubber. You must not hunt the elephants, for they are my elephants. Those tusks that fifty years ago your grandfather, with his naked spear, cut from an elephant, and which you have tried to hide from me under the floor of this hut, are my ivory. Because that elephant, running wild through the jungle fifty years ago, belonged to me. And you yourself are mine, your time is mine, your labor is mine, your wife, your children, all are mine. They belong to me."



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[Illustration: “Tenants” of Leopold, Who Claims that the Congo Belongs to Him, and that These Native People Are There Only as His Tenants.]

This, then, is the “open door” as I find it to-day in the Congo. It is an incredible state of affairs, so insolent, so magnificent in its impertinence, that it would be humorous, were it not for its background of misery and suffering, for its hostage houses, its chain gangs, its *chicottes*, its nameless crimes against the human body, its baskets of dried hands held up in tribute to the Belgian blackguard.

III

THE CAPITAL OF THE CONGO

Leopold’s “shop” has its front door at Banana. Its house flag is a golden star on a blue background. Banana is the port of entry to the Congo. You have, no doubt, seen many ports of Europe—Antwerp, Hamburg, Boulogne, Lisbon, Genoa, Marseilles. Banana is the port of entry to a country as large as Western Europe, and while the imports and exports of Europe trickle through all these cities, the commerce of the Congo enters and departs entirely at Banana. You can then picture the busy harbor, the jungle of masts, the white bridges and awnings of the steamers. By the fat funnels and the flags you can distinguish the English tramps, the German merchantmen, the French, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese traders, the smart “liners” from Liverpool, even the Arab dhows with bird-wing sails, even the steel, four-masted schooners out of Boston, U.S.A. You can imagine the toiling lighters, the slap-dash tenders, the launches with shrieking whistles.

Of course, you suspect it is not a bit like that. But were it for fourteen countries the “open door” to twenty millions of people, that is how it might look.

Instead, it is the private entrance to the preserves of a private individual. So what you really see is, on the one hand, islands of mangrove bushes, with their roots in the muddy water; on the other, Banana, a strip of sand and palm trees without a wharf, quay, landing stage, without a pier to which you could make fast anything larger than a rowboat.

In a canoe naked natives paddle alongside to sell fish; a peevish little man in a sun hat, who, in order to save Leopold three salaries, holds four port offices, is being rowed to the gangway; on shore the only other visible inhabitant of Banana, a man with no nerves, is disturbing the brooding, sweating silence by knocking the rust off the plates of a stranded mud-scow. Welcome to our city! Welcome to busy, bustling Banana, the port of entry of the Congo Free State.

[Illustration: The Facilities for Landing at Banana, the Port of Entry to the Congo, Are Limited.]



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In a canoe we were paddled to the back yard of the cafe of Madame Samuel, and from that bower of warm beer and sardine tins trudged through the sun up one side of Banana and down the other. In between the two paths were the bungalows and gardens of forty white men and two white women. Many of the gardens, as was most of Banana, were neglected, untidy, littered with condensed-milk tins. Others, more carefully tended, were laid out in rigid lines. With all tropical nature to draw upon, nothing had been imagined. The most ambitious efforts were designs in whitewashed shells and protruding beer bottles. We could not help remembering the gardens in Japan, of the poorest and the most ignorant coolies. Do I seem to find fault with Banana out of all proportion to its importance? It is because Banana, the Congo's most advanced post of civilization, is typical of all that lies beyond.

From what I had read of the Congo I expected a broad sweep of muddy, malaria-breeding water, lined by low-lying swamp lands, gloomy, monotonous, depressing.

But on the way to Boma and, later, when I travelled on the Upper Congo, I thought the river more beautiful than any great river I had ever seen. It was full of wonderful surprises. Sometimes it ran between palm-covered banks of yellow sand as low as those of the Mississippi or the Nile; and again, in half an hour, the banks were rock and as heavily wooded as the mountains of Montana, or as white and bold as the cliffs of Dover, or we passed between great hills, covered with what looked like giant oaks, and with their peaks hidden in the clouds. I found it like no other river, because in some one particular it was like them all. Between Banana and Boma the banks first screened us in with the tangled jungle of the tropics, and then opened up great wind-swept plateaux, leading to hills that suggested—of all places—England, and, at that, cultivated England. The contour of the hills, the shape of the trees, the shade of their green contrasted with the green of the grass, were like only the cliffs above Plymouth. One did not look for native kraals and the wild antelope, but for the square, ivy-topped tower of the village church, the loaf-shaped hayricks, slow-moving masses of sheep. But this that looks like a pasture land is only coarse limestone covered with bitter, unnutritious grass, which benefits neither beast nor man.

At sunset we anchored in the current three miles from Boma, and at daybreak we tied up to the iron wharf. As the capital of the government Boma contains the residence and gardens of the governor, who is the personal representative of Leopold, both as a shopkeeper and as a king by divine right. He is a figurehead. The real administrator is M. Vandamme, the Secretaire-General, the ubiquitous, the mysterious, whose name before you leave Southampton is in the air, of whom all men, whether they speak in French or English, speak well. It is from Boma that M. Vandamme sends collectors of rubber, politely labeled inspecteurs, directeurs, judges, capitaines, and sous-lieutenants to their posts, and distributes them over one million square miles.

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Boma is the capital of a country which is as large as six nations of the European continent. For twenty-five years it has been the capital. Therefore, the reader already guesses that Boma has only one wharf, and at that wharf there is no custom-house, no warehouse, not even a canvas awning under which, during the six months of rainy season, one might seek shelter for himself and his baggage.

Our debarkation reminded me of a landing of filibusters. A wharf forty yards long led from the steamer to the bank. Down this marched the officers of the army, the clerks, the bookkeepers, and on the bank and in the street each dumped his boxes, his sword, his camp-bed, his full-dress helmet. It looked as though a huge eviction had taken place, as though a retreating army, having gained the river's edge, were waiting for a transport. It was not as though to the government the coming of these gentlemen was a complete surprise; regularly every three weeks at that exact spot a like number disembark. But in years the State has not found it worth while to erect for them even an open zinc shed. The cargo invoiced to the State is given equal consideration.

"Prisoners of the State," each wearing round his neck a steel ring from which a chain stretches to the ring of another "prisoner," carried the cargo to the open street, where lay the luggage of the officers, and there dropped it. Mingled with steamer chairs, tin bathtubs, gun-cases, were great crates of sheet iron, green boxes of gin, bags of Teneriffe potatoes, boilers of an engine. Upon the scene the sun beat with vicious, cruel persistence. Those officers who had already served in the Congo dropped their belongings under the shadow of a solitary tree. Those who for the first time were seeing the capital of the country they had sworn to serve sank upon their boxes and, with dismay in their eyes, mopped their red and dripping brows.

[Illustration: "Prisoners" of the State in Chains at Matadi.]

Boma is built at the foot of a hill of red soil. It is a town of scattered buildings made of wood and sheet-iron plates, sent out in crates, and held together with screws. To Boma nature has been considerate. She has contributed many trees, two or three long avenues of palms, and in the many gardens caused flowers to blossom and flourish. In the report of the "Commission of Enquiry" which Leopold was forced to send out in 1904 to investigate the atrocities, and each member of which, for his four months' work, received \$20,000, Boma is described as possessing "the daintiness and *chic* of a European watering-place."



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Boma really is like a seaport of one of the Central American republics. It has a temporary sufficient-to-the-day-for-to-morrow-we-die air. It looks like a military post that at any moment might be abandoned. To remove this impression the State has certain exhibits which seem to point to a stable and good government. There is a well-conducted hospital and clean, well-built barracks; for the amusement of the black soldiers even a theatre, and for the higher officials attractive bungalows, a bandstand, where twice a week a negro band plays by ear, and plays exceedingly well. There is even a lawn-tennis court, where the infrequent visitor to the Congo is welcomed, and, by the courteous Mr. Vandamme, who plays tennis as well as he does every thing else, entertained. Boma is the shop window of Leopold's big store. The good features of Boma are like those attractive articles one sometimes sees in a shop window, but which in the shop one fails to find—at least, I did not find them in the shop. Outside of Boma I looked in vain for a school conducted by the State, like the one at Boma, such as those the United States Government gave by the hundred to the Philippines. I found not one. And I looked for such a hospital as the one I saw at Boma, such as our government has placed for its employes along, and at both ends of, the Isthmus of Panama, and, except for the one at Leopoldville, I saw none.

In spite of the fact that Boma is a “European watering-place,” all the servants of the State with whom I talked wanted to get away from it, especially those who already had served in the interior. To appreciate what Boma lacks one has only to visit the neighboring seaports on the same coast; the English towns of Sierra Leone and Calabar, the French town of Libreville in the French Congo, the German seaport Duala in the Cameroons, but especially Calabar in Southern Nigeria. In actual existence the new Calabar is eight years younger than Boma, and in its municipal government, its street-making, cleaning, and lighting, wharfs, barracks, prisons, hospitals, it is a hundred years in advance. Boma is not a capital; it is the distributing factory for a huge trading concern, and a particularly selfish one. There is, as I have said, only one wharf, and at that wharf, without paying the State, only State boats may discharge cargo, so the English, Dutch, and German boats are forced to “tie up” along the river front. There the grass is eight feet high and breeds mosquitoes and malaria, and conceals the wary crocodile. At night, from the deck of the steamer, all one can see of this capital is a fringe of this high grass in the light from the air ports, and on shore three gas-lamps. No cafes are open, no sailors carouse, no lighted window suggests that some one is giving a dinner, that some one is playing bridge. Darkness, gloom, silence mark this “European watering-place.”

“You ask me,” demanded a Belgian lieutenant one night as we stood together by the rail, “whether I like better the bush, where there is no white man in a hundred miles, or to be stationed at Boma?”

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He threw out his hands at the gas-lamps, rapidly he pointed at each of them in turn.

“Voila, Boma!” he said.

From Boma we steamed six hours farther up the river to Matadi. On the way we stopped at Noqui, the home of Portuguese traders on the Portuguese bank, which, as one goes up-stream, lies to starboard. Here the current runs at from four to five miles an hour, and has so sharply cut away the bank that we are able to run as near to it with the stern of our big ship as though she were a canoe. To one used more to ocean than to Congo traffic it was somewhat bewildering to see the five-thousand-ton steamer make fast to a tree, a sand-bank looming up three fathoms off her quarter, and the blades of her propeller, as though they were the knives of a lawn-mower, cutting the eel-grass.

At Matadi the Congo makes one of her lightning changes. Her banks, which have been low and woody, with, on the Portuguese side, glimpses of boundless plateaux, become towering hills of rock. At Matadi the cataracts and rapids begin, and for two hundred miles continue to Stanley Pool, which is the beginning of the Upper Congo. Leopoldville is situated on Stanley Pool, just to the right of where the rapids start their race to the south. With Leopoldville above and Boma below, still nearer the mouth of the river, Matadi makes a centre link in the chain of the three important towns of the Lower Congo.

When Henry M. Stanley was halted by the cataracts and forced to leave the river he disembarked his expedition on the bank opposite Matadi, and a mile farther up-stream. It was from this point he dragged and hauled his boats, until he again reached smooth water at Stanley Pool. The wagons on which he carried the boats still can be seen lying on the bank, broken and rusty. Like the sight of old gun carriages and dismantled cannon, they give one a distinct thrill. Now, on the bank opposite from where they lie, the railroad runs from Matadi to Leopoldville.

The Congo forces upon one a great admiration for Stanley. Unless civilization utterly alters it, it must always be a monument to his courage, and as you travel farther and see the difficulties placed in his way, your admiration increases. There are men here who make little of what Stanley accomplished; but they are men who seldom leave their own compound, and, who, when they do go up the river, travel at ease, not in a canoe, or on foot through the jungle, but in the smoking-room of the steamer and in a first-class railroad carriage. That they are able so to travel is due to the man they would belittle. The nickname given to Stanley by the natives is to-day the nickname of the government. Matadi means rock. When Stanley reached the town of Matadi, which is surrounded entirely by rock, he began with dynamite to blast roads for his caravan. The natives called him Bula Matadi, the Breaker of Rocks, and, as in those days he was the Government, the Law, and the Prophets, Bula Matadi, who then was the white man who governed, now signifies the white man's government. But it is a very different



government, and a very different white man. With the natives the word is universal. They say "Bula Matadi wood post." "Not traders' chop, Bula Matadi's chop." "Him no missionary steamer, him Bula Matadi steamer."



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The town of Matadi is of importance as the place where, owing to the rapids, passengers and cargoes are reshipped on the railroad to the *haut Congo*. It is a railroad terminus only, and it looks it. The railroad station and store-houses are close to the river bank, and, spread over several acres of cinders, are the railroad yard and machine shops. Above those buildings of hot corrugated zinc and the black soil rises a great rock. It is not so large as Gibraltar, or so high as the Flatiron Building, but it is a little more steep than either. Three narrow streets lead to its top. They are of flat stones, with cement gutters. The stones radiate the heat of stove lids. They are worn to a mirror-like smoothness, and from their surface the sun strikes between your eyes, at the pit of your stomach, and the soles of your mosquito boots. The three streets lead to a parade ground no larger than and as bare as a brickyard. It is surrounded by the buildings of Bula Matadi, the post-office, the custom-house, the barracks, and the Cafe Franco-Belge. It has a tableland fifty yards wide of yellow clay so beaten by thousands of naked feet, so baked by the heat, that it is as hard as a brass shield. Other tablelands may be higher, but this is the one nearest the sun. You cross it wearily, in short rushes, with your heart in your throat, and seeking shade, as a man crossing the zone of fire seeks cover from the bullets. When you reach the cool, dirty custom-house, with walls two feet thick, you congratulate yourself on your escape; you look back into the blaze of the flaming plaza and wonder if you have the courage to return.

[Illustration: Bush Boys in the Plaza at Matadi Seeking Shade.]

At the custom-house I paid duty on articles I could not possibly have bought anywhere in the Congo, as, for instance, a tent and a folding-bed, and for a license to carry arms. A young man with a hammer and tiny branding irons beat little stars and the number of my license to *porter d'armes* on the stock of each weapon. Without permission of Bula Matadi on leaving the Congo, one can not sell his guns, or give them away. This is a precaution to prevent weapons falling into the hands of the native. For some reason a native with a gun alarms Bula Matadi. Just on the other bank of the river the French, who do not seem to fear the black brother, sell him flint-lock rifles, as many as his heart desires.

On the steamer there was a mild young missionary coming out, for the first time, to whom some unobserving friend had given a fox-terrier. The young man did not care for the dog. He had never owned a dog, and did not know what to do with this one. Her name was "Fanny," and only by the efforts of all on board did she reach the Congo alive. There was no one, from the butcher to the captain, including the passengers, who had not shielded Fanny from the cold, and later from the sun, fed her, bathed her, forced medicine down her throat, and raced her



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up and down the spar deck. Consequently we all knew Fanny, and it was a great shock when from the custom-house I saw her running around the blazing parade ground, her eyes filled with fear and “lost dog” written all over her, from her drooping tongue to her drooping tail. Captain Burton and I called “Fanny,” and, not seeking suicide for ourselves, sent half a dozen black boys to catch her. But Fanny never liked her black uncles; on the steamer the Kroom boys learned to give her the length of her chain, and so we were forced to plunge to her rescue into the valley of heat. Perhaps she thought we were again going to lock her up on the steamer, or perhaps that it was a friendly game, for she ran from us as fast as from the black boys. In Matadi no one ever had crossed the parade ground except at a funeral march, and the spectacle of two large white men playing tag with a small fox-terrier attracted an immense audience. The officials and clerks left work and peered between the iron-barred windows, the “prisoners” in chains ceased breaking rock and stared dumbly from the barracks, the black “sentries” shrieked and gesticulated, the naked bush boys, in from a long caravan journey, rose from the side of their burdens and commented upon our manoeuvres in gloomy, guttural tones. I suspect they thought we wanted Fanny for “chop.” Finally Fanny ran into the legs of a German trader, who grabbed her by the neck and held her up to us.

“You want him? Hey?” he shouted.

“Ay, man,” gasped Burton, now quite purple, “did you think we were trying to amuse the dog?”

I made a leash of my belt, and the captain returned to the ship dragging his prisoner after him. An hour later I met the youthful missionary leading Fanny by a rope.

“I must tell you about Fanny,” he cried. “After I took her to the Mission I forgot to tie her up—as I suppose I should have done—and she ran away. But, would you believe it, she found her way straight back to the ship. Was it not intelligent of her?”

I was too far gone with apoplexy, heat prostration, and sunstroke to make any answer, at least one that I could make to a missionary.

The next morning Fanny, the young missionary, and I left for Leopoldville on the railroad. It is a narrow-gauge railroad built near Matadi through the solid rock and later twisting and turning so often that at many places one can see the track on three different levels. It is not a State road, but was built and is owned by a Dutch company, and, except that it charges exorbitant rates and does not keep its carriages clean, it is well run, and the road-bed is excellent. But it runs a passenger train only three times a week, and though the distance is so short, and though the train starts at 6:30 in the morning, it does not get you to Leopoldville the same day. Instead, you must rest over

night at Thysville and start at seven the next morning. That afternoon at three you reach Leopoldville. For the two

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hundred and fifty miles the fare is two hundred francs, and one is limited to sixty pounds of luggage. That was the weight allowed by the Japanese to each war correspondent, and as they gave us six months in Tokio in which to do nothing else but weigh our equipment, I left Matadi without a penalty. Had my luggage exceeded the limit, for each extra pound I would have had to pay the company ten cents. To the Belgian officers and agents who go for three years to serve the State in the bush the regulation is especially harsh, and in a company so rich, particularly mean. To many a poor officer, and on the pay they receive there are no rich ones, the tax is prohibitive. It forces them to leave behind medicines, clothing, photographic supplies, all ammunition, which means no chance of helping out with duck and pigeon the daily menu of goat and tinned sausages, and, what is the greatest hardship, all books. This regulation, which the State permitted to the concessionaires of the railroad, sends the agents of the State into the wilderness physically and mentally unequipped, and it is no wonder the weaker brothers go mad, and act accordingly.

