

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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## STANLEY'S JOURNEY ACROSS AFRICA.

II

Many were the almost miraculous escapes of the explorers of the Stanley expedition from the combined perils of cannibals and cataracts—of savage beasts and still more savage men—the narrative of which is of stirring interest. But sometimes, alas! more thrilling is the story of the tragic fate of those brave men. Frank Pocock was now the only white man, besides Stanley, with the expedition. Barker having suddenly died. Amid the African jungle Frank was fond of singing the Sunday-school hymns he had learned as a boy in dear old England. Saddened by the death of his brother, he seemed to have a presentiment of his own approaching fate. One night Stanley heard him singing, in a sad, minor strain, the following words:

"The home land, the fair land,  
Refuge for all distressed,  
Where pain and sin ne'er enter in,  
But all is peace and rest.

"The home land! I long to meet  
Those who have gone before;  
The weeping eyes and weary feet,  
Rest on that happy shore.

"The home land, the bright land,  
My eyes are filled with tears,  
Remembering all the happy band,  
Passed from my sight for years.

"When will it dawn upon my soul?  
When shall I reach that strand?  
By night and day, I watch and pray  
For thee, dear, blest home land."

"I thought the voice trembled as the strain ended," writes Stanley, "so I said, 'Frank, my dear fellow, you will make us all cry with such tones as those. Choose some heroic tune, whose notes will make us all feel alive.'"

"All right, sir," he replied, with a bright, cheerful face, and sang the following:



FRANK POCOCK



THE FIGHT BELOW THE CONFLUENCE OF THE ARUW MI AND THE CONGO RIVERS.

"Brightly gleams our banner,  
Pointing to the sky,  
Waving wanderers onward  
To their home on high.

"Journeying o'er the desert,  
Gladly thus we pray,  
And with hands united  
Take our heavenward way.

"How do you like this, sir?" he asked.  
My God, my Father, while I stray,  
Far from my home, in life's rough way,  
O teach me from my heart to say,  
Thy will be done.

Though dark my path and sad my lot,  
Let me be still and murmur not,  
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,  
Thy will be done.

"What though in lonely grief I sigh,  
For friends beloved, no longer nigh!  
Submissive would I still reply,  
Thy will be done."

"Frank, you are thinking too much of the poor fellows we have lost," said Stanley.

"It is of no use, my son. The time for regret and sorrow will come by-and-by, but just now we are in the centre of Africa; savages behind you, savages on either side of you. Onward, I say; onward to death, if it is to be. Sing, my dear Frank, your best song."

He responded by singing:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,  
Marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus,  
Going on before."

And in this spirit the brave fellow marched on to his death. Not long after, June 3rd, 1877, in shooting the

rapids of Massassa, his canoe was wrecked, he was engulfed in the eddies, and his comrades never saw him again. Stanley's grief was intense. "In my troubles," he writes, "his face was my cheer, his English voice recalled me to my aims, and out of his brave, bold heart he uttered in my own language words of comfort to my thirsty ears. Thirty-four months had we lived together, and hearty throughout had been his assistance and true his service. The servant had long ago merged in the companion—the companion had soon become a friend. When curbed about by anxiety and gloom, his voice had ever made music to my soul. When grieving for the hapless lives lost, he consoled me. But now my faithful comforter and true-hearted friend was gone."

We give a sketch of one of the numerous

### RIVER FIGHTS,

by which the expedition had to conquer its way down the Congo. As soon as its approach was known the hideous war-drums resounded along the shore, and the warriors rushed to their canoes. "Soon," says Stanley, "we see a sight that sends the blood tingling through every nerve and fibre of our body—a flotilla of gigantic canoes bearing down upon us." There were fifty-four of them, manned by two thousand cannibals, vociferously demanding human meat. Finding that he must fight against nearly twenty-fold odds, Stanley anchored his fleet of twenty-three boats and awaited the onset. "Boys, be firm as iron," he cried. "Wait till you see the first spear, then take good aim. Don't think of running away. Only your guns can save you." On they came. Soon spears were hurtling through the air, but every sound was lost in the noise of the musketry. In five minutes the savages retreated, baffled of their anticipated prey.

But Stanley describes himself as

HUNTED TO DESPAIR.  
We had laboured strenuously through ranks of savages, scattered over a score of flotillas, had endured persistent attacks day and night while struggling through them, had resorted to all kinds of defence, and yet at every curve of this fearful river the yells of the savages broke loud upon our ears, the snake-like canoes darted forward to the attack, while the drums and horns and shouts raised a fierce and deafening uproar. We were becoming exhausted, yet we were still only in the middle of the continent. We were being weeded out by units and twos and threes. There were not thirty in the entire expedition who had not received a wound. To continue this fearful life was not possible. I pen these lines with half a feeling that they will never be read by man. I leave events to an all-gracious Providence. Often food could be procured only at

the risk of life. The guns were reduced in number to thirty. The natives were often armed with European guns. "At one time," says Stanley, "I saw nine bright musket barrels aimed at me." He had thirty-two pitched battles with the savages. The marvel is that a single man escaped. At the Kalulu Falls nine men were drowned in one afternoon. Not at all paces were the natives hostile. At Inke Falls 600 were hired to drag the teakwood boats, some of which weighed three tons, over a steep and difficult portage. They also helped to make, with vast toil, two new canoes, but they were both soon lost in the rapids.

The prolonged struggle was nearly at an end. And well that it was so, for they were nearly in despair. Fevers had sapped the frame; hunger had debilitated the body, anxiety preyed upon the mind. My people," continues Stanley, "were groaning aloud. Hollow-eyed, sallow, and gaunt, unspeakably miserable in aspect, we had but one thought—to trudge on for one more look at the sea."

They left the Congo to escape its cataracts, and struck through the wilder-

(Continued on next page.)



THE BURIAL SERVICE OF EDWARD POCOCK.