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## HOW I CROSSED AFRICA.

A TALK WITH CAPTAIN LOVETT CAMERON, R.N.

There are few men, writes Raymond Blathwayt, in "Great Thoughts," who have done so much and talked so little as Captain Cameron, the African explorer. And yet the story of his life is one that is full of romance and of vivid interest and intensity. I met him in Eastborne last summer, and as we sat by the sea he told me something of what he went through many years ago. Captain Cameron is a thorough sailor, short, sturdy, brown-bearded, keen-eyed, and withal a very handsome man. In reply to a question which I put to him, he said: "My object now embraces the whole future politics of Africa. For in Africa lies, to a great extent, the hope of the world. No one dreams how rich, in every possible respect, that continent is. I am a director in several companies that have for their object the opening up of this hitherto unknown world."

"Well, will you tell me, Captain Cameron, something of your past in Africa?"

"Certainly, I will," he replied, as he, like Sir Bedivere, began to revolve many memories in his mind. "My expenditure cost one-tenth what Stanley's cost him. This was how it came about. I was stationed on the East Coast from 1866 to 1870, engaged in capturing slave traders. In this way I had picked up the language fairly well, besides acquiring a vast amount of useful knowledge concerning the natives and their country. I knew all the skippers of the different slavers, and altogether I was thoroughly well up in the whole *locale*. In 1866 Dr. Livingstone started to go round the north end of Nyassa, but went by the south end instead. In 1870 I went home. Whilst in England there came the news of Livingstone's supposed loss. I wrote to Sir Roderick Murchison, of the Royal Geographical Society, volunteering to go and find him. The reply was that there was no need, as Mr. Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald*, was about to despatch Stanley on the same errand. I wrote to the Geographical Society, and pointed out to them that England ought to send an expedition, not America. Then I began, at their instance, to collect money for an expedition, the command of which, up to the very day it started, I fully expected would be given to me, instead of which it was given to Commander Dawson. He met Stanley returning from Livingstone.

After further correspondence, the Geographical Society resolved to send me out to meet Livingstone again, and give him stores, etc.; then to separate, and explore the country on my own account. I left England, therefore, in 1872, with Bartle Frere on slave business, I being under his orders. At Zanzibar, we encountered opposition from the Arabs, who were furious at the stoppage of the slave trade. We had a good deal of trouble in consequence.

There were with me at that time, Murphy, Dillon, and a grandson of Dr. Moffat's. Dillon and I went on ahead when we left the coast. Poor Moffatt died before the rest of the party, who had followed on, could reach us. Ah, that was a terrible time!" sighed Captain Cameron, as he gazed out on the brilliant sky and sea around and beneath us. "At Unyanyambi we were stopped by hostile tribes; we had no carriers, as they and everyone else were ill. I myself was quite blind from ophthalmia. Whilst we waited there, the gloom and horror was increased by the bringing in of Livingstone's body, and I actually had to give them the means of taking it down to the coast. Then Murphy resigned, and accompanied the doctor's body to the coast.

Every minute of my time was noted on my journals."

"Were your men of much use to you?"

"Well, yes, to a certain degree; but they are rather cowardly. I remember one day I was going along in my palanquin, when a wild bull charged us, and they dropped me in the middle of the pathway and fled; and there I was, tied to a chair, unable to move hand or foot, and this fearful beast careered round me! We ran short in our supplies, and for fourteen days we were absolutely without any provisions or food of any kind other than roots of ferns, fungus, etc., which we pulled up as we walked along. Arrived at Ujiji, and having possessed myself of the journals, the great question that was then uppermost

ing, but I took up a stiff position and forced a peace. After leaving Nanyee, where I took Livingstone's instruments and watch, so as to compare his observations with mine, I proved that the Lualaba river had nothing to do with the Nile, but was the upper water of the Congo. Had I wished it I could have come down that river before Stanley, only I resolved to go south with Tippoo Tib whom I found a very decent fellow. He was a slave trader, it is true, but chiefly owing to circumstances. He saved the missionaries at the time of the German and English blockade of the coast, two years ago. From Nanyee the whole country was perfectly new. I went up the central depression of Africa, down which flow the rivers which go to form the Congo. There was no great difficulty," continued Captain Cameron, who appeared determined to minimize his adventures as much as possible; "but there was most lovely scenery.

At one place I found all the women had been sent away in anticipation of our arrival. Here my pet goat was stolen. I went up armed to the village and made a row about it. A spear was chucked at me, and then another, and another, and another. I stood quite still beneath a volley of abuse and spears. Then my rifle was given me and they retired. After a while one of my men wounded a native who was a long way off. We then had a palaver. They were much impressed by our behavior. "If you take another route," said they, "you shall go unmolested." I had only fifty-six men and twenty rifles with me, and as the whole country was alive against us, I thought it wiser to follow their advice. One night at sunset we reached a village, and in answer to my hail we received a volley of arrows. I ran down into the village, followed by my men, and the villagers ran away. We destroyed the village, and I made a four-square fort, with a hut at each corner. Here we were shut up, and stormed continually for five days. At last we caught a man and woman, whom we retained for a time as hostages. Then I sent the woman away with a message that we meant and wished them no harm. She returned with the chiefs. They had thought we were Portuguese. We became great friends. King Kasongo ruled over the country, which was as big as the German Empire, and took tribute from different chiefs. You know," continued the explorer, "they have a wonderful system of policy and etiquette in those regions. The chiefs come in and pay homage, the king himself travels with a big suite, and visits the districts. After that I proceeded through the country of another great chief; here our route lay in the great bed of the Congo. At last we reached the Portuguese Establishment of Bihe—a place filled with wheat, oranges, roses—and then we wandered on our way to the coast for a distance of two hundred and forty miles, keeping out of wars and battles only by the exercise of the greatest possible tact. The



CAPTAIN LOVETT CAMERON, R.N.

Shortly after that Dillon fell very ill, and he had to give in, and I—myself a complete cripple—was left to go alone. I determined I would go as straight as I could to Ujiji to pick up Livingstone's journals. Three days after I heard that Dillon had shot himself in delirium. There was an end of him, poor fellow! I made a big sweep to the south to get to Ujiji, and I had no end of trouble in passing the natives."

"But you were not absolutely alone, surely?" said I.

"No," he replied, "not at that time; for I had one hundred and fifty carriers, who had recovered their health, and twenty supposed soldiers and servants. To go through all that jungle was a terrible task. I used to get my latitude by lunar obser-

in my mind was that of the level of the lake. Its longitude and its outlet had been undetermined by both Livingstone and Stanley. I went right round it and found the outlet—although Stanley denies that I did so—and proved that what Dr. Livingstone thought was a separate lake was really part of Tanganyika. After that I returned to Ujiji, dismissed those who were afraid to cross the lake because of the unknown land that lay before them, and because they feared the horrors it might contain, I cut down the party to sixty-four, and then crossed the lake."

"Did you have many adventures at that part of your journey?"

"Not many," he replied. "There were, of course, hardships to be undergone, and once some Arabs and natives fell to fight-

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