My black boys travelled second-class, which means an open car with narrow seats very close together and a wooden roof. On these cars passengers are allowed twenty pounds of luggage and permitted to collect two hundred and fifty miles of heat and dust. To a black boy twenty pounds is little enough, for he travels with much more baggage than an average "blanc." I am not speaking of the Congo boy. All the possessions the State leaves him he could carry in his pockets, and he has no pockets. But wherever he goes the Kroo boy, Mendi boy, or Sierra Leone boy carries all his belongings with him in a tin trunk painted pink, green, or yellow. He is never separated from his "box," and the recognized uniform of a Kroo boy at work, is his breechcloth, and hanging from a ribbon around his knee, the key to his box. If a boy has no box he generally carries three keys.

In the first-class car were three French officers en route to Brazzaville, the capital of the French Congo, and a dog, a sad mongrel, very dirty, very hungry. On each side of the tiny toy car were six revolving-chairs, so the four men, not to speak of the dog, quite filled it. And to our own bulk each added hand-bags, cases of beer, helmets, gun-cases, cameras, water-bottles, and, as the road does not supply food of any kind, his chop-box. A chop-box is anything that holds food, and for food of every kind, for the hours of feeding, and the verb "to feed," on the West Coast, the only word, the "lazy" word, is "chop."

The absent-minded young missionary, with Fanny jammed between his ankles, and looking out miserably upon the world, and two other young missionaries, travelled second-class.

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They were even more crowded together than were we, but not so much with luggage as with humanity. But as a protest against the high charges of the railroad the missionaries always travel in the open car. These three young men were for the first time out of England, and in any fashion were glad to start on their long journey up the Congo to Bolobo. To them whatever happened was a joke. It was a joke even when the colored "wife" of one of the French officers used the broad shoulders of one of them as a pillow and slept sweetly. She was a large, good-natured, good-looking mulatto, and at the frequent stations the French officer ran back to her with "white man's chop," a tin of sausages, a pineapple, a bottle of beer. She drank the beer from the bottle, and with religious tolerance offered it to the Baptists. They assured her without the least regret that they were teetotalers. To the other blacks in the open car the sight of a white man waiting on one of their own people was a thrilling spectacle. They regarded the woman who could command such services with respect. It would be interesting to know what they thought of the white man. At each station the open car disgorged its occupants to fill with water the beer bottle each carried, and to buy from the natives kwango, the black man's bread, a flaky, sticky flour that tastes like boiled chestnuts; and pineapples at a franc for ten. And such pineapples! Not hard and rubber-like, as we know them at home, but delicious, juicy, melting in the mouth like hothouse grapes, and, also, after each mouthful, making a complete bath necessary. One of the French officers had a lump of ice which he broke into pieces and divided with the others. They saluted magnificently many times, and as each drowned the morsel in his tin cup of beer, one of them cried with perfect simplicity: "C'est Paris!" This reminded me that the ship's steward had placed much ice in my chop basket, and I carried some of it to another car in which were five of the White Sisters. For nineteen days I had been with them on the steamer, but they had spoken to no one, and I was doubtful how they would accept my offering. But the Mother Superior gave permission, and they took the ice through the car window, their white hoods bristling with the excitement of the adventure. They were on their way to a post still two months' journey up the river, nearly to Lake Tanganyika, and for three years or, possibly, until they died, that was the last ice they would see.

At Bongolo station the division superintendent came in the car and everybody offered him refreshment, and in return he told us, in the hope of interesting us, of a washout, and then casually mentioned that an hour before an elephant had blocked the track. It seemed so much too good to be true that I may have expressed some doubt, for he said: "Why, of course and certainly. Already this morning one was at Sariski Station and another at Sipeto." And instead of looking out of the window I had been reading an American magazine, filched from the smoking-room, which was one year old!



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At Thysville the railroad may have opened a hotel, but when I was there to hunt for a night's shelter it turned you out bag and baggage. The French officers decided to risk a Portuguese trading store known as the "Ideal Hotel," and the missionaries very kindly gave me the freedom of their Rest House. It is kept open for those of the Mission who pass between the Upper and Lower Congo. At the station the young missionaries were met by two older missionaries—Mr. Weekes, who furnished the "Commission of Enquiry" with much evidence, which they would not, or were not allowed to, print, and Mr. Jennings. With them were twenty "boys" from the Mission and, with each of them carrying a piece of our baggage on his head, we climbed the hill, and I was given a clean, comfortable, completely appointed bedroom. Our combined chop we turned over to a black brother. He is the custodian of the Rest House and an excellent cook. While he was preparing it my boys spread out my folding rubber tub. Had I closed the door I should have smothered, so, in the presence of twenty interested black Baptists, I took an embarrassing but one of the most necessary baths I can remember.

There still was a piece of the ice remaining, and as the interest in the bathtub had begun to drag I handed it to one of my audience. He yelled as though I had thrust into his hand a drop of vitriol, and, leaping in the air, threw the ice on the floor and dared any one to touch it. From the "personal" boys who had travelled to Matadi the Mission boys had heard of ice. But none had ever seen it. They approached it as we would a rattlesnake. Each touched it and then sprang away. Finally one, his eyes starting from his head, cautiously stroked the inoffensive brick and then licked his fingers. The effect was instantaneous. He assured the others it was "good chop," and each of them sat hunched about it on his heels, stroking it, and licking his fingers, and then with delighted thrills rubbing them over his naked body. The little block of ice that at Liverpool was only a "quart of water" had assumed the value of a diamond.

Dinner was enlivened by an incident. Mr. Weekes, with orders simply to "fry these," had given to the assistant of the cook two tins of sausages. The small *chef* presented them to us in the pan in which he had cooked them, but he had obeyed instructions to the letter and had fried the tins unopened.

After dinner we sat until late, while the older men told the young missionaries of atrocities of which, in the twenty years and within the last three years, they had been witnesses. Already in Mr. Morel's books I had read their testimony, but hearing from the men themselves the tales of outrage and cruelty gave them a fresh and more intimate value, and sent me to bed hot and sick with indignation. But, nevertheless, the night I slept at Thysville was the only cool one I knew in the Congo. It was as cool as is a night in autumn at home. Thysville, between the Upper and the Lower Congo, with its fresh mountain air, is an obvious site for a hospital for the servants of the State. To the Congo it should be what Simla is to the sick men of India; but the State is not running hospitals. It is in the rubber business.



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All steamers for the Upper Congo and her great tributaries, whether they belong to the State or the Missions, start from Leopoldville. There they fit out for voyages, some of which last three and four months. So it is a place of importance, but, like Boma, it looks as though the people who yesterday built it meant to-morrow to move out. The river-front is one long dump-heap. It is a grave-yard for rusty boilers, deck-plates, chains, fire-bars. The interior of the principal storehouse for ships' supplies, directly in front of the office of the captain of the port, looks like a junk-shop for old iron and newspapers. I should have enjoyed taking the captain of the port by the neck and showing him the water-front and marine shops at Calabar; the wharfs and quays of stone, the open places spread with gravel, the whitewashed cement gutters, the spare parts of machinery, greased and labeled in their proper shelves, even the condemned scrap-iron in orderly piles; the whole yard as trim as a battleship.

On the river-front at Leopoldville a grossly fat man, collarless, coatless, purple-faced, perspiring, was rushing up and down. He was the captain of the port. Black women had assembled to greet returning black soldiers, and the captain was calling upon the black sentries to drive them away. The sentries, yelling, fell upon the women with their six-foot staves and beat them over the head and bare shoulders, and as they fled, screaming, the captain of the port danced in the sun shaking his fists after them and raging violently. Next morning I was told he had tried to calm his nerves with absinthe, which is not particularly good for nerves, and was exceedingly unwell. I was sorry for him. The picture of discipline afforded by the glazed-eyed official, reeling and cursing in the open street, had been illuminating.

Although at Leopoldville the State has failed to build wharfs, the esthetic features of the town have not been neglected, and there is a pretty plaza called Stanley Park. In the centre of this plaza is a pillar with, at its base, a bust of Leopold, and on the top of the pillar a plaster-of-Paris lady, nude, and, not unlike the Bacchante of MacMonnies. Not so much from the likeness as from history, I deduced that the lady must be Cleo de Merode. But whether the monument is erected to her or to Leopold, or to both of them, I do not know.

[Illustration: The Monument in Stanley Park, Erected, not to Stanley, but to Leopold.]

I left Leopoldville in the *Deliverance*. Some of the State boats that make the long trip to Stanleyville are very large ships. They have plenty of deck room and many cabins. With their flat, raft-like hull, their paddle-wheel astern, and the covered sun deck, they resemble gigantic house-boats. Of one of these boats the *Deliverance* was only one-third the size, but I took passage on her because she would give me a chance to see not only something



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of the Congo, but also one of its great tributaries, the less travelled Kasai. The *Deliverance* was about sixty-five feet over all and drew three feet of water. She was built like a mud-scow, with a deck of iron plates. Amidships, on this deck, was a tiny cabin with berths for two passengers and standing room for one. The furnaces and boiler were forward, banked by piles of wood. All the river boats burn only wood. Her engines were in the stern. These engines and the driving-rod to the paddle-wheel were uncovered. This gives the *Deliverance* the look of a large automobile without a tonneau. You were constantly wondering what had gone wrong with the carbureter, and if it rained what would happen to her engines. Supported on iron posts was an upper deck, on which, forward, stood the captain's box of a cabin and directly in front of it the steering-wheel. The telegraph, which signalled to the openwork engine below, and a dining table as small as a chess-board, completely filled the "bridge." When we sat at table the captain's boy could only just squeeze himself between us and the rail. It was like dining in a private box. And certainly no theatre ever offered such scenery, nor did any menagerie ever present so many strange animals.

We were four white men: Captain Jensen, his engineer, and the other passenger, Captain Anfossi, a young Italian. Before he reached his post he had to travel one month on the *Deliverance* and for another month walk through the jungle. He was the most cheerful and amusing companion, and had he been returning after three years of exile to his home he could not have been more brimful of spirits. Captain Jensen was a Dane (almost every river captain is a Swede or a Dane) and talked a little English, a little French, and a little Bangala. The mechanic was a Finn and talked the native Bangala, and Anfossi spoke French. After chop, when we were all assembled on the upper deck, there would be the most extraordinary talks in four languages, or we would appoint one man to act as a clearing-house, and he would translate for the others.

On the lower deck we carried twenty "wood boys," whose duty was to cut wood for the furnace, and about thirty black passengers. They were chiefly soldiers, who had finished their period of service for the State, with their wives and children. They were crowded on the top of the hatches into a space fifteen by fifteen feet between our cabin door and the furnace. Around the combings of the hatches, and where the scuppers would have been had the *Deliverance* had scuppers, the river raced over the deck to a depth of four or five inches. When the passengers wanted to wash their few clothes or themselves they carried on their ablutions and laundry work where they happened to be sitting. But for Anfossi and myself to go from our cabin to the iron ladder of the bridge it was necessary to wade both in the water and to make stepping stones of the passengers. I do not mean

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that we merely stepped over an occasional arm or leg. I mean we walked on them. You have seen a football player, in a hurry to make a touchdown, hurdle without prejudice both friends and foes. Our progress was like this. But by practice we became so expert that without even awakening them we could spring lightly from the plump stomach of a black baby to its mother's shoulder, from there leap to the father's ribs, and rebound upon the rungs of the ladder.

[Illustration: The *Deliverance*.]

The river marched to the sea at the rate of four to five miles an hour. The *Deliverance* could make about nine knots an hour, so we travelled at the average rate of five miles; but for the greater part of each day we were tied to a bank while the boys went ashore and cut enough wood to carry us farther. And we never travelled at night. Owing to the changing currents, before the sun set we ran into shore and made fast to a tree. I explained how in America the river boats used search-lights, and was told that on one boat the State had experimented with a searchlight, but that particular searchlight having got out of order the idea of night travelling was condemned.

Ours was a most lazy progress, but one with the most beautiful surroundings and filled with entertainment. From our private box we looked out upon the most wonderful of panoramas. Sometimes we were closely hemmed in by mountains of light-green grass, except where, in the hollows, streams tumbled in tiny waterfalls between gigantic trees hung with strange flowering vines and orchids. Or we would push into great lakes of swirling brown water, dotted with flat islands overgrown with reed grass higher than the head of a man. Again the water turned blue and the trees on the banks grew into forests with the look of cultivated, well-cared-for parks, but with no sign of man, not even a mud hut or a canoe; only the strangest of birds and the great river beasts. Sometimes the sky was overcast and gray, the warm rain shut us in like a fog, and the clouds hid the peaks of the hills, or there would come a swift black tornado and the rain beat into our private box, and each would sit crouched in his rain coat, while the engineer smothered his driving-rods in palm oil, and the great drops drummed down upon the awning and drowned the fire in our pipes. After these storms, as though it were being pushed up from below, the river seemed to rise in the centre, to become convex. By some optical illusion, it seemed to fall away on either hand to the depth of three or four feet.

But as a rule we had a brilliant, gorgeous sunshine that made the eddying waters flash and sparkle, and caused the banks of sand to glare like whitewashed walls, and turn the sharp, hard fronds of the palms into glittering sword-blades. The movement of the boat tempered the heat, and in lazy content we sat in our lookout box and smiled upon the world. Except for the throb of the engine and the slow splash, splash, splash of the wheel there was no sound. We might have been adrift in the heart of a great ocean. So

complete was the silence, so few were the sounds of man's presence, that at times one almost thought that ours was the first boat to disturb the Congo.

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Although we were travelling by boat, we spent as much time on land as on the water. Because the *Deliverance* burnt wood and, like an invading army, “lived on the country,” she was always stopping to lay in a supply. That gave Anfossi and myself a chance to visit the native villages or to hunt in the forest.

To feed her steamers the State has established along the river-bank posts for wood, and in theory at these places there always is a sufficient supply of wood to carry a steamer to the next post. But our experience was either that another steamer had just taken all the wood or that the boys had decided to work no more and had hidden themselves in the bush. The State posts were “clearings,” less than one hundred yards square, cut out of the jungle. Sometimes only black men were in charge, but as a rule the *chef de poste* was a lonely, fever-ridden white, whose only interest in our arrival was his hope that we might spare him quinine. I think we gave away as many grains of quinine as we received logs of wood. Empty-handed we would turn from the wood post and steam a mile or so farther up the river, where we would run into a bank, and a boy with a steel hawser would leap overboard and tie up the boat to the roots of a tree. Then all the boys would disappear into the jungle and attack the primeval forest. Each was supplied with a machete and was expected to furnish a *bras* of wood. A *bras* is a number of sticks about as long and as thick as your arm, placed in a pile about three feet high and about three feet wide. To fix this measure the head boy drove poles into the bank three feet apart, and from pole to pole at the same distance from the ground stretched a strip of bark. When each boy had filled one of these openings all the wood was carried on board, and we would unhitch the *Deliverance*, and she would proceed to burn up the fuel we had just collected. It took the twenty boys about four hours to cut the wood, and the *Deliverance* the same amount of time to burn it. It was distinctly a hand-to-mouth existence. As I have pointed out, when it is too dark to see the currents, the Congo captains never attempt to travel. So each night at sunset Captain Jensen ran into the bank, and as soon as the plank was out all the black passengers and the crew passed down it and spent the night on shore. In five minutes the women would have the fires lighted and the men would be cutting grass for bedding and running up little shelters of palm boughs and hanging up linen strips that were both tents and mosquito nets.

[Illustration: The Native Wife of a *Chef de Poste*.]



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In the moonlight the natives with their camp-fires and torches made most wonderful pictures. Sometimes for their sleeping place the captain would select a glade in the jungle, or where a stream had cut a little opening in the forest, or a sandy island, with tall rushes on either side and the hot African moon shining on the white sand and turning the palms to silver, or they would pitch camp in a buffalo wallow, where the grass and mud had been trampled into a clay floor by the hoofs of hundreds of wild animals. But the fact that they were to sleep where at sunrise and at sunset came buffaloes, elephants, and panthers, disturbed the women not at all, and as they bent, laughing, over the iron pots, the firelight shone on their bare shoulders and was reflected from their white teeth and rolling eyes and brazen bangles.

Until late in the night the goats would bleat, babies cry, and the “boys” and “mammies” talked, sang, quarrelled, beat tom-toms, and squeezed mournful groans out of the accordion of civilization. One would have thought we had anchored off a busy village rather than at a place where, before that night, the inhabitants had been only the beasts of the jungle and the river.

IV

AMERICANS IN THE CONGO

In trying to sum up what I found in the Congo Free State, I think what one fails to find there is of the greatest significance. To tell what the place is like, you must tell what it lacks. One must write of the Congo always in the negative. It is as though you asked: “What sort of a house is this one Jones has built?” and were answered: “Well, it hasn’t any roof, and it hasn’t any cellar, and it has no windows, floors, or chimneys. It’s that kind of a house.”

When first I arrived in the Congo the time I could spend there seemed hopelessly inadequate. After I’d been there a month, it seemed to me that in a very few days any one could obtain a painfully correct idea of the place, and of the way it is administered. If an orchestra starts on an piece of music with all the instruments out of tune, it need not play through the entire number for you to know that the instruments are out of tune.

The charges brought against Leopold II, as King of the Congo, are three:

- (a) That he has made slaves of the twenty million blacks he promised to protect.
- (b) That, in spite of his promise to keep the Congo open to trade, he has closed it to all nations.
- (c) That the revenues of the country and all of its trade he has retained for himself.



Any one who visits the Congo and remains only two weeks will be convinced that of these charges Leopold is guilty. In that time he will not see atrocities, but he will see that the natives are slaves, that no foreigner can trade with them, that in the interest of Leopold alone the country is milked.



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He will see that the government of Leopold is not a government. It preserves the perquisites and outward signs of government. It coins money, issues stamps, collects taxes. But it assumes none of the responsibilities of government. The Congo Free State is only a great trading house. And in it Leopold is the only wholesale and retail trader. He gives a bar of soap for rubber, and makes a "turn-over" of a cup of salt for ivory. He is not a monarch. He is a shopkeeper.

