

THE CONGO AND ITS MISSIONS.

BY ADELINA M. TESKEY.

"Still humanity grows dearer
Being learned the more."

—Jean Ingelow.



STANLEY'S EXPEDITION—DRAGGING BOATS OVER PORTAGE ON THE CONGO.

EVER since Stanley completed his work in 1877 of tracing the Congo River, the attention of all Christendom has been attracted toward this great highway into the heart of Africa. In 1484, Dogo Cam, a Portuguese navigator, sighted the mouth of the Congo, but not until 1877 was there any definite knowledge concerning it. The cataract region is said to be the obstacle which kept so long secret this great highway, but, that passed, there has also been discovered one thousand one hundred miles of navigable river, and beyond the Stanley Falls another two thousand miles of river-way.

The Congo varies greatly in width, and flows with great velocity in places, eroding the banks to such an extent that granite rocks, schist, mica, gneiss and quartz are exposed. In such localities the vegetation is scarce and stunted. In the more level regions, where the river has

formed itself into quiet pools or lakes, the banks are forest-clad, rich soil has accumulated, which is cultivated by the natives for raising ground nuts, sweet potatoes, Indian corn, cassava bushes, and all garden produce. In places may be found some of the richest soil in the world. As might be expected in such a soil, the vegetation is of tropical luxuriance and endless variety. Beautiful creepers, ferns and palms lend their rare grace to the scene, and wild flowers, from the purest white to the most gorgeously coloured, embroider the landscape.

"The beauty of the leaf-forms alone," says a traveller, "is a pleasure, while the tints, from the darkest green to soft yellow, delicate pink, bronze, chocolate, and bright crimson, are mysteries of colour." The grass even, like other things, is of gigantic proportions. Stanley gives us a passage descriptive of the country through which he trav-