

to imagine the feelings which would overtake him were he one day suddenly to find himself there. The immensity of the situation is appalling. At first the mind appears mercifully to become oblivious to its surroundings; but gradually and steadily there creeps in the feeling of the utter insignificance of the human being in the midst of the dark and brooding shades of the forest, unending and eternal.

Hundreds of miles ahead, behind, to right, and to left, always the same! To die here is to die unknown to your white fellow beings. Lost to die in the unknown would be your certain fate were you to make a single error in judging your locality. Like some mighty monster, ever ready to seize upon and destroy unlucky man, stands this forest silent, dark, and deadly, but patient with the certainty of success begotten by centuries of passive waiting. From morning to night nothing but a dark and dusky gloom greets the traveller. He is crushed with a sense of his insignificance. Trees, water and, here and there, a patch of sky are the three objects that meet his eye. He longs again for the clear blue open sky and the short crisp grass of the open country.

As each man marched along with bent back and swinging pace I fancied I could read their thoughts with a certainty that experience brings. I knew them to be similar to my own. Each of us thought of the deadly and torturing pangs of starvation; the wild wilderness of emptiness that had to be passed through going and returning; of the many bones that whitened the camps of the expedition on its way up the river Ituri. We thought of the terrible nights we had passed in former times, crouching over the fires with aching stomachs and broken spirits, and praying to Heaven that we should soon see the sunny grass lands.

Here we were only some twenty-seven souls or so marching on from day to day, deeper and deeper into the forest, each day getting farther away from our comrades. Ahead of us lay

OVER SIX HUNDRED MILES

of forest. Westward, to the edge of the Congo, on our left, forest to the far off Manyuema country, three months open march away; and to the right, forest for two hundred miles.

Had it been the unknown that we were to pierce it would not have mattered so much; for the unknown is almost always a hopeful prospect in life on earth. But it was the stern reality of a knowledge bought at the expense of misery, starvation and death that made the forest ahead of us seem so cruel and black. I can only say that it was entirely owing to the pluck and devotion of each individual black in this little band that enabled matters to be brought to such a brilliant conclusion.

May it ever be the lot of the white man in Africa, who finds himself in similar difficulties, to possess such men as our chief trained these up to be! Disciplined with an iron hand, the result was that they would obey orders without hesitation. Accustomed to the most impartial justice, each knew his case would have the ready ear of his master. It is with such men as

THESE TWENTY-SEVEN

that the future of Africa will be worked out.

We made twelve miles from the Fort by nightfall and bivouacked on the site of an old encampment of dwarfs. Next morning we were off before daylight after a hasty meal of parched corn. Climbing the high hill Kilimani we had to take shelter about two p.m. in some old weather beaten native huts from the torrents of cold pouring rain which chilled the men to the bone.

19th—Left camp at six o'clock and by ten a.m. had

made nine miles and, after hard and fast going, marched in to the deserted village of Mabunga by five p.m., having made twenty-three English miles. Mabunga we now found deserted, and the trees and shrubs grown up so much as to make the place almost unrecognizable. The accursed Manyuema having devastated all that country along the Ihuru river precluded us from piercing through the bush by that route and from making down the north bank of the Ihuru.

The march into Mabunga was one of the very best I have ever made in the forest. Twenty-three miles will not seem much on a good level road in England or Canada. But when one takes into consideration the state of disused path in a tropical forest, grown up with some months of lusty vegetation, this distance must be considered as not bad for ten hours' marching.

From here to Kilonga's, every vestige of remaining food had been destroyed on our route by the Manyuema raiders of Kloinga-Longa, and what had perchance escaped the keen observation of these people had been crushed and trampled under foot by the hordes of elephants that frequent this part of the forest.

22nd February.—To-day we passed three of our old camps made in carrying the boat to Fort Bodo. Reached the deserted clearing outside Ipoto, the Arab settlement of Kloinga-Longa, and soon afterwards astonished the Manyuema by marching into their midst, ninety miles from Fort Bodo.

The state of filth and misery that met our eyes here was beyond all description. Refuse of the most foul kind lay in heaps up against the very sides of the huts. It is true that many houses of a superior kind had been built during our absence, but though those may have been clean in their interior, at the very doors were heaped the piles of rubbish and filth that Europeans would not have allowed within fifty yards of their houses.

Slaves, covered with ulcers, and starved away to mere bags of bones, stood round us and watched us in making camp. Everywhere a stench pervaded the atmosphere, until we longed every man to be again in the adjoining forest, where at least the air was pure, and the eye unoffended with the misery of the settlement.

After making my Salaams to the Arab chiefs, I commenced negotiations to obtain some guides to show me a cross cut through the forest for three days ahead. As usual they returned the inevitable and chronic answer to my eager solicitations, at which all Arabs are so famous.

"Inshallah Kashu" —"please God to-morrow: we cannot answer you to-day, for you are tired and have marched from afar off."

"In the morning when you have rested and are refreshed with the night's sleep, we will give you our answer. Meanwhile tell us what you saw at the Nyanza."

In the morning, at last, after much wearing pow-wow, I gave Kilonga-Longa one of the two blankets I possessed, and in this way obtained some guides to show us a short road to Kalunga's station on the Lenda river and from there on to Ugarrowa's.

It afterwards turned out that we had to show these intelligent guides the way. It may be interesting to know that one of the conditions under which they came was that they were to have all the ivory we might find on the way.

While at Kalonga-Longa I learned that Kamonri, one of our late donkey boys, while searching for food on the south side of the Ituri river, had been killed and eaten by the "Wakussu," and close to the fire were found one of his thighs and shin bones.

Yladi, under chief of the Manyuema, amused us