And were the country not so rich in rubber and ivory, were the natives not sweated so severely, he also would be a bankrupt shopkeeper. For the Congo is not only one vast trading post, but also it is a trading post badly managed. Even in the republics of Central America where the government changes so frequently, and where each new president is trying to make hay while he can, there is better administration, more is done for the people, the rights of other nations are better respected.

Were the Congo properly managed, it would be one of the richest territories on the surface of the earth. As it is, through ignorance and cupidity, it is being despoiled and its people are the most wretched of human beings. In the White Book containing the reports of British vice-consuls on conditions in the Congo from April of last year to January of this year, Mr. Mitchell tells how the enslavement of the people still continues, how "they" (the conscripts, as they are called) "are hunted in the forest by soldiers, and brought in chained by the neck like criminals." They then, though conscripted to serve in the army, are set to manual labor. They are slaves. The difference between the slavery under Leopold and the slavery under the Arab raiders is that the Arab was the better and kinder master. He took "prisoners" just as Leopold seizes "conscripts," but he had too much foresight to destroy whole villages, to carry off all the black man's live stock, and to uproot his vegetable gardens. He purposed to return. And he did not wish to so terrify the blacks that to escape from him they would penetrate farther into the jungle. His motive was purely selfish, but his methods, compared with those of Leopold, were almost considerate. The work the State to-day requires of the blacks is so oppressive that they have no time, no heart, to labor for themselves.

In every other colony—French, English, German—in the native villages I saw vegetable gardens, goats, and chickens, large, comfortable, three-room huts, fences, and, especially in the German settlement of the Cameroons at Duala, many flower gardens. In Bell Town at Duala I walked for miles through streets lined with such huts and gardens, and saw whole families, the very old as well as the very young, sitting contentedly in the shade of their trees, or at work in their gardens. In the Congo native villages I saw but one old person, of chickens or goats that were not to be given to the government as taxes I saw none, and the vegetable gardens,



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when there were any such, were cultivated for the benefit of the *chef de poste*, and the huts were small, temporary, and filthy. The dogs in the kennels on my farm are better housed, better fed, and much better cared for, whether ill or well, than are the twenty millions of blacks along the Congo River. And that these human beings are so ill-treated is due absolutely to the cupidity of one man, and to the apathy of the rest of the world. And it is due as much to the apathy and indifference of whoever may read this as to the silence of Elihu Root or Sir Edward Grey. No one can shirk his responsibility by sneering, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Government of the United States and the thirteen other countries have promised to protect these people, to care for their "material and moral welfare," and that promise is morally binding upon the people of those countries. How much Leopold cares for the material welfare of the natives is illustrated by the prices he pays the "boys" who worked on the government steamer in which I went up the Kasai. They were bound on a three months' voyage, and for each month's work on this trip they were given in payment their rice and eighty cents. That is, at the end of the trip they received what in our money would be equivalent to two dollars and forty cents. And that they did not receive in money, but in "trade goods," which are worth about ten per cent less than their money value. So that of the two dollars and eighty cents that is due them, these black boys, who for three months sweated in the dark jungle cutting wood, are robbed by this King of twenty-four cents. One would dislike to grow rich at that price.

[Illustration: English Missionaries, and Some of Their Charges.]

In the French Congo I asked the traders at Libreville what they paid their boys for cutting mahogany. I found the price was four francs a day without "chop," or three and a half francs with "chop." That is, on one side of the river the French pay in cash for one day's work what Leopold pays in trade goods for the work of a month. As a result the natives run away to the French side, and often, I might almost say invariably, when at the *poste de bois* on the Congo side we would find two cords of wood, on the other bank at the post for the French boats we would count two hundred and fifty cords of wood. I took photographs of the native villages in all the colonies, in order to show how they compared—of the French and Belgian wood posts, the one well stocked and with the boys lying about asleep or playing musical instruments, or alert to trade and barter, and on the Belgian side no wood, and the unhappy white man alone, and generally shivering with fever. Had the photographs only developed properly they would have shown much more convincingly than one can write how utterly miserable is the condition of the Congo negro. And the condition of the white man at the wood posts is only a little better. We found one man absolutely without supplies. He was only twenty-four hours distant from Leopoldville, but no supplies had been sent him. He was ill with fever, and he could eat nothing but milk. Captain Jensen had six cans of condensed milk, which the State calculated should suffice for him and his passengers for three months. He turned the lot over to the sick man.



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We found another white man at the first wood post on the Kasai just above where it meets the Congo. He was in bed and dangerously ill with enteric fever. He had telegraphed the State at Leopoldville and a box of medicines had been sent to him; but the State doctors had forgotten to enclose any directions for their use. We were as ignorant of medicines as the man himself, and, as it was impossible to move him, we were forced to leave him lying in his cot with the row of bottles and tiny boxes, that might have given him life, unopened at his elbow. It was ten days before the next boat would touch at his post. I do not know that it reached him in time. One could tell dozens of such stories of cruelty to natives and of injustice and neglect to the white agents.

The fact that Leopold has granted to American syndicates control over two great territories in the Congo may bring about a better state of affairs, and, in any event, it may arouse public interest in this country. It certainly should be of interest to Americans that some of the most prominent of their countrymen have gone into close partnership with a speculator as unscrupulous and as notorious as is Leopold, and that they are to exploit a country which as yet has been developed only by the help of slavery, with all its attendant evils of cruelty and torture.

That Leopold has no right to give these concessions is a matter which chiefly concerns the men who are to pay for them, but it is an interesting fact.

The Act of Berlin expressly states: *"No Power which exercises, or shall exercise, sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions, shall be allowed to grant therein a monopoly or favor of any kind in matters of trade."*

Leopold is only a steward placed by the Powers over the Congo. He is a janitor. And he has no more authority to give even a foot of territory to Belgians, Americans, or Chinamen than the janitor of an apartment house has authority to fill the rooms with his wife's relations or sell the coal in the basement.

The charge that the present concessionaires have no title that any independent trader or miner need respect is one that is sure to be brought up when the Powers throw Leopold out, and begin to clean house. The concessionaires take a sporting chance that Leopold will not be thrown out. It should be remembered that it is to his and to their advantage to see that he is not.

In November of 1906, Leopold gave the International Forestry and Mining Company of the Congo mining rights in territories adjoining his private park, the *Domaine de la Couronne*, and to the American Congo Company he granted the right to work rubber along the Congo River to where it joins the Kasai. This latter is a territory of four thousand square miles. The company also has the option within the next eleven years of buying land in any part of a district which is nearly one-half of the entire Congo. Of the



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Forestry and Mining Company one-half of the profits go to Leopold, one-fourth to Belgians, and the remaining fourth to the Americans. Of the profits of the American Congo Company, Leopold is entitled to one-half and the Americans to the other half. This company was one originally organized to exploit a new method of manufacturing crude rubber from the plant. The company was taken over by Thomas F. Ryan and his associates. Back of both companies are the Guggenheims, who are to perform the actual work in the mines and in the rubber plantation. Early in March a large number of miners and engineers were selected by John Hays Hammond, the chief engineer of the Guggenheim Exploration Companies, and A. Chester Beatty, and were sent to explore the territory granted in the mining concession. Another force of experts are soon to follow. The legal representative of the syndicates has stated that in the Congo they intend to move "on commercial lines." By that we take it they mean they will give the native a proper price for his labor; and instead of offering "bonuses" and "commissions" to their white employees will pay them living wages. The exact terms of the concessions are wrapped in mystery. Some say the territories ceded to the concessionaires are to be governed by them, policed by them, and that within the boundaries of these concessions the Americans are to have absolute control. If this be so the syndicates are entering upon an experiment which for Americans is almost without precedent. They will be virtually what in England is called a chartered company, with the difference that the Englishmen receive their charter from their own government, while the charter under which the Americans will act will be granted by a foreign Power, and for what they may do in the Congo their own government could not hold them responsible. They are answerable only to the Power that issued the charter; and that Power is the just, the humane, the merciful Leopold.

The history of the early days of chartered companies in Africa, notoriously those of the Congo, Northern Nigeria, Rhodesia, and German Central Africa does not make pleasant reading. But until the Americans in the Congo have made this experiment, it would be most unfair (except that the company they choose to keep leaves them open to suspicion) not to give them the benefit of the doubt. One can at least say for them that they seem to be absolutely ignorant of the difficulties that lie before them. At least that is true of all of them to whom I have talked.

The attorney of the Rubber Company when interviewed by a representative of a New York paper is reported to have said: "We have purchased a privilege from a Sovereign State and propose to operate it along purely commercial lines. With King Leopold's management of Congo affairs in the past, or, with *what he may do in an administrative way in the future, we have absolutely nothing to do.*" The italics are mine.



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When asked: "Under your concessions are you given similar powers over the native blacks as are enjoyed by other concessionaires?" the answer of the attorney, as reported, was: "The problem of labor is not mentioned in the concession agreement, neither is the question of local administration. We are left to solve the labor problem in our own way, on a purely commercial basis, and with the question of government we have absolutely nothing whatever to do. The labor problem will not be formidable. Our mills are simple affairs. One man can manage them, and the question of the labor on the rubber concession is reduced to the minimum." This answer of the learned attorney shows an ignorance of "labor" conditions in the Congo which is, unless assumed, absolutely abject.

If the American syndicates are not to police and govern the territories ceded them, but if these territories are to continue to be administered by Leopold, it is not possible for the Americans to have "absolutely nothing to do" with that administration. Leopold's sole idea of administration is that every black man is his slave, in other words, the only men the Americans can depend upon for labor are slaves. Of the profits of these American companies Leopold is to receive one-half. He will work his rubber with slaves.

Are the Americans going to use slaves also, or do they intend "on commercial lines" to pay those who work for them living wages? And if they do, at the end of the fiscal year, having paid a fair price for labor, are they prepared to accept a smaller profit than will their partner Leopold, who obtains his labor with the aid of a chain and a whip?

[Illustration: The Laboring Man Upon Whom the American Concessionaires Must Depend.]

The attorney for the company airily says: "The labor problem will not be formidable."

If the man knows what he is talking about, he can mean but one thing.

The motives that led Leopold to grant these concessions are possibly various. The motives that induced the Americans to take his offer were probably less complicated. With them it was no question of politics. They wanted the money; they did not need it, for they all are rich—they merely wanted it. But Leopold wants more than the half profits he will obtain from the Americans. If the Powers should wake from their apathy and try to cast him out of the Congo, he wants, through his American partners, the help of the United States. Should he be "dethroned," by granting these concessions now on a share and share alike basis with Belgians, French, and Americans, he still, through them, hopes to draw from the Congo a fair income. And in the meanwhile he looks to these Americans to kill any action against him that may be taken in our Senate and House of Representatives, even in the White House and Department of State.

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For the last two years Chester A. Beatty has been visiting Leopold at Belgium, and has obtained the two concessions, and Leopold has obtained, or hopes he has obtained, the influence of many American shareholders. The fact that the people of the United States possessed no "vested interest" in the Congo was the important fact that placed any action on our part in behalf of that distressed country above suspicion. If we acted, we did so because the United States, as one of the signatory Powers of the Berlin Act, had promised to protect the natives of the Congo; and we could truly claim that we acted only in the name of humanity. Leopold has now robbed us of that claim. He hopes that the enormous power wielded by the Americans with whom he is associated, will prevent any action against him in this country.

But the deal has already been made public, and the motives of those who now oppose improvement of conditions in the Congo, and who support Leopold, will be at once suspected.

To me the most interesting thing about the tract of land ceded to Mr. Ryan, apart from the number of hippopotamuses I saw on it, was that the people living along the Congo say that it is of no value. They told me that two years ago, after working it for some time, Leopold abandoned it as unprofitable, and they added that, when Leopold cannot whip rubber out of the forest, it is hard to believe that it can be obtained there legitimately by any one else. On the bank I saw the "factories" to which the unprofitable rubber had been carried from the interior. They had formerly belonged to Leopold, now they are the property of Mr. Ryan and of the American Congo Company. In only two years they already are in ruins, and the jungle has engulfed them.

I was on the land owned by the company a dozen times or more, but I did not go into the interior. Even had I done so, I am not an expert on rubber, and would have understood nothing of Para trees, Lagos silk, and liane. I am speaking not of my own knowledge, only of what was told me by people who live on the spot. I found that this particular concession was well known, because, unlike the land given to the Forestry and Mines Company, it is not an inaccessible tract, but is situated only eight miles from Leopoldville. In our language, that is about as far as is the Battery to 160th Street. Leopoldville is the chief place on the Congo River, and every one there who spoke to me of the concession knew where it was situated, and repeated that it had been given up by Leopold as unprofitable, and that he had unloaded it on Mr. Ryan. They seem to think it very clever of the King to have got rid of it to the American millionaire. To one knowing Mr. Ryan only from what he reads of him in the public press, he does not seem to be the sort of man to whom Leopold could sell a worthless rubber plantation. However, it is a matter which concerns only Mr. Ryan and those who may think of purchasing shares in the company. The Guggenheims, who are to operate this rubber, say that Leopold did not know how to get out the full value of the land, and that they, by using the machinery they will install, will be able to make a profit, where Leopold, using only native labor, suffered a loss.



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To the poor the ways of the truly rich are past finding out. After a man has attained a fortune sufficient to keep him in yachts and automobiles, one would think he could afford to indulge himself in the luxury of being squeamish; that as to where he obtained any further increase of wealth, he would prefer to pick and choose.

On the contrary, these Americans go as far out of their way as Belgium to make a partner of the man who has wrung his money from wretched slaves, who were beaten, starved, and driven in chains. This concession cannot make them rich. It can only make them richer. And not richer in fact, for all the money they may whip out of the Congo could not give them one thing that they cannot now command, not an extra taste to the lips, not a fresh sensation, not one added power for good. To them it can mean only a figure in ink on a page of a bank-book. But what suffering, what misery it may mean to the slaves who put it there! Why should men as rich as these elect to go into partnership with one who sweats his dollars out of the naked black? How really fine, how really wonderful it would be if these same men, working together, decided to set free these twenty million people—if, instead of joining hands with Leopold, they would overthrow him and march into the Congo free men, without his chain around their ankles, and open it to the trade of the world, and give justice and a right to live and to work and to sell and buy to millions of miserable human beings. These Americans working together could do it. They could do it from Washington. Or five hundred men with two Maxim guns could do it. The “kingdom” of the Congo is only a house of cards. Five hundred filibusters could take Boma, proclaim the Congo open to the traders of the world, as the Act of Berlin declares it to be, and in a day make of Leopold the jest of Europe. They would only be taking possession of what has always belonged to them.

Down in the Congo I talked to many young officers of Leopold’s army. They had been driven to serve him by the whips of failure, poverty, or crime. I do not know that the American concessionaires are driven by any such scourge. These younger men, who saw the depths of their degradation, who tasted the dirty work they were doing, were daily risking life by fever, through lack of food, by poisoned arrows, and for three hundred dollars a year. Their necessity was great. They had the courage of their failure. They were men one could pity. One of them picked at the band of blue and gold braid around the wrist of his tunic, and said: “Look, it is our badge of shame.”

To me those foreign soldiers of fortune, who, sooner than starve at home or go to jail, serve Leopold in the jungle, seem more like men and brothers than these truly rich, who, of their own free will, safe in their downtown offices, become partners with this blackguard King.

What will be the outcome of the American advance into the Congo? Will it prove the salvation of the Congo? Will it be, if that were possible, a greater evil?



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E.R. Morel, who is the leader in England of the movement for the improvement of the Congo, has written: "It is a little difficult to imagine that the trust magnates are moulded upon the unique model of Leopold II, and are prepared for the asking to become associates in slave-driving. The trouble is that they probably know nothing about African conditions, that they have been primed by the King with his detestable theories, and are starting their enterprises on the basis that the natives of Central Africa must be regarded as mere 'laborers' for the white man's benefit, possessing no rights in land nor in the produce of the soil. If Mr. Ryan and his colleagues are going to acquire their rubber over four thousand square miles, by 'commercial methods,' we welcome their advent. But we would point out to them that, in such a case, they had better at once abandon all idea of three or four hundred per cent dividends with which the wily autocrat at Brussels has doubtless primed them. No such monstrous profits are to be acquired in tropical Africa under a trade system. If, on the other hand, the methods they are prepared to adopt are the methods King Leopold and his other concessionaires have adopted for the past thirteen years, devastation and destruction, and the raising of more large bodies of soldiers, are their essential accompaniments; and the widening of the area of the Congo hell is assured."

The two things in the American invasion of the Congo that promise good to that unhappy country are that our country is represented at Boma by a most intelligent, honest, and fearless young man in the person of James A. Smith, our Consul-General, and that the actual work of operating the mines and rubber is in the hands of the Guggenheims. They are well known as men upright in affairs, and as philanthropists and humanitarians of the common-sense type. Like other rich men of their race, they have given largely to charity and to assist those less fortunate than themselves.

For thirteen years in mines in Mexico, in China, and Alaska, they have had to deal with the problem of labor, and they have met it successfully. Workmen of three nationalities they have treated with fairness.

"Why should you suppose," Mr. Daniel Guggenheim asked me, "that in the Congo we will treat the negroes harshly? In Mexico we found the natives ill-paid and ill-fed. We fed them and paid them well. Not from any humanitarian idea, but because it was good business. It is not good business to cut off a workman's hands or head. We are not ashamed of the way we have always treated our workmen, and in the Congo we are not going to spoil our record."

I suggested that in Mexico he did not have as his partner Leopold, tempting him with slave labor, and that the distance from Broadway to his concessions in the Congo was so great that as to what his agents might do there he could not possibly know. To this Mr. Guggenheim answered that "Neither Leopold nor anyone else can dictate how we shall treat the native labor," that if his agents were cruel they would be instantly dismissed, and that for what occurred in the Congo on the land occupied by the

American Congo Company his brothers and himself alone were responsible, and that they accepted that responsibility.

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But already on his salary list he has men who are sure to get him into trouble, men of whose *dossiers* he is quite ignorant.

From Belgium, Leopold has unloaded on the American companies several of his “valets du roi,” press agents, and tools, men who for years have been defenders of his dirty work in the Congo; and of the Americans, one, who is prominently exploited by the Belgians, had to leave Africa for theft.

