

quired by the International African Association by treaty with the natives, for the purpose of establishing free states under its supervision.

This great territory, hitherto known as The Unexplored Region, will, if the Conference be able to carry out its plans, be thrown open to free trade, and the largest of African rivers made a commercial highway for all nations. The navigation of the Congo between the coast and Leopoldville is interrupted by a series of cataracts or falls. Around these falls it is proposed to build a railway. Above Leopoldville the river is navigable for 4,520 miles. The country about which the Congo Congress is negotiating is bounded on the south by the Zambesi, and extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the valley of the Nile and the lakes out of which it flows, a region of wonderful fertility. The Congo flows through an elevated plateau, the temperature varying during the year from 80° at noon to 60° at two a.m., and the soil is capable of raising immense crops of tropical and semi-tropical products. The Congo is supposed to be second only to the Amazon in its volume of water.

THE NILE.

This river has its first great reservoir under the Equator, and derives all its waters from the region between a few degrees south of that line, and 13° north, where it receives its last affluent, the Atbara. The Egyptian Nile is formed by the junction, near Khartoum, of the Blue and the White Niles. The Blue rises in the centre of Abyssinia, and is fed by the rains which fall in the mountains of that country from April to August. It is this great mass of water which causes the rapid rise in summer and brings with it the silt which yearly spreads fertility over the land. The White Nile comes direct from the great natural reservoirs before mentioned.

The annual rise of the river begins before the end of June and reaches its greatest flow late in September, gradually decreasing till the end of May, the great regularity of the flow being due to the admirable system of reservoirs and checks, which nature has provided.

The cataracts play an important part in the preservation and regulation of the Nile flow. They are formed by masses of granite rock which at intervals cross the course of the stream and form enduring dams; without these the Nile in Nubia would be a fierce torrent during high water, and a dry channel a large part of the year. The Nile is navigable at all seasons of the year by steamboats of light draught between the mouth and the first cataract (Assouan), between the first and second (Assouan to Wadi Halfa), between near Berber and Khartoum, between Khartoum and a little south of Gondokoro, and between Duffli and Lake Albert. It is only during the season of high water that boats can descend the Nile between Berber and Assouan. The work of towing or warping boats up against the current is more difficult but less dangerous than the descent.—(Condensed from Gen. Stone in *Science*.)

THE SOUDAN.

That portion of the African Continent known as the Soudan (the country of the blacks) or Nigritia, in its largest sense embraces all the great stretch of country between the sixth and the fifteenth parallels north latitude, extending from the Nile Provinces on the east to Senegambia on the Atlantic coast. It covers an area of nearly a million and a-half square miles, is known to be peopled with dense tribes and to possess inexhaustible natural resources. The inhabitants are of the negro race. Khartoum is the connecting link between this vast country and what is known as