That Mr. Guggenheim wishes and intends to give to the black in the Congo fair treatment there is no possible doubt. But that on Broadway, removed from the scene of operations in time some four to six months, and in actual distance eight thousand miles, he can control the acts of his agents and his partners, remains to be proved. He is attacking a problem much more momentous than the handling of Mexican *peons* or Chinese coolies, and every step of the working out of this problem will be watched by the people of this country.

And should they find that the example of the Belgian concessionaires in their treatment of the natives is being imitated by even one of the American Congo Company the people of this country will know it, and may the Lord have mercy on his soul!

V

HUNTING THE HIPPO

Except once or twice in the Zoo, I never had seen a hippopotamus, and I was most anxious, before I left the Congo, to meet one. I wanted to look at him when he was free, and his own master, without iron bars or keepers; when he believed he was quite alone, and was enjoying his bath in peace and confidence. I also wanted to shoot him, and to hang in my ancestral halls his enormous head with the great jaws open and the inside of them painted pink and the small tusks hungrily protruding. I had this desire, in spite of the fact that for every hippo except the particular one whose head I coveted, I entertained the utmost good feeling.

As a lad, among other beasts the hippopotamus had appealed to my imagination. Collectively, I had always looked upon them as most charming people. They come of an ancient family. Two thousand four hundred years ago they were mentioned by Herodotus. And Herodotus to the animal kingdom is what Domesday Book is to the landed gentry. To exist beautifully for twenty-four hundred years without a single mesalliance, without having once stooped to trade, is certainly a strong title to nobility. Other animals by contact with man have become degraded. The lion, the “King of Beasts,” now rides a bicycle, and growls, as previously rehearsed, at the young woman in spangles, of whom he is secretly afraid. And the elephant, the monarch of the jungle, and of a family as ancient and noble as that of the hippopotamus, the monarch of the

river, has become a beast of burden and works for his living. You can see him in Phoenix Park dragging a road-roller, in Siam and India carrying logs, and at Coney Island he bends the knee to little girls from Brooklyn. The royal proboscis, that once uprooted trees, now begs for peanuts.



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But, you never see a hippopotamus chained to a road-roller, or riding a bicycle. He is still the gentleman, the man of elegant leisure, the aristocrat of aristocrats, harming no one, and, in his ancestral river, living the simple life.

And yet, I sought to kill him. At least, one of him, but only one. And, that I did not kill even one, while a bitter disappointment, is still a source of satisfaction.

In the Congo River we saw only two hippos, and both of them were dead. They had been shot from a steamer. If the hippo is killed in the water, it is impossible to recover the body at once. It sinks and does not rise, some say, for an hour, others say for seven hours. As in an hour the current may have carried the body four miles below where it sank, the steamer does not wait, and the destruction of the big beast is simple murder. There should be a law in the Congo to prevent their destruction, and, no doubt, if the State thought it could make a few francs out of protecting the hippo, as it makes many million francs by preserving the elephant, which it does for the ivory, such a law would exist. We soon saw many hippos, but although we could not persuade the only other passenger not to fire at them, there are a few hippos still alive in the Congo. For, the only time the Captain and I were positive he hit anything, was when he fired over our heads and blew off the roof of the bridge.

When first we saw the two dead hippos, one of them was turning and twisting so violently that we thought he was alive. But, as we drew near, we saw the strange convulsions were due to two enormous and ugly crocodiles, who were fiercely pulling at the body. Crocodiles being man-eaters, we had no feelings about shooting them, either in the water or up a tree; and I hope we hit them. In any event, after we fired the body drifted on in peace.

On my return trip, going with the stream, when the boat covers about four times the distance she makes when steaming against it, I saw many hippos. In one day I counted sixty-nine. But on our way up the Congo, until we turned into the Kasai River, we saw none.

So, on the first night we camped in the Kasai I had begun to think I never would see one, and I went ashore both skeptical and discouraged. We had stopped, not at a wood post, but at a place on the river's bank previously untouched by man, where there was a stretch of beach, and then a higher level with trees and tall grasses. Driven deep in this beach were the footprints of a large elephant. They looked as though some one had amused himself by sinking a bucket in the mud, and then pulling it out. For sixty yards I followed the holes and finally lost them in a confusion of other tracks. The place had been so trampled upon that it was beaten into a basin. It looked as though every animal in the Kasai had met there to hold a dance. There were the deep imprints of the hippos and the round foot of the elephant, with the marks of the big toes showing



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as clearly as though they had been scooped out of the mud with a trowel, the hoofs of buffalo as large as the shoe of a cart horse, and the arrow-like marks of the antelope, some in dainty little Vs, others measuring three inches across, and three inches from the base to the point. They came from every direction, down the bank and out of the river; and crossed and recrossed, and beneath the fresh prints that had been made that morning at sunrise, were those of days before rising up sharply out of the sun-dried clay, like bas-reliefs in stucco. I had gone ashore in a state of mind so skeptical that I was as surprised as Crusoe at the sight of footprints. It was as though the boy who did not believe in fairies suddenly stumbled upon them sliding down the moonbeams. One felt distinctly apologetic—as though uninvited he had pushed himself into a family gathering. At the same time there was the excitement of meeting in their own homes the strange peoples I had seen only in the springtime, when the circus comes to New York, in the basement of Madison Square Garden, where they are our pitiful prisoners, bruising their shoulders against bars. Here they were monarchs of all they surveyed. I was the intruder; and, looking down at the marks of the great paws and delicate hoofs, I felt as much out of place as would a grizzly bear in a Fifth Avenue club. And I behaved much as would the grizzly bear. I rushed back for my rifle intent on killing something.

The sun had just set; the moon was shining faintly: it was the moment the beasts of the jungle came to the river to drink. Anfossi, although he had spent three years in the Congo and had three years' contract still to work out, was as determined to kill something as was the tenderfoot from New York.

Sixty yards from the stern of the *Deliverance* was the basin I had discovered; at an equal distance from her bow, a stream plunged into the river. Anfossi argued the hippos would prefer to drink the clear water of the stream, to the muddy water of the basin, and elected to watch at the stream. I carried a deck chair to the edge of my basin and placed it in the shadow of the trees. Anfossi went into our cabin for his rifle. At that exact moment a hippopotamus climbed leisurely out of the river and plunged into the stream. One of the soldiers on shore saw him and rushed for the boat. Anfossi sent my boy on the jump for me and, like a gentleman, waited until I had raced the sixty yards. But when we reached the stream there was nothing visible but the trampled grass and great holes in the mud and near us in the misty moonlight river something that puffed and blew slowly and luxuriously, as would any fat gentleman who had been forced to run for it. Had I followed Anfossi's judgment and gone along the bank sixty yards ahead, instead of sixty yards astern of the *Deliverance*, at the exact moment at which I sank into my deck chair, the hippo would have emerged at my feet. It is even betting as to which of us would have been the more scared.



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The next day, and for days after, we saw nothing but hippos. We saw them floating singly and in family groups, with generally four or five cows to one bull, and sometimes in front a baby hippo no larger than a calf, which the mother with her great bulk would push against the swift current, as you see a tugboat in the lee of a great liner. Once, what I thought was a spit of rocks suddenly tumbled apart and became twenty hippos, piled more or less on top of each other. During that one day, as they floated with the current, enjoying their afternoon's nap, we saw thirty-four. They impressed me as the most idle, and, therefore, the most aristocratic of animals. They toil not, neither do they spin; they had nothing to do but float in the warm water and the bright sunshine; their only effort was to open their enormous jaws and yawn luxuriously, in the pure content of living, in absolute boredom. They reminded you only of fat gouty old gentlemen, puffing and blowing in the pool at the Warm Springs.

The next chance we had at one of them on shore came on our first evening in the Kasai just before sunset. Captain Jensen was steering for a flat island of sand and grass where he meant to tie up for the night. About fifty yards from the spot for which we were making, was the only tree on the island, and under it with his back to us, and leisurely eating the leaves of the lower branches, exactly as though he were waiting for us by appointment, was a big gray hippo. His back being toward us, we could not aim at his head, and he could not see us. But the *Deliverance* is not noiseless, and, hearing the paddle-wheel, the hippo turned, saw us, and bolted for the river. The hippopotamus is as much at home in the water as the seal. To get to the water, if he is surprised out of it, and to get under it, if he is alarmed while in it, is instinct. If he does venture ashore, he goes only a few rods from the bank and then only to forage. His home is the river, and he rushes to bury himself in it as naturally as the squirrel makes for a tree. This particular hippo ran for the river as fast as a horse coming at a slow trot. He was a very badly scared hippo. His head was high in the air, his fat sides were shaking, and the one little eye turned toward us was filled with concern. Behind him the yellow sun was setting into the lagoons. On the flat stretch of sand he was the only object, and against the horizon loomed as large as a freight car. That must be why we both missed him. I tried to explain that the reason I missed him was that, never before having seen so large an animal running for his life, I could not watch him do it and look at the gun sights. No one believed that was why I missed him. I did not believe it myself. In any event neither of us hit his head, and he plunged down the bank to freedom, carrying most of the bank with him. But, while we still were violently blaming each other, at about two hundred yards below the boat, he again waddled out of the river and waded



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knee deep up the little stream. Keeping the bunches of grass between us, I ran up the beach, aimed at his eye and this time hit him fairly enough. With a snort he rose high in the air, and so, for an instant, balanced his enormous bulk. The action was like that of a horse that rears on his hind legs, when he is whipped over the nose. And apparently my bullet hurt him no more than the whip the horse, for he dropped heavily to all fours, and again disappeared into the muddy river. Our disappointment and chagrin were intense, and at once Anfossi and I organized a hunt for that evening. To encourage us, while we were sitting on the bridge making a hasty dinner, another hippopotamus had the impertinence to rise, blowing like a whale, not ten feet from where we sat. We could have thrown our tin cups and hit him; but he was in the water, and now we were seeking only those on land.

[Illustration: Mr. Davis and Native "Boy," on the Kasai River.]

Two years ago when the atrocities along the Kasai made the natives fear the white man and the white man fear the natives, each of the river boats was furnished with a stand of Albinis rifles. Three of the black soldiers, who were keen sportsmen, were served with these muskets, and as soon as the moon rose, the soldiers and Anfossi, my black boy, with an extra gun, and I set forth to clear the island of hippos. To the stranger it was a most curious hunt. The island was perfectly flat and bare, and the river had eaten into it and overflowed it with tiny rivulets and deep, swift-running streams. Into these rivulets and streams the soldiers plunged, one in front, feeling the depth of the water with a sounding rod, and as he led we followed. The black men made a splendid picture. They were naked but for breech-cloths, and the moonlight flashed on their wet skins and upon the polished barrels of the muskets. But, as a sporting proposition, as far as I could see, we had taken on the hippopotamus at his own game. We were supposed to be on an island, but the water was up to our belts and running at five miles an hour. I could not understand why we had not openly and aboveboard walked into the river. Wading waist high in the water with a salmon rod I could understand, but not swimming around in a river with a gun. The force of the shallowest stream was the force of the great river behind it, and wherever you put your foot, the current, on its race to the sea, annoyed at the impediment, washed the sand from under the sole of your foot and tugged at your knees and ankles. To add to the interest the three soldiers held their muskets at full cock, and as they staggered for a footing each pointed his gun at me. There also was a strange fish about the size of an English sole that sprang out of the water and hurled himself through space. Each had a white belly, and as they skimmed past us in the moonlight it was as though some one was throwing dinner plates. After we had swum the length of the English Channel, we returned to the boat. As to that midnight hunt I am still uncertain as to whether we were hunting the hippos or the hippos were hunting us.



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The next morning we had our third and last chance at a hippo.

It is distinctly a hard-luck story. We had just gone on the bridge for breakfast when we saw him walking slowly from us along an island of white sand as flat as your hand, and on which he loomed large as a haystack. Captain Jensen was a true sportsman. He jerked the bell to the engine-room, and at full speed the *Deliverance* raced for the shore. The hippo heard us, and, like a baseball player caught off base, tried to get back to the river. Captain Jensen danced on the deck plates:

“Shoot it! shoot it!” he yelled, “Gotfurdamn! shoot it!” When Anfossi and I fired, the *Deliverance* was a hundred yards from the hippo, and the hippo was not five feet from the bank. In another instant, he would have been over it and safe. But when we fired, he went down as suddenly as though a safe had dropped on him. Except that he raised his head, and rolled it from side to side, he remained perfectly still. From his actions, or lack of actions, it looked as though one of the bullets had broken his back; and when the blacks saw he could not move they leaped and danced and shrieked. To them the death of the big beast promised much chop.

But Captain Jensen was not so confident. “Shoot it,” he continued to shout, “we lose him yet! Gotfurdamn! shoot it!”

My gun was an American magazine rifle, holding five cartridges. We now were very near the hippo, and I shot him in the head twice, and, once, when he opened them, in the jaws. At each shot his head would jerk with a quick toss of pain, and at the sight the blacks screamed with delight that was primitively savage. After the last shot, when Captain Jensen had brought the *Deliverance* broadside to the bank, the hippo ceased to move. The boat had not reached the shore before the boys with the steel hawser were in the water; the gangplank was run out, and the black soldiers and wood boys, with their knives, were dancing about the hippo and hacking at his tail. Their idea was to make him the more quickly bleed to death. I ran to the cabin for more cartridges. It seemed an absurd precaution. I was as sure I had the head of that hippo as I was sure that my own was still on my neck. My only difficulty was whether to hang the head in the front hall or in the dining-room. It might be rather too large for the dining-room. That was all that troubled me. After three minutes, when I was back on deck, the hippo still lay immovable. Certainly twenty men were standing about him; three were sawing off his tail, and the women were chanting triumphantly a song they used to sing in the days when the men were allowed to hunt, and had returned successful with food.

On the bridge was Anfossi with his camera. Before the men had surrounded the hippo he had had time to snap one picture of it. I had just started after my camera, when from the blacks there was a yell of alarm, of rage, and amazement. The hippo had opened his eyes and raised his head. I shoved the boys out of the way, and, putting the gun close to his head, fired pointblank. I wanted to put him out of pain. I need not have distressed myself. The bullet affected him no more than a quinine pill. What seemed

chiefly to concern him, what apparently had brought him back to life, was the hacking at his tail. That was an indignity he could not brook.



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His expression, and he had a perfectly human expression, was one of extreme annoyance and of some slight alarm, as though he were muttering: "This is no place for *me*," and, without more ado, he began to roll toward the river. Without killing some one, I could not again use the rifle. The boys were close upon him, prying him back with the gangplank, beating him with sticks of firewood, trying to rope him with the steel hawser. On the bridge Captain Jensen and Anfossi were giving orders in Danish and Italian, and on the bank I swore in American. Everybody shoved and pushed and beat at the great bulk, and the great bulk rolled steadily on. We might as well have tried to budge the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He reached the bank, he crushed it beneath him, and, like a suspension bridge, splashed into the water. Even then, we who watched him thought he would stick fast between the boat and the bank, that the hawser would hold him. But he sank like a submarine, and we stood gaping at the muddy water and saw him no more. When I recovered from my first rage I was glad he was still alive to float in the sun and puff and blow and open his great jaws in a luxurious yawn. I could imagine his joining his friends after his meeting with us, and remarking in reference to our bullets: "I find the mosquitoes are quite bad this morning."

With this chapter is published the photograph Anfossi took, from the deck of the steamer, of our hippo—the hippo that was too stupid to know when he was dead. It is not a good photograph, but of our hippo it is all we have to show. I am still undecided whether to hang it in the hall or the dining-room.

[Illustration: The Hippopotamus that Did Not Know He Was Dead.]

The days I spent on my trip up the river were of delightful sameness, sunshine by day, with the great panorama drifting past, and quiet nights of moonlight. For diversion, there were many hippos, crocodiles, and monkeys, and, though we saw only their tracks and heard them only in the jungle, great elephants. And innumerable strange birds—egrets, eagles, gray parrots, crimson cranes, and giant flamingoes—as tall as a man and from tip to tip measuring eight feet.

Each day the programme was the same. The arrival at the wood post, where we were given only excuses and no wood, and where once or twice we unloaded blue cloth and bags of salt, which is the currency of the Upper Congo, and the halt for hours to cut wood in the forest.

Once we stopped at a mission and noted the contrast it made with the bare, unkempt posts of the State. It was the Catholic mission at Wombali, and it was a beauty spot of flowers, thatched houses, grass, and vegetables. There was a brickyard, and schools, and sewing-machines, and the blacks, instead of scowling at us, nodded and smiled and looked happy and contented. The Father was a great red-bearded giant, who seemed to have still stored up in him all the energy of the North. While the steamer was unloaded he raced me over the vegetable garden and showed me his farm. I had seen

other of the Catholic Missions, and I spoke of how well they looked, of the signs they gave of hard work, and of consideration for the blacks.



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“I am not of that Order,” the Father said gravely. He was speaking in English, and added, as though he expected some one to resent it: “We are Jesuits.” No one resented it, and he added: “We have our Order in your country. Do you know Fordham College?”

Did I know it? If you are trying to find our farm, the automobile book tells you to leave Fordham College on your left after Jerome Avenue.

“Of course, I know it,” I said. “They have one of the best baseball nines near New York; they play the Giants every spring.”

The Reverend Father started.

“They play with Giants!” he gasped.

I did not know how to say “baseball nines” in French, but at least he was assured that whatever it was, it was one of the best near New York.

Then Captain Jensen’s little black boy ran up to tell me the steamer was waiting, and began in Bangalese to beg something of the Father. The priest smiled and left us, returning with a rosary and crucifix, which the boy hung round his neck, and then knelt, and the red-bearded Father laid his fingers on the boy’s kinky head. He was a very happy boy over his new possession, and it was much coveted by all the others. One of the black mammies, to ward off evil from the little naked baby at her breast, offered an arm’s length of blue cloth for “the White Man’s fetish.”

[Illustration: The Jesuit Brothers at the Wombali Mission.]

My voyage up the Kasai ended at Dima, the headquarters of the Kasai Concession. I had been told that at Dima I would find a rubber plantation, and I had gone there to see it. I found that the plantation was four days distant, and that the boat for the plantation did not start for six days. I also had been told by the English missionaries at Dima, that I would find an American mission. When I reached Dima I learned that the American mission was at a station further up the river, which could not be reached sooner than a month. That is the sort of information upon which in the Congo one is forced to regulate his movements. As there was at Dima neither mission nor plantation, and as the only boat that would leave it in ten days was departing the next morning, I remained there only one night. It was a place cut out of the jungle, two hundred yards square, and of all stations I saw in the Congo, the best managed. It is the repair shop for the steamers belonging to the Kasai Concession, as well as the headquarters of the company and the residence of the director, M. Dryepoint. He and Van Damme seemed to be the most popular officials in the Congo. M. Dryepoint was up the river, so I did not meet him, but I was most courteously and hospitably entertained by M. Fumiere. He gave me a whole house to myself, and personally showed me over his small kingdom. All the houses

were of brick, and the paths and roads were covered with gravel and lined with flowers. Nothing in the Congo is more curious than this pretty town of suburban



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villas and orderly machine shops; with the muddy river for a street and the impenetrable jungle for a back yard. The home of the director at Dima is the proud boast of the entire Congo. And all they say of it is true. It did have a billiard table and ice, and a piano, and M. Fumiere invited me to join his friends at an excellent dinner. In furnishing this celebrated house, the idea had apparently been to place in it the things one would least expect to find in the jungle, or, without wishing to be ungracious, anywhere. So, although there are no women at Dima, there are great mirrors in brass frames, chandeliers of glass with festoons and pendants of glass, metal lamps with shades of every color, painted plaster statuettes and carved silk-covered chairs. In the red glow of the lamps, surrounded by these Belgian atrocities, M. Fumiere sat down to the pianola. The heat of Africa filled the room; on one side we could have touched the jungle, on the other in the river the hippopotamus puffed and snorted. M. Fumiere pulled out the stops, and upon the heat and silence of the night, floated the "Evening Star," Mascagni's "Intermezzo," and "Chin-chin Chinaman."

Next morning I left for Leopoldville in a boat much larger than the *Deliverance*, but with none of her cheer or good-fellowship. This boat was run by the black wife of the captain. Trailing her velvet gown, and cleaning her teeth with a stick of wood, she penetrated to every part of the steamer, making discipline impossible and driving the crew out of control.

I was glad to escape at Kinchassa to the clean and homelike bungalow and beautiful gardens of the only Englishman still in the employ of the State, Mr. Cuthbert Malet, who gave me hospitably of his scanty store of "Scotch," and, what was even more of a sacrifice, of his precious handful of eggs. A week later I was again in Boma, waiting for the *Nigeria* to take me back to Liverpool.

Before returning to the West Coast and leaving the subject of the Congo, I wish to testify to what seemed to me the enormously important work that is being done by the missionaries. I am not always an admirer of the missionary. Some of those one meets in China and Japan seem to be taking much more interest in their own bodies than in the souls of others. But, in the Congo, almost the only people who are working in behalf of the natives are those attached to the missions. Because they bear witness against Leopold, much is said by his hired men and press agents against them. But they are deserving of great praise. Some of them are narrow and bigoted, and one could wish they were much more tolerant of their white brothers in exile, but compared with the good they do, these faults count for nothing. It is due to them that Europe and the United States know the truth about the Congo. They were the first to bear witness, and the hazardous work they still are doing for their fellow men is honest, practical Christianity.



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VI

OLD CALABAR

While I was up the Congo and the Kasai rivers, Mrs. Davis had remained at Boma, and when I rejoined her, we booked passage home on the *Nigeria*. We chose the *Nigeria*, which is an Elder-Dempster freight and passenger steamer, in preference to the fast mail steamer because of the ports of the West Coast we wished to see as many as possible. And, on her six weeks' voyage to Liverpool, the *Nigeria* promised to spend as much time at anchor as at sea. On the Coast it is a more serious matter to reserve a cabin than in New York. You do not stop at an uptown office, and on a diagram of the ship's insides, as though you were playing roulette, point at a number. Instead, as you are to occupy your cabin, not for one, but for six, weeks, you search, as vigilantly as a navy officer looking for contraband, the ship herself and each cabin.

But going aboard was a simple ceremony. The Hotel Splendide stands on the bank of the Congo River. After saying "Good-by" to her proprietor, I walked to the edge of the water and waved my helmet. In the Congo, a white man standing in the sun without a hat is a spectacle sufficiently thrilling to excite the attention of all, and at once Captain Hughes of the *Nigeria* sent a cargo boat to the rescue, and on the shoulders of naked Kroom boys Mrs. Davis and the maid, and the trunks, spears, tents, bathtubs, carved idols, native mats, and a live mongoos were dropped into it, and we were paddled to the gangway.

"If that's all, we might as well get under way," said Captain Hughes. The anchor chains creaked, from the bank the proprietor of the Splendide waved his hand, and the long voyage to Liverpool had begun. It was as casual as halting and starting a cable-car.

According to schedule, after leaving the Congo, we should have gone south and touched at Loanda. But on this voyage, outward bound, the *Nigeria* had carried, to help build the railroad at Lobito Bay, a deckload of camels. They had proved trying passengers, and instead of first touching at the Congo, Captain Hughes had continued on south and put them ashore. So we were robbed of seeing both Loanda and the camels.

This line, until Calabar is reached, carries but few passengers, and, except to receive cargo, the ship is not fully in commission. During this first week she is painted, and holystoned, her carpets are beaten, her cabins scrubbed and aired, and the passengers mess with the officers. So, of the ship's life, we acquired an intimate knowledge, her interests became our own, and the necessity of feeding her gaping holds with cargo was personal and acute. On a transatlantic steamer, when once the hatches are down, the captain need think only of navigation; on these coasters, the hatches never are

down, and the captain, that sort of captain dear to the heart of the owners, is the man who fills the holds.



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A skipper going ashore to drum up trade was a novel spectacle. Imagine the captain of one of the Atlantic greyhounds prying among the warehouses on West Street, demanding of the merchants: "Anything going my way, this trip?" He would scorn to do it. Before his passengers have passed the custom officers, he is in mufti, and on his way to his villa on Brooklyn Heights, or to the Lambs Club, and until the Blue Peter is again at the fore, little he cares for passengers, mails, or cargo. But the captain of a "coaster" must be sailor and trader, too. He is expected to navigate a coast, the latest chart of which is dated somewhere near 1830, and at which the waves rush in walls of spray, sometimes as high as a three-story house. He must speak all the known languages of Europe, and all the unknown tongues of innumerable black brothers. At each port he must entertain out of his own pocket the agents of all the trading houses, and, in his head, he must keep the market price, "when laid down in Liverpool," of mahogany, copra, copal, rubber, palm oil, and ivory. To see that the agent has not overlooked a few bags of ground nuts, or a dozen puncheons of oil, he must go on shore and peer into the compound of each factory, and on board he must keep peace between the Kroo boys and the black deck passengers, and see that the white passengers with a temperature of 105, do not drink more than is good for them. At least, those are a few of the duties the captains on the ships controlled by Sir Alfred Jones, who is Elder and Dempster, are expected to perform. No wonder Sir Alfred is popular.

Our first port of call was Landana, in Portuguese territory, but two ships of the Woermann Line were there ahead of us and had gobbled up all the freight. So we could but up anchor and proceed to Libreville, formerly the capital of the French Congo. At five in the morning by the light of a ship's lantern, we were paddled ashore to drum up trade. We found two traders, Ives and Thomas, who had waiting for the *Nigeria* at the mouth of the Gabun River six hundred logs of mahogany, and, in consequence, there was general rejoicing, and Scotch and "sparklets," and even music from a German music-box that would burst into song only after it had been fed with a copper. One of the clerks said that Ives had forgotten how to extract the coppers and in consequence was using the music-box as a savings bank.

In the French Congo the natives are permitted to trade; in the Congo Free State they are not, or, rather, they have nothing with which to trade, and the contrast between the empty "factories" of the Congo and those of Libreville, crowded with natives buying and selling, was remarkable. There also was a conspicuous difference in the quality and variety of the goods. In Leopold's Congo "trade" goods is a term of contempt. It describes articles manufactured only for those who have no choice and must accept whatever is offered. When your customers must take what you please to give them the quality of your goods is likely to deteriorate. Salt of the poorest grade, gaudy fabrics that neither "wear" nor "wash," bars of coarse soap (the native is continually washing his single strip of cloth), and axe-heads made of iron, are what Leopold thinks are a fair exchange for the forced labor of the black.

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But the articles I found in the factories in Libreville were what, in the Congo, are called "white man's goods" and were of excellent quality and in great variety. There were even French novels and cigars. Some of the latter, called the Young American on account of the name and the flag on the lid, tempted me, until I saw they were manufactured by Dusseldorffer and Vanderswassen, and one suspected Rotterdam.

In Ives's factory I saw for the first time a "trade" rifle, or Tower musket. In the vernacular of the Coast, they are "gas-pipe" guns. They are put together in England, and to a white man are a most terrifying weapon. The original Tower muskets, such as, in the days of '76, were hung over the fireplace of the forefathers of the Sons of the Revolution, were manufactured in England, and stamped with the word "Tower," and for the reigning king G.R. I suppose at that date at the Tower of London there was an arsenal; but I am ready to be corrected. To-day the guns are manufactured at Birmingham, but they still have the flint lock, and still are stamped with the word "Tower" and the royal crown over the letters G.R., and with the arrow which is supposed to mark the property of the government. The barrel is three feet four inches long, and the bore is that of an artesian well. The native fills four inches of this cavity with powder and the remaining three feet with rusty nails, barbed wire, leaden slugs, and the legs and broken parts of iron pots. An officer of the W.A.F.F.'s, in a fight in the bush in South Nigeria, had one of these things fired at him from a distance of fifteen feet. He told me all that saved him was that when the native pulled the trigger the recoil of the gun "kicked" the muzzle two feet in the air and the native ten feet into the bush. I bought a Tower rifle at the trade price, a pound, and brought it home. But although my friends have offered to back either end of the gun as being the more destructive, we have found no one with a sufficient sporting spirit to determine the point.

Libreville is a very pretty town, but when it was laid out the surveyors just missed placing the Equator in its main street. It is easy to understand why with such a live wire in the vicinity Libreville is warm. From the same cause it also is rich in flowers, vines, and trees growing in generous, undisciplined abundance, making of Libreville one vast botanical garden, and burying the town and its bungalows under screens of green and branches of scarlet and purple flowers. Close to the surf runs an avenue bordered by giant cocoanut palms and, after the sun is down, this is the fashionable promenade. Here every evening may be seen in their freshest linen the six married white men of Libreville, and, in the latest Paris frocks, the six married ladies, while from the verandas of the factories that line the sea front and from under the paper lanterns of the Cafe Guion the clerks and traders sip their absinthe and play dominoes, and cast envious glances at the six fortunate fellow exiles.

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For several days we lay a few miles south of Libreville, off the mouth of the Gabun River, taking in the logs of mahogany. It was a continuous performance of the greatest interest. I still do not understand why all those engaged in it were not drowned, or pounded to a pulp. Just before we touched at the Gabun River, two tramp steamers, chartered by Americans, carried off a full cargo of this mahogany to the States. It was an experiment the result of which the traders of Libreville are awaiting with interest. The mahogany that the reader sees in America probably comes from Hayti, Cuba, or Belize, and is of much finer quality than that of the Gabun River, which latter is used for making what the trade calls “fancy” cigar-boxes and cheap furniture. But before it becomes a cigar-box it passes through many adventures. Weeks before the steamer arrives the trader, followed by his black boys, explores the jungle and blazes the trees. Then the boys cut trails through the forest, and, using logs for rollers, drag and push the tree trunks to the bank of the river. There the tree is cut into huge cubes, weighing about a ton, and measuring twelve to fifteen feet in length and three feet across each face. A boy can “shape” one of these logs in a day.

Although his pay varies according to whether the tributaries of the river are full or low, so making the moving of the logs easy or difficult, he can earn about three pounds ten shillings a month, paid in cash. Compared with the eighty cents a month paid only a few miles away in the Congo Free State, and in “trade” goods, these are good wages. When the log is shaped the mark of the trader is branded on it with an iron, just as we brand cattle, and it is turned loose on the river. At the mouth of the river there is little danger of the log escaping, for the waves are stronger than the tide, and drive the logs upon the shore. There, in the surf, we found these tons of mahogany pounding against each other. In the ship’s steam-launch were iron chains, a hundred yards long, to which, at intervals, were fastened “dogs,” or spikes. These spikes were driven into the end of a log, the brand upon the log was noted by the captain and trader, and the logs, chained together like the vertebrae of a great sea serpent, were towed to the ship’s side. There they were made fast, and three Kroo boys knocked the spike out of each log, warped a chain around it, and made fast that chain to the steel hawser of the winch. As it was drawn to the deck a Senegalese soldier, acting for the Customs, gave it a second blow with a branding hammer, and, thundering and smashing, it swung into the hold.

[Illustration: There, in the Surf, We Found These Tons of Mahogany, Pounding Against Each Other.]



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In the “round up” of the logs the star performers were the three Kroo boys at the ship’s side. For days, in fascinated horror, the six passengers watched them, prayed for them, and made bets as to which would be the first to die. One understands that a Kroo boy is as much at home in the sea as on shore, but these boys were neither in the sea nor on shore. They were balancing themselves on blocks of slippery wood that weighed a ton, but which were hurled about by the great waves as though they were life-belts. All night the hammering of the logs made the ship echo like a monster drum, and all day without an instant’s pause each log reared and pitched, spun like a barrel, dived like a porpoise, or, broadside, battered itself against the iron plates. But, no matter what tricks it played, a Kroo boy rode it as easily as though it were a horse in a merry-go-round.

It was a wonderful exhibition. It furnished all the thrills that one gets when watching a cowboy on a bucking bronco, or a trained seal. Again and again a log, in wicked conspiracy with another log, would plan to entice a Kroo boy between them, and smash him. At the sight the passengers would shriek a warning, the boy would dive between the logs, and a mass of twelve hundred pounds of mahogany would crash against a mass weighing fifteen hundred with a report like colliding freight cars.

And then, as, breathless, we waited to see what once was a Kroo boy float to the surface, he would appear sputtering and grinning, and saying to us as clearly as a Kroo smile can say it: “He never touched me!”

[Illustration: A Log of Mahogany Jammed in the Anchor Chains.]

Two days after we had stored away the mahogany we anchored off Duala, the capital of the German Cameroons. Duala is built upon a high cliff, and from the water the white and yellow buildings with many pillars gave it the appearance of a city. Instead, it is a clean, pretty town. With the German habit of order, it has been laid out like barracks, but with many gardens, well-kept, shaded streets, and high, cool houses, scientifically planned to meet the necessities of the tropics. At Duala the white traders and officials were plump and cheerful looking, and in the air there was more of prosperity than fever. The black and white sentry boxes and the native soldiers practising the stork march of the Kaiser’s army were signs of a rigid military rule, but the signs of Germany’s efforts in trade were more conspicuous. Nowhere on the coast did we see as at Duala such gorgeous offices as those of the great trading house of Woermann, the hated rivals of “Sir Alfred,” such carved furniture, such shining brass railings, and nowhere else did we see plate-glass windows, in which, with unceasing wonder, the natives stared at reflections of their own persons. In the river there was a private dry dock of the Woermanns, and along the wharfs for acres was lumber for the Woermanns, boxes of trade goods, puncheons and casks for the Woermanns, private cooper shops and private machine shops and private banks for the Woermanns. The house flag of the Woermanns became as significant as that of a reigning sovereign. One felt inclined to salute it.



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The success of the German merchant on the East Coast and over all the world appears to be a question of character. He is patient, methodical, painstaking; it is his habit of industry that is helping him to close port after port to English, French, and American goods. The German clerks do not go to the East Coast or to China and South America to drink absinthe or whiskey, or to play dominoes or cricket. They work twice as long as do the other white men, and during those longer office hours they toil twice as hard. One of our passengers was a German agent returning for his vacation. I used to work in the smoking-room and he always was at the next table, also at work, on his ledgers and account books. He was so industrious that he bored me, and one day I asked him why, instead of spoiling his vacation with work, he had not balanced his books before he left the Coast.

"It is an error," he said; "I can not find him." And he explained that in the record of his three years' stewardship, which he was to turn over to the directors in Berlin, there was somewhere a mistake of a sixpence.

"But," I protested, "what's sixpence to you? You drink champagne all day. You begin at nine in the morning!"

"I drink champagne," said the clerk, "because for three years I have myself alone in the bush lived, but, can I to my directors go with a book not balanced?" He laid his hand upon his heart and shook his head. "It is my heart that tells me 'No!'"

After three weeks he gave a shout, his face blushed with pleasure, and actual tears were in his eyes. He had dug out the error, and at once he celebrated the recovery of the single sixpence by giving me twenty-four shillings' worth of champagne. It is a true story, and illustrates, I think, the training and method of the German mind, of the industry of the merchants who are trading over all the seas. As a rule the "trade" goods "made in Germany" are "shoddy." They do not compare in quality with those of England or the States; in every foreign port you will find that the English linen is the best, that the American agricultural implements, American hardware, saws, axes, machetes, are superior to those manufactured in any other country. But the German, though his goods are poorer, cuts the coat to please the customer. He studies the wishes of the man who is to pay. He is not the one who says: "Take it, or leave it."

The agent of one of the largest English firms on the Ivory Coast, one that started by trading in slaves, said to me: "Our largest shipment to this coast is gin. This is a French colony, and if the French traders and I were patriots instead of merchants we would buy from our own people, but we buy from the Germans, because trade follows no flag. They make a gin out of potatoes colored with rum or gin, and label it 'Demerara' and 'Jamaica.' They sell it to us on the wharf at Antwerp for ninepence a gallon, and we sell it at nine francs per dozen bottles. Germany is taking our trade from us because she undersells us, and because her merchants don't wait for trade to come to them, but go after it. Before the Woermann boat is due their agent here will come to

my factory and spy out all I have in my compound. 'Why don't you ship those logs with us?' he'll ask.

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“Can’t spare the boys to carry them to the beach,’ I’ll say.

“I’ll furnish the boys,’ he’ll answer. That’s the German way.

“The Elder-Dempster boats lie three miles out at sea and blow a whistle at us. They act as though by carrying our freight they were doing us a favor. These German ships, to save you the long pull, anchor close to the beach and lend you their own shore boats and their own boys to work your cargo. And if you give them a few tons to carry, like as not they’ll ‘dash’ you to a case of ‘fizz.’ And meanwhile the English captain is lying outside the bar tooting his whistle and wanting to know if you think he’s going to run his ship aground for a few bags of rotten kernels. And he can’t see, and the people at home can’t see, why the Germans are crowding us off the Coast.”

Just outside of Duala, in the native village of Bell Town, is the palace and the harem of the ruler of the tribe that gave its name to the country, Mango Bell, King of the Cameroons. His brother, Prince William, sells photographs and “souvenirs.” We bought photographs, and on the strength of that hinted at a presentation at court. Brother William seemed doubtful, so we bought enough postal cards to establish us as *etrangers de distinction*, and he sent up our names. With Pivani, Hatton & Cookson’s chief clerk we were escorted to the royal presence. The palace is a fantastic, pagoda-like building of three stories; and furnished with many mirrors, carved oak sideboards, and lamp-shades of colored glass. Mango Bell, King of the Cameroons, sounds like a character in a comic opera, but the king was an extremely serious, tall, handsome, and self-respecting negro. Having been educated in England, he spoke much more correct English than any of us. Of the few “Kings I Have Met,” both tame and wild, his manners were the most charming. Back of the palace is an enormously long building under one roof. Here live his thirty-five queens. To them we were not presented.

[Illustration: The Palace of the King of the Cameroons.]

Prince William asked me if I knew where in America there was a street called Fifth Avenue. I suggested New York. He referred to a large Bible, and finding, much to his surprise, that my guess was correct, commissioned me to buy him, from a firm on that street, just such another Bible as the one in his hand. He forgot to give me the money to pay for it, but loaned us a half-dozen little princes to bear our purchases to the wharf. For this service their royal highnesses graciously condescended to receive a small “dash,” and with the chief clerk were especially delighted. He, being a sleight-of-hand artist, apparently took five-franc pieces out of their Sunday clothes and from their kinky hair. When we left they were rapidly disrobing to find if any more five-franc pieces were concealed about their persons.



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The morning after we sailed from Duala we anchored in the river in front of Calabar, the capital of Southern Nigeria. Of all the ports at which we touched on the Coast, Calabar was the hottest, the best looking, and the best administered. It is a model colony, but to bring it to the state it now enjoys has cost sums of money entirely out of proportion to those the colony has earned. The money has been spent in cutting down the jungle, filling in swamps that breed mosquitoes and fever, and in laying out gravel walks, water mains, and open cement gutters, and in erecting model hospitals, barracks, and administrative offices. Even grass has been made to grow, and the high bluff upon which are situated the homes of the white officials and Government House has been trimmed and cultivated and tamed until it looks like an English park. It is a complete imitation, even to golf links and tennis courts. But the fight that has been made against the jungle has not stopped with golf links. In 1896 the death rate was ten men out of every hundred. That corresponds to what in warfare is a decimating fire, upon which an officer, without danger of reproof, may withdraw his men. But at Calabar the English doctors did not withdraw, and now the death rate is as low as three out of every hundred. That Calabar, or any part of the West Coast, will ever be made entirely healthy is doubtful. Man can cut down a forest and fill in a swamp, but he can not reach up, as to a gas jet, and turn off the sun. And at Calabar, even at night when the sun has turned itself off, the humidity and the heat leave one sweating, tossing, and gasping for air. In Calabar the first thing a white man learns is not to take any liberties with the sun. When he dresses, eats, drinks, and moves about the sun is as constantly on his mind, as it is on the face of the sun-dial. The chief ascent to the top of the bluff where the white people live is up a steep cement walk about eighty yards long. At the foot of this a white man will be met by four hammock-bearers, and you will see him get into the hammock and be carried in it the eighty yards.

For even that short distance he is taking no chances. But while he nurses his vitality and cares for his health he does not use the sun as an excuse for laziness or for slipshod work. I have never seen a place in the tropics where, in spite of the handicap of damp, fierce heat, the officers and civil officials are so keenly and constantly employed, where the bright work was so bright, and the whitewash so white.

Out at the barracks of the West African Frontier Force, the W.A.F.F.'s, the officers, instead of from the shade of the veranda watching the non-coms. teach a native the manual, were themselves at work, and each was howling orders at the black recruits and smashing a gun against his hip and shoulder as smartly as a drill sergeant. I found the standard maintained at Calabar the more interesting because the men were



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almost entirely their own audience. If they make the place healthy, and attractive-looking, and dress for dinner, and shy at cocktails, and insist that their tan shoes shall glow like meershaum pipes, it is not because of the refining presence of lovely women, but because the men themselves like things that way. The men of Calabar have learned that when the sun is at 110, morals, like material things, disintegrate, and that, though the temptation is to go about in bath-room slippers and pajamas, one is wiser to bolster up his drenched and drooping spirit with a stiff shirt front and a mess jacket. They tell that in a bush station in upper Nigeria, one officer got his D.S.O. because with an audience of only a white sergeant he persisted in a habit of shaving twice a day.

[Illustration: The Home of the Thirty Queens of King Mango Bell.]

There are very few women in Calabar. There are three or four who are wives of officials, two nurses employed by the government, and the Mother Superior and Sisters of the Order of St. Joseph, and, of course, all of them are great belles. For the Sisters, especially the officers, the government people, the traders, the natives, even the rival missionaries, have the most tremendous respect and admiration. The sacrifice of the woman who, to be near her husband on the Coast, consents to sicken and fade and grow old before her time, and of the nurse who, to preserve the health of others, risks her own, is very great; but the sacrifice of the Sisters, who have renounced all thought of home and husband, and who have exiled themselves to this steaming swamp-land, seems the most unselfish. In order to support the 150 little black boys and girls who are at school at the mission, the Sisters rob themselves of everything except the little that will keep them alive. Two, in addition to their work at the mission, act as nurses in the English hospital, and for that they receive together \$600. This forms the sole regular income of the five women; for each \$120 a year. With anything else that is given them in charity, they buy supplies for the little converts. They live in a house of sandstone and zinc that holds the heat like a flat-iron, they are obliged to wear a uniform that is of material and fashion so unsuited to the tropics that Dr. Chichester, in charge of the hospital, has written in protest against it to Rome, and on many days they fast, not because the Church bids them so to do, but because they have no food. And with it all, these five gentlewomen are always eager, cheerful, sweet of temper, and a living blessing to all who meet them. What now troubles them is that they have no room to accommodate the many young heathen who come to them to be taught to wear clothes, and to be good little boys and girls. This is causing the Sisters great distress. Any one who does not believe in that selfish theory, that charity begins at home, but who would like to help to spread Christianity in darkest Africa and give happiness to five noble women, who are giving their lives for others, should send a postal money order to Marie T. Martin, the Reverend Mother Superior of the Catholic Mission of Old Calabar, Southern Nigeria.

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And if you are going to do it, as they say in the advertising pages, “Do it now!”

[Illustration: The Mother Superior and Sisters of St. Joseph and Their Converts at Old Calabar.]

At Calabar there is a royal prisoner, the King of Benin. He is not an agreeable king like His Majesty of the Cameroons, but a grossly fat, sensual-looking young man, who, a few years ago, when he was at war with the English, made “ju ju” against them by sacrificing three hundred maidens, his idea being that the ju ju would drive the English out of Benin. It was poor ju ju, for it drove the young man himself out of Benin, and now he is a king in exile. As far as I could see, the social position of the king is insecure, and certainly in Calabar he does not move in the first circles. One afternoon, when the four or five ladies of Calabar and Mr. Bedwell, the Acting Commissioner, and the officers of the W.A.F.F.’s were at the clubhouse having ice-drinks, the king at the head of a retinue of cabinet officers, high priests, and wives bore down upon the club-house with the evident intention of inviting himself to tea. Personally, I should like to have met a young man who could murder three hundred girls and worry over it so little that he had not lost one of his three hundred pounds, but the others were considerably annoyed and sent an A.D.C. to tell him to “Move on!” as though he were an organ-grinder, or a performing bear.

“These kings,” exclaimed a subaltern of the W.A.F.F.’s, indignantly, “are trying to push in everywhere!”

When we departed from Calabar, the only thing that reconciled me to leaving it and its charming people, was the fact that when the ship moved there was a breeze. While at anchor in the river I had found that not being able to breathe by day or to sleep by night in time is trying, even to the stoutest constitution.

One of the married ladies of Calabar, her husband, an officer of the W.A.F.F.’s, and the captain of the police sailed on the *Nigeria* “on leave,” and all Calabar came down to do them honor. There was the commissioner’s gig, and the marine captain’s gig, and the police captain’s gig, and the gig from “Matilda’s,” the English trading house, and one from the Dutch house and the French house, and each gig was manned by black boys in beautiful uniforms and fezzes, and each crew fought to tie up to the foot of the accommodation ladder. It was as gay as a regatta. On the quarter-deck the officers drank champagne, in the captain’s cabin Hughes treated the traders to beer, in the “square” the non-coms. of the W.A.F.F.’s drank ale. The men who were going away on leave tried not to look too happy, and those who were going back to the shore drank deep and tried not to appear too carelessly gay. A billet on the West Coast is regarded by the man who accepts it as a sort of sporting proposition, as a game of three innings of nine months each, during which he matches his health against the Coast. If he lives he wins; if he dies the Coast wins.



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After Calabar, at each port off which we anchored, at Ponny, Focardos, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast Castle, and Sekonni, it was always the same. Always there came over the side the man going "Home," the man who had fought with the Coast and won. He was as excited, as jubilant as a prisoner sentenced to death who had escaped his executioners. And always the heartiest in their congratulations were the men who were left behind, his brother officers, or his fellow traders, the men of the Sun Hat Brigade, in their unofficial uniforms, in shirtwaists, broad belts from which dangled keys and a whistle, beautifully polished tan boots, and with a wand-like whip or stick of elephant hide. They swarmed the decks and overwhelmed the escaping refugee with good wishes. He had cheated their common enemy. By merely keeping alive he had achieved a glorious victory. In their eyes he had performed a feat of endurance like swimming the English Channel. They crowded to congratulate him as people at the pit-mouth congratulate the entombed miner, who, after many days of breathing noisome gases, drinks the pure air. Even the black boys seem to feel the triumph of the white master, and their paddles never flashed so bravely, and their songs never rang so wildly, as when they were racing him away from the brooding Coast with its poisonous vapors toward the big white ship that meant health and home.

Although most of the ports we saw only from across a mile or two of breakers, they always sent us something of interest. Sometimes all the male passengers came on board drunk. With the miners of the Gold Coast and the "Palm Oil Ruffians" it used to be a matter of etiquette not to leave the Coast in any other condition. Not so to celebrate your escape seemed ungenerous and ungrateful. At Sekondi one of the miners from Ashanti was so completely drunk, that he was swung over the side, tied up like a plum-pudding, in a bag.

When he emerged from the bag his expression of polite inquiry was one with which all could sympathize. To lose consciousness on the veranda of a cafe, and awake with a bump on the deck of a steamer many miles at sea, must strengthen one's belief in magic carpets.

Another entertainment for the white passengers was when the boat boys fought for the black passengers as they were lowered in the mammy-chair. As a rule, in the boats from shore, there were twelve boys to paddle and three or four extra men to handle and unhook the mammy-chair and the luggage. While the boys with the paddles manoeuvred to bring their boat next to the ship's side, the extra boys tried to pull their rivals overboard, dragging their hands from ropes and gunwales, and beating them with paddles. They did this while every second the boat under them was spinning in the air or diving ten feet into the hollow of the waves, and trying to smash itself and every other boat into driftwood. From the deck the second officer would swing a mammy-chair

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over the side with the idea of dropping it into one of these boats. But before the chair could be lowered, a rival boat would shove the first one away, and with a third boat would be fighting for its place. Meanwhile, high above the angry sea, the chair and its cargo of black women would be twirling like a weathercock and banging against the ship's side. The mummies were too terrified to scream, but the ship's officers yelled and swore, the boat's crews shrieked, and the black babies howled. Each baby was strapped between the shoulders of the mother. A mammy-chair is like one of those two-seated swings in which people sit facing one another. If to the shoulders of each person in the swing was tied a baby, it is obvious that should the swing bump into anything, the baby would get the worst of it. That is what happened in the mammy-chair. Every time the chair spun around, the head of a baby would come "crack!" against the ship's side. So the babies howled, and no one of the ship's passengers, crowded six deep along the rail, blamed them. The skull of the Ethiopian may be hard, but it is most unfair to be swathed like a mummy so that you can neither kick nor strike back, and then have your head battered against a five-thousand-ton ship.

How the boys who paddled the shore boats live long enough to learn how to handle them is a great puzzle. We were told that the method was to take out one green boy with a crew of eleven experts. But how did the original eleven become experts? At Accra, where the waves are very high and rough, are the best boat boys on the coast. We watched the Custom House boat fight her way across the two miles of surf to the shore. The fight lasted two hours. It was as thrilling as watching a man cross Niagara Falls on a tight-rope. The greater part of the two hours the boat stood straight in the air, as though it meant to shake the crew into the sea, and the rest of the time it ran between walls of water ten feet high and was entirely lost to sight. Two things about the paddling on the West Coast make it peculiar; the boys sit, not on the thwarts, but on the gunwales, as a woman rides a side-saddle, and in many parts of the coast the boys use paddles shaped like a fork or a trident. One asks how, sitting as they do, they are able to brace themselves, and how with their forked paddles they obtained sufficient resistance. A coaster's explanation of the split paddle was that the boys did not want any more resistance than they could prevent.

[Illustration: The Kroo Boys Sit, Not On the Thwarts, but On the Gunwales, as a Woman Rides a Side Saddle.]

There is no more royal manner of progress than when one of these boats lifts you over the waves, with the boys chanting some wild chorus, with their bare bodies glistening, their teeth and eyes shining, the splendid muscles straining, and the dripping paddles flashing like twelve mirrors.

Some of the chiefs have canoes of as much as sixty men-power, and when these men sing, and their bodies and voices are in unison, a war canoe seems the only means of

locomotion, and a sixty-horse-power racing car becomes a vehicle suited only to the newly rich.



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I knew I had left the West Coast when, the very night we sailed from Sierra Leone, for greater comfort, I reached for a linen bed-spread that during four stifling, reeking weeks had lain undisturbed at the foot of the berth. During that time I had hated it as a monstrous thing; as something as hot and heavy as a red flannel blanket, as a buffalo robe. And when, on the following night, I found the wind-screen was not in the air port, and that, nevertheless, I still was alive, I knew we had passed out of reach of the Equator, and that all that followed would be as conventional as the "trippers" who joined us at the Canary Isles; and as familiar as the low, gray skies, the green, rain-soaked hills, and the complaining Channel gulls that convoyed us into Plymouth Harbor.

VII

ALONG THE EAST COAST

Were a man picked up on a flying carpet and dropped without warning into Lorenzo Marquez, he might guess for a day before he could make up his mind where he was, or determine to which nation the place belonged.

If he argued from the adobe houses with red-tiled roofs and walls of cobalt blue, the palms, and the yellow custom-house, he might think he was in Santiago; the Indian merchants in velvet and gold embroideries seated in deep, dark shops which breathe out dry, pungent odors, might take him back to Bombay; the Soudanese and Egyptians in long blue night-gowns and freshly ironed fezzes would remind him of Cairo; the dwarfish Portuguese soldiers, of Madeira, Lisbon, and Madrid, and the black, bare-legged policemen in khaki with great numerals on their chests, of Benin, Sierra Leone, or Zanzibar. After he had noted these and the German, French, and English merchants in white duck, and the Dutch man-of-war-men, who look like ship's stewards, the French marines in coal-scuttle helmets, the British Jack-tars in their bare feet, and the native Kaffir women, each wrapped in a single, gorgeous shawl with a black baby peering from beneath her shoulder-blades, he would decide, by using the deductive methods of Sherlock Holmes, that he was in the Midway of the Chicago Fair.

Several hundred years ago Da Gama sailed into Delagoa Bay and founded the town of Lorenzo Marquez, and since that time the Portuguese have always felt that it is only due to him and to themselves to remain there. They have great pride of race, and they like the fact that they possess and govern a colony. So, up to the present time, in spite of many temptations to dispose of it, they have made the ownership of Delagoa Bay an article of their national religion. But their national religion does not require of them to improve their property. And to-day it is much as it was when the sails of Da Gama's fleet first stirred its poisonous vapors.



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The harbor itself is an excellent one and the bay is twenty-two miles along, but there is only one landing-pier, and that such a pier as would be considered inconsistent with the dignity of the Larchmont Yacht Club. To the town itself Portugal has been content to contribute as her share the gatherers of taxes, collectors of customs and dispensers of official seals. She is indifferent to the fact that the bulk of general merchandise, wine, and machinery that enter her port is brought there by foreigners. She only demands that they buy her stamps. Her importance in her own colony is that of a toll-gate at the entrance of a great city.

Lorenco Marquez is not a spot which one would select for a home. When I was first there, the deaths from fever were averaging fifteen a day, and men who dined at the club one evening were buried hurriedly before midnight, and when I returned in the winter months, the fever had abated, but on the night we arrived twenty men were robbed. The fact that we complained to the police about one of the twenty robberies struck the commandant as an act of surprising and unusual interest. We gathered from his manner that the citizens of Lorenco Marquez look upon being robbed as a matter too personal and selfish with which to trouble the police. It was perhaps credulous of us, as our hotel was liberally labelled with notices warning its patrons that "Owing to numerous robberies in this hotel, our guests will please lock their doors." This was one of three hotels owned by the same man. One of the others had been described to us as the "tough" hotel, and at the other, a few weeks previous, a friend had found a puff-adder barring his bedroom door. The choice was somewhat difficult.

On her way from Lorenco Marquez to Beira our ship, the *Kanzlar*, kept close to the shore, and showed us low-lying banks of yellow sand and coarse green bushes. There was none of the majesty of outline which reaches from Table Bay to Durban, none of the blue mountains of the Colony, nor the deeply wooded table-lands and great inlets of Kaffraria. The rocks which stretch along the southern coast and against which the waves break with a report like the bursting of a lyddite shell, had disappeared, and along Gazaland and the Portuguese territory only swamps and barren sand-hills accompanied us in a monotonous yellow line. From the bay we saw Beira as a long crescent of red-roofed houses, many of them of four stories with verandas running around each story, like those of the summer hotels along the Jersey coast. It is a town built upon the sands, with a low stone breakwater, but without a pier or jetty, the lack of which gives it a temporary, casual air as though it were more a summer resort than the one port of entry for all Rhodesia. It suggested Coney Island to one, and to others Asbury Park and the board-walk at Atlantic City. When we found that in spite of her Portuguese flags and naked blacks, Beira reminded us of nothing except

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an American summer-resort, we set to discovering why this should be, and decided it was because, after the red dust of the Colony and the Transvaal, we saw again stretches of white sand, and instead of corrugated zinc, flimsy houses of wood, which you felt were only opened for the summer season and which for the rest of the year remained boarded up against driven sands and equinoctial gales. Beira need only to have added to her "Sea-View" and "Beach" hotels, a few bathing-suits drying on a clothes-line, a tin-type artist, and a merry-go-round, to make us feel perfectly at home. Beira being the port on the Indian Ocean which feeds Mashonaland and Matabeleland and the English settlers in and around Buluwayo and Salisbury, English influence has proclaimed itself there in many ways. When we touched, which was when the British soldiers were moving up to Rhodesia, the place, in comparison with Lorenzo Marquez, was brisk, busy, and clean. Although both are ostensibly Portuguese, Beira is to Lorenzo Marquez what the cleanest street of Greenwich Village, of New York City, is to "Hell's Kitchen" and the Chinese Quarter. The houses were well swept and cool, the shops were alluring, the streets were of clean shifting white sand, and the sidewalks, of gray cement, were as well kept as a Philadelphia doorstep. The most curious feature of Beira is her private tram-car system. These cars run on tiny tracks which rise out of the sand and extend from one end of the town to the other, with branch lines running into the yards of shops and private houses. The motive power for these cars is supplied by black boys who run behind and push them. Their trucks are about half as large as those on the hand-cars we see flying along our railroad tracks at home, worked by gangs of Italian laborers. On some of the trucks there is only a bench, others are shaded by awnings, and a few have carriage-lamps and cushioned seats and carpets. Each of them is a private conveyance; there is not one which can be hired by the public. When a merchant wishes to go down town to the port, his black boys carry his private tram-car from his garden and settle it on the rails, the merchant seats himself, and the boys push him and his baby-carriage to whatever part of the city he wishes to go. When his wife is out shopping and stops at a store the boys lift her car into the sand in order to make a clear track for any other car which may be coming behind them. One would naturally suppose that with the tracks and switch-boards and sidings already laid, the next step would be to place cars upon them for the convenience of the public, but this is not the case, and the tracks through the city are jealously reserved for the individuals who tax themselves five pounds a year to extend them and to keep them in repair. After the sleds on the island of Madeira these private street-cars of Beira struck me as being the most curious form of conveyance I had ever seen.

[Illustration: Going Visiting in Her Private Tram-car at Beira.]

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Beira was occupied by the Companhia de Mozambique with the idea of feeding Salisbury and Buluwayo from the north, and drawing away some of the trade which at that time was monopolized by the merchants of Cape Town and Durban. But the tse-tse fly belt lay between Beira on the coast and the boundary of the Chartered Company's possessions, and as neither oxen nor mules could live to cross this, it was necessary, in order to compete with the Cape-Buluwayo line, to build a railroad through the swamp and jungle. This road is now in operation. It is two hundred and twenty miles in length, and in the brief period of two months, during the long course of its progress through the marshes, two hundred of the men working on it died of fever. Some years ago, during a boundary dispute between the Portuguese and the Chartered Company, there was a clash between the Portuguese soldiers and the British South African police. How this was settled and the honor of the Portuguese officials satisfied, Kipling has told us in the delightful tale of "Judson and the Empire." It was off Beira that Judson fished up a buoy and anchored it over a sand-bar upon which he enticed the Portuguese gunboat. A week before we touched at Beira, the Portuguese had rearranged all the harbor buoys, but, after the casual habits of their race, had made no mention of the fact. The result was that the *Kanzlar* was hung up for twenty-four hours. We tried to comfort ourselves by thinking that we were undoubtedly occupying the same mud-bank which had been used by the strategic Judson to further the course of empire.

The *Kanzlar* could not cross the bar to go to Chinde, so the *Adjutant*, which belongs to the same line and which was created for these shallow waters, came to the *Kanzlar*, bringing Chinde with her. She brought every white man in the port, and those who could not come on board our ship remained contentedly on the *Adjutant*, clinging to her rail as she alternately sank below, or was tossed high above us. For three hours they smiled with satisfaction as though they felt that to have escaped from Chinde, for even that brief time, was sufficient recompense for a thorough ducking and the pains of seasickness. On the bridge of the *Adjutant*, in white duck and pith helmets, were the only respectable members of Chinde society. We knew that they were the only respectable members of Chinde society, because they told us so themselves. On her lower deck she brought two French explorers, fully dressed for the part as Tartarin of Tarascon might have dressed it in white havelocks and gaiters buckled up to the thighs, and clasping express rifles in new leather cases. From her engine-room came stokers from Egypt, and from her forward deck Malays in fresh white linen, Mohammedans in fez and turban, Portuguese officials, chiefly in decorations, Indian coolies and Zanzibari boys, very black and very beautiful, who wound and unwound long blue strips of cotton about their shoulders,

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or ears, or thighs as the heat, or the nature of the work of unloading required. Among these strange peoples were goats, as delicately colored as a meerschaum pipe, and with the horns of our red deer, strange white oxen with humps behind the shoulders, those that are exhibited in cages at home as “sacred buffalo,” but which here are only patient beasts of burden, and gray monkeys, wildcats, snakes and crocodiles in cages addressed to “Hagenbeck, Hamburg.” The freight was no less curious; assegais in bundles, horns stretching for three feet from point to point, or rising straight, like poignards; skins, ground-nuts, rubber, and heavy blocks of bees-wax wrapped in coarse brown sacking, and which in time will burn before the altars of Roman Catholic churches in Italy, Spain, and France.

People of the “Bromide” class who run across a friend from their own city in Paris will say, “Well, to think of meeting *you* here. How small the world is after all!” If they wish a better proof of how really small it is, how closely it is knit together, how the existence of one canning-house in Chicago supports twenty stores in Durban, they must follow, not the missionary or the explorers, not the punitive expeditions, but the man who wishes to buy, and the man who brings something to sell. Trade is what has brought the latitudes together and made the world the small department store it is, and forced one part of it to know and to depend upon the other.

The explorer tells you, “I was the first man to climb Kilamajaro.” “I was the first to cut a path from the shores of Lake Nyassa into the Congo Basin.” He even lectures about it, in front of a wet sheet in the light of a stereopticon, and because he has added some miles of territory to the known world, people buy his books and learned societies place initials after his distinguished name. But before his grandfather was born and long before he ever disturbed the waters of Nyassa the Phoenicians and Arabs and Portuguese and men of his own time and race had been there before him to buy ivory, both white and black, to exchange beads and brass bars and shaving-mirrors for the tusks of elephants, raw gold, copra, rubber, and the feathers of the ostrich. Statesmen will modestly say that a study of the map showed them how the course of empire must take its way into this or that undiscovered wilderness, and that in consequence, at their direction, armies marched to open these tracts which but for their prescience would have remained a desert. But that was not the real reason. A woman wanted three feathers to wear at Buckingham Palace, and to oblige her a few unimaginative traders, backed by a man who owned a tramp steamer, opened up the East Coast of Africa; another wanted a sealskin sacque, and fleets of ships faced floating ice under the Northern Lights. The bees of the Shire Riverway help to illuminate the cathedrals of St. Peters and Notre Dame, and back of Mozambique thousands of rubber-trees are being planted to-day, because, at the other end of the globe, people want tires for their automobiles; and because the fashionable ornament of the natives of Swaziland is, for no reason, no longer blue-glass beads, manufacturers of beads in Switzerland and Italy find themselves out of pocket by some thousands and thousands of pounds.



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The traders who were making the world smaller by bringing cotton prints to Chinde to cover her black nakedness, her British Majesty's consul at that port, and the boy lieutenant of the paddle-wheeled gunboat which patrols the Zambesi River, were the gentlemen who informed me that they were the only respectable members of Chinde society. They came over the side with the gratitude of sailors whom the *Kanzlar* might have picked up from a desert island, where they had been marooned and left to rot. They observed the gilded glory of the *Kanzlar* smoking-room, its mirrors and marble-topped tables, with the satisfaction and awe of the California miner, who found all the elegance of civilization in the red plush of a Broadway omnibus. The boy-commander of the gunboat gazed at white women in the saloon with fascinated admiration.

"I have never," he declared, breathlessly, "I have never seen so many beautiful women in one place at the same time! I'd forgotten that there were so many white people in the world."

"If I stay on board this ship another minute I shall go home," said Her Majesty's consul, firmly. "You will have to hold me. It's coming over me—I feel it coming. I shall never have the strength to go back." He appealed to the sympathetic lieutenant. "Let's desert together," he begged.

[Illustration: One-half of the Street Cleaning Department of Mozambique.]

In the swamps of the East Coast the white exiles lay aside the cloaks and masks of crowded cities. They do not try to conceal their feelings, their vices, or their longings. They talk to the first white stranger they meet of things which in the great cities a man conceals even from his room-mate, and men they would not care to know, and whom they would never meet in the fixed social pathways of civilization, they take to their hearts as friends. They are too few to be particular, they have no choice, and they ask no questions. It is enough that the white man, like themselves, is condemned to exile. They do not try to find solace in the thought that they are the "foretrekkers" of civilization, or take credit to themselves because they are the path-finders and the pioneers who bear the heat and burden of the day. They are sorry for themselves, because they know, more keenly than any outsider can know, how good is the life they have given up, and how hard is the one they follow, but they do not ask anyone else to be sorry. They would be very much surprised if they thought you saw in their struggle against native and Portuguese barbarism, fever, and savage tribes, a life of great good and value, full of self-renunciation, heroism, and self-sacrifice.

On the day they boarded the *Kanzlar* the pains of nostalgia were sweeping over the respectable members of Chinde society like waves of nausea, and tearing them. With a grim appreciation of their own condition, they smiled mockingly at the ladies on the quarter-deck, as you have seen prisoners grin through the bars; they were even

boisterous and gay, but their gayety was that of children at recess, who know that when the bell rings they are going back to the desk.



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A little English boy ran through the smoking-room, and they fell upon him, and quarrelled for the privilege of holding him on their knees. He was a shy, coquettish little English boy, and the boisterous, noisy men did not appeal to him. To them he meant home and family and the old nursery, papered with colored pictures from the *Christmas Graphic*. His stout, bare legs and tangled curls and sailor's hat, with "H.M.S. Mars" across it, meant all that was clean and sweet-smelling in their past lives.

"I'll arrest you for a deserter," said the lieutenant of the gunboat. "I'll make the consul send you back to the *Mars*." He held the boy on his knee fearfully, handling him as though he were some delicate and precious treasure that might break if he dropped it.

The agent of the Oceanic Development Company, Limited, whose business in life is to drive savage Angonis out of the jungle, where he hopes in time to see the busy haunts of trade, begged for the boy with eloquent pleading.

"You've had the kiddie long enough now," he urged. "Let me have him. Come here, Mr. Mars, and sit beside me, and I'll give you fizzy water—like lemon-squash, only nicer." He held out a wet bottle of champagne alluringly.

"No, he is coming to his consul," that youth declared. "He's coming to his consul for protection. You are not fit characters to associate with an innocent child. Come to me, little boy, and do not listen to those degraded persons." So the "innocent child" seated himself between the consul and the chartered trader, and they patted his fat calves and red curls and took his minute hands in their tanned fists, eying him hungrily, like two cannibals. But the little boy was quite unconscious and inconsiderate of their hunger, and, with the cruelty of children, pulled himself free and ran away.

"He was such a nice little kiddie," they said, apologetically, as though they felt they had been caught in some act of weakness.

"I haven't got a card with me; I haven't needed one for two years," said the lieutenant, genially. "But fancy your knowing Sparks! He has the next station to mine; I'm at one end of the Shire River and he's at the other; he patrols from Fort Johnson up to the top of the lake. I suppose you've heard him play the banjo, haven't you? That's where we hit it off—we're both terribly keen about the banjo. I suppose if it wasn't for my banjo, I'd go quite off my head down here. I know Sparks would. You see, I have these chaps at Chinde to talk to, and up at Tete there's the Portuguese governor, but Sparks has only six white men scattered along Nyassa for three hundred miles."

I had heard of Sparks and the six white men. They grew so lonely that they agreed to meet once a month at some central station and spend the night together, and they invited Sparks to attend the second meeting. But when he arrived he found that they had organized a morphine club, and the only six white men on Lake Nyassa were sitting around a table with their sleeves rolled up, giving themselves injections. Sparks told

them it was a “disgusting practice,” and put back to his gunboat. I recalled the story to the lieutenant, and he laughed mournfully.

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“Yes,” he said; “and what’s worse is that we’re here for two years more, with all this fighting going on at the Cape and in China. Still, we have our banjos, and the papers are only six weeks old, and the steamer stops once every month.”

[Illustration: Custom House, Zanzibar.]

Fortunately there were many bags of bees-wax to come over the side, so we had time in which to give the exiles the news of the outside world, and they told us of their present and past lives: of how one as an American filibuster had furnished coal to the Chinese Navy; how another had sold “ready to wear” clothes in a New York department store, and another had been attache at Madrid, and another in charge of the forward guns of a great battle-ship. We exchanged addresses and agreed upon the restaurant where we would meet two years hence to celebrate their freedom, and we emptied many bottles of iced-beer, and the fact that it was iced seemed to affect the exiles more than the fact that it was beer.

But at last the ship’s whistle blew with raucous persistence. It was final and heartless. It rang down the curtain on the mirage which once a month comes to mock Chinde with memories of English villages, of well-kept lawns melting into the Thames, of London asphalt and flashing hansoms. With a jangling of bells in the engine-room the mirage disappeared, and in five minutes to the exiles of Chinde the *Kanzlar* became a gray tub with a pennant of smoke on the horizon line.

I have known some men for many years, smoked and talked with them until improper hours of the morning, known them well enough to borrow their money, even their razors, and parted from them with never a pang. But when our ship abandoned those boys to the unclean land behind them, I could see them only in a blurred and misty group. We raised our hats to them and tried to cheer, but it was more of a salute than a cheer. I had never seen them before, I shall never meet them again—we had just burned signals as our ships passed in the night—and yet, I must always consider among the friends I have lost, those white-clad youths who are making the ways straight for others through the dripping jungles of the Zambesi, “the only respectable members of Chinde Society.”[A]

[Footnote A: NOTE—I did not lose the white-clad youths. The lieutenant now is the commander of a cruiser, and the consul, a consul-general; and they write me that the editor of the Chinde newspaper, on his editorial page, has complained that he, also, should be included among the respectable members of Chinde Society. He claims his absence at Tete, at the time of the visit of the *Kanzlar*, alone prevented his social position being publicly recognized. That justice may be done, he, now, is officially, though tardily, created a member of Chinde’s respectable society. R.H.D.]

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The profession of the slave-trader, unless it be that of his contemporary, the pirate preying under his black flag, is the one which holds you with the most grewsome and fascinating interest. Its inhumanity, its legends of predatory expeditions into unknown jungles of Africa, the long return marches to the Coast, the captured blacks who fall dead in the trail, the dead pulling down with their chains those who still live, the stifling holds of the slave-ships, the swift flights before pursuing ships-of-war, the casting away, when too closely chased, of the ship's cargo, and the sharks that followed, all of these come back to one as he walks the shore-wall of Mozambique. From there he sees the slave-dhows in the harbor, the jungles on the mainland through which the slaves came by the thousands, and still come one by one, and the ancient palaces of the Portuguese governors, dead now some hundreds of years, to whom this trade in human agony brought great wealth, and no loss of honor.

[Illustration: Chain-gangs of Petty Offenders Outside of Zanzibar.]

Mozambique in the days of her glory was, with Zanzibar, the great slave-market of East Africa, and the Portuguese and the Arabs who fattened on this traffic built themselves great houses there, and a fortress capable, in the event of a siege, of holding the garrison and all the inhabitants as well. To-day the slave-trade brings to those who follow it more of adventure than of financial profit, but the houses and the official palaces and the fortress still remain, and they are, in color, indescribably beautiful. Blue and pink and red and light yellow are spread over their high walls, and have been so washed and chastened by the rain and sun, that the whole city has taken on the faint, soft tints of a once brilliant water-color. The streets themselves are unpeopled, empty and strangely silent. Their silence is as impressive as their beauty. In the heat of the day, which is from sunrise to past sunset, you see no one, you hear no footfall, no voices, no rumble of wheels or stamp of horses' hoofs. The bare feet of the native, who is the only human being who dares to move abroad, makes no sound, and in Mozambique there are no carriages and no horses. Two bullock-carts, which collect scraps and refuse from the white staring streets, are the only carts in the city, and with the exception of a dozen 'rikshas are the only wheeled vehicles the inhabitants have seen.

I have never visited a city which so impressed one with the fact that, in appearance, it had remained just as it was four hundred years before. There is no decay, no ruins, no sign of disuse; it is, on the contrary, clean and brilliantly beautiful in color, with dancing blue waters all about it, and with enormous palms moving above the towering white walls and red tiled roofs, but it is a city of the dead. The open-work iron doors, with locks as large as letter-boxes, are closed, the wooden window-shutters are barred,

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and the wares in the shops are hidden from the sidewalk by heavy curtains. There is a park filled with curious trees and with flowers of gorgeous color, but the park is as deserted as a cemetery; along the principal streets stretch mosaic pavements formed of great blocks of white and black stone, they look like elongated checker-boards, but no one walks upon them, and though there are palaces painted blue, and government buildings in Pompeian red, and churches in chaste gray and white, there are no sentries to guard the palaces, nor no black-robed priests enter or leave the churches. They are like the palaces of a theatre, set on an empty stage, and waiting for the actors. It will be a long time before the actors come to Mozambique. It is, and will remain, a city of the fifteenth century. It is now only a relic of a cruel and barbarous period, when the Portuguese governors, the "gentlemen adventurers," and the Arab slave-dealers, under its blue skies, and hidden within its barred and painted walls, led lives of magnificent debauchery, when the tusks of ivory were piled high along its waterfront, and the dhows at anchor reeked with slaves, and when in the market-place, where the natives now sit bargaining over a bunch of bananas or a basket of dried fish, their forefathers were themselves bought and sold.

In the five hundred years in which he has claimed the shore line of East Africa from south of Lorencó Marquez to north of Mozambique, and many hundreds of miles inland, the Portuguese has been the dog in the manger among nations. In all that time he has done nothing to help the land or the people whom he pretends to protect, and he keeps those who would improve both from gaining any hold or influence over either. It is doubtful if his occupation of the East Coast can endure much longer. The English and the Germans now surround him on every side. Even handicapped as they are by the lack of the seaports which he enjoys, they have forced their way into the country which lies beyond his and which bounds his on every side. They have opened up this country with little railroads, with lonely lengths of telegraph wires, and with their launches and gunboats they have joined, by means of the Zambesi and Chinde Rivers, new territories to the great Indian Ocean. His strip of land, which bars them from the sea, is still unsettled and unsafe, its wealth undeveloped, its people untamed. He sits at his cafe at the coast and collects custom-dues and sells stamped paper. For fear of the native he dares not march five miles beyond his sea-port town, and the white men who venture inland for purposes of trade or to cultivate plantations do so at their own risk, he can promise them no protection.



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The land back of Mozambique is divided into "holdings," and the rent of each holding is based upon the number of native huts it contains. The tax per hut is one pound a year, and these holdings are leased to any Portuguese who promises to pay the combined taxes of all the huts. He also engages to cut new roads, to keep those already made in repair, and to furnish a sufficient number of police to maintain order. The lessees of these holdings have given rise to many and terrible scandals. In the majority of cases, the lessee, once out of reach of all authority and of public opinion, and wielding the power of life and death, becomes a tyrant and task-master over his district, taxing the natives to five and ten times the amount which each is supposed to furnish, and treating them virtually as his bondsmen. Up along the Shire River, the lessees punish the blacks by hanging them from a tree by their ankles and beating their bare backs with rhinoceros hide, until, as it has been described to me by a reputable English resident, the blood runs in a stream over the negro's shoulders, and forms a pool beneath his eyes.

[Illustration: The Ivory on the Right, Covered Only with Sacking, Is Ready for Shipment to Boston, U.S.A.]

You hear of no legitimate enterprise fostered by these lessees, of no development of natural resources, but, instead, you are told tales of sickening cruelty, and you can read in the consular reports others quite as true; records of heartless treatment of natives, of neglect of great resources, and of hurried snatching at the year's crop and a return to the Coast, with nothing to show of sustained effort or steady development. The incompetence of Portugal cannot endure. Now that England has taken the Transvaal from the Boer, she will find the seaport of Lorenzo Marquez too necessary to her interests to much longer leave it in the itching palms of the Portuguese officials. Beira she also needs to feed Rhodesia, and the Zambesi and Chinde Rivers to supply the British Central African Company. Farther north, the Germans will find that if they mean to make German Central Africa pay, they must control the seaboard. It seems inevitable that, between the two great empires, the little kingdom of Portugal will be crowded out, and having failed to benefit either herself or anyone else on the East Coast, she will withdraw from it, in favor of those who are fitter to survive her.

There is no more interesting contrast along the coast of East Africa than that presented by the colonies of England, Germany, and Portugal. Of these three, the colonies of the Englishmen are, as one expects to find them, the healthiest, the busiest, and the most prosperous. They thrive under your very eyes; you feel that they were established where they are, not by accident, not to gratify a national vanity or a ruler's ambition, but with foresight and with knowledge, and with the determination to make money; and that they will increase and flourish because they are situated where the natives and settlers have something to sell, and where the men can bring, in return, something the natives and colonials wish to buy. Port Elizabeth, Durban, East London, and Zanzibar belong to this prosperous class, which gives good reason for the faith of those who founded them.



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On the other hand, as opposed to these, there are the settlements of the Portuguese, rotten and corrupt, and the German settlements of Dar Es Salaam and Tanga which have still to prove their right to exist. Outwardly, to the eye, they are model settlements. Dar Es Salaam, in particular, is a beautiful and perfectly appointed colonial town. In the care in which it is laid out, in the excellence of its sanitary arrangements, in its cleanliness, and in the magnificence of its innumerable official residences, and in their sensible adaptability to the needs of the climate, one might be deceived into believing that Dar Es Salaam is the beautiful gateway of a thriving and busy colony. But there are no ramparts of merchandise along her wharves, no bulwarks of strangely scented bales blocking her water-front; no lighters push hurriedly from the shore to meet the ship, although she is a German ship, or to receive her cargo of articles "made in Germany." On the contrary, her freight is unloaded at the English ports, and taken on at English ports. And the German traders who send their merchandise to Hamburg in her hold come over the side at Zanzibar, at Durban, and at Aden, where the English merchants find in them fierce competitors. There is nothing which goes so far to prove the falsity of the saying that "trade follows the flag" as do these model German colonies with their barracks, governor's palace, officers' clubs, public pleasure parks, and with no trade; and the English colonies, where the German merchants remain, and where, under the English flag, they grow steadily rich. The German Emperor, believing that colonies are a source of strength to an empire, rather than the weakness that they are, has raised the German flag in Central East Africa, but the ships of the German East African Company, subsidized by him, carry their merchandize to the English ports, and his German subjects remain where they can make the most money. They do not move to those ports where the flag of their country would wave over them.

Dar Es Salaam, although it lacks the one thing needful to make it a model settlement, possesses all the other things which are needful, and many which are pure luxuries. Its residences, as I have said, have been built after the most approved scientific principles of ventilation and sanitation. In no tropical country have I seen buildings so admirably adapted to the heat and climatic changes and at the same time more in keeping with the surrounding scenery. They are handsome, cool-looking, white and clean, with broad verandas, high walls, and false roofs under which currents of air are lured in spite of themselves. The residences are set back along the high bank which faces the bay. In front of them is a public promenade, newly planted shade-trees arch over it, and royal palms reach up to it from the very waters of the harbor. At one end of this semicircle are the barracks of the Soudanese soldiers, and at the other is the official

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palace of the governor. Everything in the settlement is new, and everything is built on the scale of a city, and with the idea of accommodating a great number of people. Hotels and cafes, better than any one finds in the older settlements along the coast, are arranged on the water-front, and there is a church capable of seating the entire white population at one time. If the place is to grow, it can do so only through trade, and when trade really comes all these palaces and cafes and barracks which occupy the entire water-front will have to be pushed back to make way for warehouses and custom-house sheds. At present it is populated only by officials, and, I believe, twelve white women.

[Illustration: The Late Sultan of Zanzibar in His State Carriage.]

You feel that it is an experiment, that it has been sent out like a box of children's building blocks, and set up carefully on this beautiful harbor. All that Dar Es Salaam needs now is trade and emigrants. At present it is a show place, and might be exhibited at a world's fair as an example of a model village.

In writing of Zanzibar I am embarrassed by the knowledge that I am not an unprejudiced witness. I fell in love with Zanzibar at first sight, and the more I saw of it the more I wanted to take my luggage out of the ship's hold and cable to my friends to try and have me made Vice-Consul to Zanzibar through all succeeding administrations.

Zanzibar runs back abruptly from a white beach in a succession of high white walls. It glistens and glares, and dazzles you; the sand at your feet is white, the city itself is white, the robes of the people are white. It has no public landing-pier. Your rowboat is run ashore on a white shelving beach, and you face an impenetrable mass of white walls. The blue waters are behind you, the lofty fortress-like facade before you, and a strip of white sand is at your feet.

And while you are wondering where this hidden city may be, a kind resident takes you by the hand and pilots you through a narrow crack in the rampart, along a twisting fissure between white-washed walls where the sun cannot reach, past great black doorways of carved oak, and out suddenly into the light and laughter and roar of Zanzibar.

In the narrow streets are all the colors of the Orient, gorgeous, unshaded, and violent; cobalt blue, greens, and reds on framework, windows, and doorways; red and yellow in the awnings and curtains of the bazaars, and orange and black, red and white, yellow, dark blue, and purple, in the long shawls of the women. It is the busiest, and the brightest and richest in color of all the ports along the East African coast. Were it not for its narrow streets and its towering walls it would be a place of perpetual sunshine. Everybody is either actively busy, or contentedly idle. It is all movement, noise, and

glitter, everyone is telling everyone else to make way before him; the Indian merchants beseech you from the open

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bazaars; their children, swathed in gorgeous silks and hung with jewels and bangles, stumble under your feet, the Sultan's troops assail you with fife and drum, and the black women, wrapped below their bare shoulders in the colors of the butterfly, and with teeth and brows dyed purple, crowd you to the wall. Outside the city there are long and wonderful roads between groves of the bulky mango-tree of richest darkest green and the bending palm, shading deserted palaces of former Sultans, temples of the Indian worshippers, native huts, and the white-walled country residences and curtained verandas of the white exiles. It is absurd to write them down as exiles, for it is a Mohammedan Paradise to which they have been exiled.

The exiles themselves will tell you that the reason you think Zanzibar is a paradise, is because you have your steamer ticket in your pocket. But that retort shows their lack of imagination, and a vast ingratitude to those who have preceded them. For the charm of Zanzibar lies in the fact that while the white men have made it healthy and clean, have given it good roads, good laws, protection for the slaves, quick punishment for the slave-dealers, and a firm government under a benign and gentle Sultan, they have done all of this without destroying one flash of its local color, or one throb of its barbaric life, which is the showy, sunshiny, and sumptuous life of the Far East. The good things of civilization are there, but they are unobtrusive, and the evils of civilization appear not at all, the native does not wear a derby hat with a kimona, as he does in Japan, nor offer you souvenirs of Zanzibar manufactured in Birmingham; Reuter's telegrams at the club and occasional steamers alone connect his white masters with the outer world, and so infrequent is the visiting stranger that the local phrase-book for those who wish to converse in the native tongue is compiled chiefly for the convenience of midshipmen when searching a slave-dhow.

[Illustration: H.S.H. Hamud bin Muhamad bin Said, the Late Sultan of Zanzibar.]

Zanzibar is an "Arabian Nights" city, a comic-opera capital, a most difficult city to take seriously. There is not a street, or any house in any street, that does not suggest in its architecture and decoration the untrammelled fancy of the scenic artist. You feel sure that the latticed balconies are canvas, that the white adobe walls are supported from behind by braces, that the sunshine is a carbon light, that the chorus of boatmen who hail you on landing will reappear immediately costumed as the Sultan's body-guard, that the women bearing water-jars on their shoulders will come on in the next scene as slaves of the harem, and that the national anthem will prove to be Sousa's Typical Tune of Zanzibar.



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Several hundred years ago the Sultans of Zanzibar grew powerful and wealthy through exporting slaves and ivory from the mainland. These were not two separate industries, but one was developed by the other and was dependent upon it. The procedure was brutally simple. A slave-trader, having first paid his tribute to the Sultan, crossed to the mainland, and marching into the interior made his bargain with one of the local chiefs for so much ivory, and for so many men to carry it down to the coast. Without some such means of transport there could have been no bargain, so the chief who was anxious to sell would select a village which had not paid him the taxes due him, and bid the trader help himself to what men he found there. Then would follow a hideous night attack, a massacre of women and children, and the taking prisoners of all able-bodied males. These men, chained together in long lines, and each bearing a heavy tooth of ivory upon his shoulder, would be whipped down to the coast. It was only when they had carried the ivory there, and their work was finished, that the idea presented itself of selling them as well as the ivory. Later, these bearers became of equal value with the ivory, and the raiding of native villages and the capture of men and women to be sold into slavery developed into a great industry. The industry continues fitfully to-day, but it is carried on under great difficulties, and at a risk of heavy punishments. What is called "domestic slavery" is recognized on the island of Zanzibar, the vast clove plantations which lie back of the port employing many hundreds of these domestic slaves. It is not to free these from their slight bondage that the efforts of those who are trying to suppress the slave-trade is to-day directed, but to prevent others from being added to their number. What slave-trading there is at present is by Arabs and Indians. They convey the slaves in dhows from the mainland to Madagascar, Arabia, or southern Persia, and to the Island of Pemba, which lies north of Zanzibar, and only fifteen miles from the mainland. If a slave can be brought this short distance in safety he can be sold for five hundred dollars; on the mainland he is not worth more than fifteen dollars. The channels, and the mouths of rivers, and the little bays opening from the Island of Pemba are patrolled more or less regularly by British gunboats, and junior officers in charge of a cutter and a crew of half a dozen men, are detached from these for a few months at a time on "boat service." It seems to be an unprofitable pursuit, for one officer told me that during his month of boat service he had boarded and searched three hundred dhows, which is an average of ten a day, and found slaves on only one of them. But as, on this occasion, he rescued four slaves, and the slavers, moreover, showed fight, and wounded him and two of his boat's crew, he was more than satisfied.



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The trade in ivory, which has none of these restrictions upon it, still flourishes, and the cool, dark warerooms of Zanzibar are stored high with it. In a corner of one little cellar they showed us twenty-five thousand dollars worth of these tusks piled up as carelessly as though they were logs in a wood-shed. One of the most curious sights in Zanzibar is a line of Zanzibari boys, each balancing a great tusk on his shoulder, worth from five hundred to two thousand dollars, and which is unprotected except for a piece of coarse sacking.

[Illustration: A German "Factory" at Tanga, the Store Below, the Living Apartments Above.]

The largest exporters of ivory in the world are at Zanzibar, and though probably few people know it, the firm which carries on this business belongs to New York City, and has been in the ivory trade with India and Africa from as far back as the fifties. In their house at Zanzibar they have entertained every distinguished African explorer, and the stories its walls have heard of native wars, pirate dhows, slave-dealers, the English occupation, and terrible marches through the jungles of the Congo, would make valuable and picturesque history. The firm has always held a semi-official position, for the reason that the United States Consul at Zanzibar, who should speak at least Swahili and Portuguese, is invariably chosen for the post from a drug-store in Yankton, Dakota, or a post-office in Canton, Ohio. Consequently, on arriving at Zanzibar he becomes homesick, and his first official act is to cable his resignation, and the State Department instructs whoever happens to be general manager of the ivory house to perform the duties of acting-consul. So, the ivory house has nearly always held the eagle of the consulate over its doorway. The manager of the ivory house, who at the time of our visit was also consul, is Harris Robbins Childs. Mr. Childs is well known in New York City, is a member of many clubs there, and speaks at least five languages. He understands the native tongue of Zanzibar so well that when the Prime Minister of the Sultan took us to the palace to pay our respects, Childs talked the language so much better than did the Sultan's own Prime Minister that there was in consequence much joking and laughing. The Sultan then was a most dignified, intelligent, and charming old gentleman. He was popular both with his own people, who loved him with a religious fervor, and with the English, who unobtrusively conducted his affairs.

There have been sultans who have acted less wisely than does Hamud bin Muhamad bin Said. A few years ago one of these, Said Khaled, defied the British Empire as represented by several gunboats, and dared them to fire on his ship of war, a tramp steamer which he had converted into a royal yacht. The gunboats were anchored about two hundred yards from the palace, which stands at the water's edge, and at the time agreed upon, they sank the Sultan's ship of war in the short space of three minutes, and in a brief bombardment destroyed the greater part of his palace. The ship of war still rests where she sank, and her topmasts peer above the water only three hundred yards distant from the windows of the new palace. They serve as a constant warning to all future sultans.

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The new palace is of somewhat too modern architecture, and is not nearly as dignified as are the massive white walls of the native houses which surround it. But within it is a fairy palace, hung with silk draperies, tapestries, and hand-painted curtains; the floors are covered with magnificent rugs from Persia and India, and the reception-room is crowded with treasures of ebony, ivory, lacquer work, and gold and silver. There were two thrones made of silver dragons, with many scales, and studded with jewels. The Sultan did not seem to mind our openly admiring his treasures, and his attendants, who stood about him in gorgeous-colored silks heavy with gold embroideries, were evidently pleased with the deep impression they made upon the visitors. The Sultan was very gentle and courteous and human, especially in the pleasure he took over his son and heir, who then was at school in England, and who, on the death of his father, succeeded him. He seemed very much gratified when we suggested that there was no better training-place for a boy than an English public school; as Americans, he thought our opinion must be unprejudiced. Before he sent us away, he gave Childs, and each of us, a photograph of himself, one of which is reproduced in this book.

Our next port was the German settlement of Tanga. We arrived there just as a blood-red sun was setting behind great and gloomy mountains. The place itself was bathed in damp hot vapors, and surrounded even to the water's edge by a steaming jungle. It was more like what we expected Africa to be than was any other place we had visited, and the proper touch of local color was supplied by a trader, who gave as his reason for leaving us so early in the evening that he needed sleep, as on the night before at his camp three lions had kept him awake until morning.

[Illustration: Soudanese Soldiers Under a German Officer Outside of Tanga.]

The bubonic plague prevented our landing at other ports. We saw them only through field-glasses from the ship's side, so that there is, in consequence, much that I cannot write of the East Coast of Africa. But the trip, which allows one merely to nibble at the Coast, is worth taking again when the bubonic plague has passed away. It was certainly worth taking once. If I have failed to make that apparent, the fault lies with the writer. It is certainly not the fault of the East Coast, not the fault of the Indian Ocean, that "sets and smiles, so soft, so bright, so blooming blue," or of the exiles and "remittance men," or of the engineers who are building the railroad from Cape Town to Cairo, or of any lack of interest which the East Coast presents in its problem of trade, of conquest, and of, among nations, the survival of the fittest.