

claims that the attendance at the religious meetings is twenty per cent. higher than in other associations of a similar size. The work is divided into four great branches:—social, physical, educational, and religious, and is distributed over numerous committees; and whilst the definite aim of the entire organization is, of course, more purely limited to the last of the four branches, I believe, from what I know of the Secretaries, that the other three branches are regarded as equally important in their aid towards the fourth, and that in their opinion, a religious life may be acquired and expressed less through an attendance upon what are called religious meetings, than through a daily personal contact with, and engagement in, higher evangelical work. One most important department of the operation of such an association lies among railway men, and in a country with rapidly growing railway enterprise it is matter for congratulation that, although the Montreal Young Men's Association has not hitherto been able to undertake much in this direction, the urgency of the field is under pressing consideration for the future.

Few more lovely spots exist in the vicinity of Montreal than the grounds of the Athletic Club on the Cote des Neiges slope of the mountain. But, alas! as usual, the house is in debt. The aid of the ladies has been called in, and several minor schemes have been set on foot to increase the income. An annual subscription of one dollar entitles a lady to take her family and friends to the grounds for a basket picnic, and a swarm of fair damsels have made a supply of cushions which they rent for a consideration for use in the pavilions of the lacrosse club, etc. The grounds are also rapidly rising in favour for Sunday school picnics, among whom something like a generous scramble has originated. The cushions of the fair damsels were in high favour on the first of June, at the Spring Games of the Amateur Athletic Association, in their beautiful new quarters at Cote St. Antoine.

Another little exhibition of feminine tact and invention is the Flower Mission, which meets every Saturday morning to receive spare flowers from citizens as they pass in to business, to make them up into bouquets, and to send them to the hospitals. For fifteen years have our young maidens maintained this labour of love.

An influential committee has been appointed to carry out the proposal to have an oil portrait of the late Dr. Howard, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in McGill College, placed in the Governor's Hall of the General Hospital, with which institution the respected Dean had been actively connected for thirty years.

Another new religion has opened up on its own account, and meets in unpretentious quarters with the pretentious name of the Religio-Philosophical Temple. In these sacred precincts we are to have a series of inspirational and trance discourses at the rate of two a week during the month of June. At these, on Sundays at 11 a.m., and on Thursdays at 8 p.m., Mr. Thos. G. W. Kates, of Philadelphia, will give *clairvoyant clairaudient*, and *psychometric tests*, and will entertain the audience with impromptu spiritual songs upon such subjects as any individual present may suggest.

VILLE MARIE.

THE VIOLET.

BORN in the night and christen'd with the dew,
The violet lifts its face for morning's kiss;
And each fair petal, fill'd with Nature's bliss,
Weaves from the sunshine a sweet robe of blue;
The birds look down and wonder how it grew,
For yesterday the leaves where now it is
Lay green i' the grass, and nought was like to this,
Earth's earliest counterfeit of Heaven's hue.
The shy hepatica; the snowdrop white;
The trebly mounted trillium; the blaze
Of golden daffodil with sunny rays—
Have all arisen in their beauty bright:
But none of Flora's first-born can compare
With this blue-blossom'd darling of the air.

SAREPTA.

CENTRAL AFRICA.

A LAND, embracing an area of some eight millions of square miles and a population of not less than 100,000,000, containing enormous forests, vast fertile plains, spacious valleys, immense mountains, grand plateaux, wonderful lake chains, rivers several thousands of miles long, magnificent flora and fauna, and through which the foot of the white man had scarcely left a permanent print—such a land is Central Africa, which is glibly spoken of as though it were merely an overlooked province of the Dark Continent.

Twenty years ago this vast territory was absolutely an unknown land. It is true that Burton, Butler, Speke and Grant among others had made occasional journeys, and Dr. Livingstone had carefully explored certain regions; but these early attempts were confined to specific objects, as the discovery of the source of the Nile, the great inland lakes, etc. An African Association had been started in 1788 in London for the purpose of internal exploration, but repeated failures and disasters disheartened the members, and it was afterwards merged into the Royal Geographical Society, which during the last fifty years has done much in the continuation of African discovery. Yet twenty years ago the bulk of Central Africa was a sealed book. The sources of the Nile had not been determined; the courses of the Congo, Niger and Zambesi had not been

defined; the wealth of nature was not dreamed of; the great variety of tribes among the black race were only generally known as negroes; the trade with Africa was confined to the seaboard; no attempts had been made to deal with the slave trade, and the efforts at converting the heathen to Christianity were up to that time chiefly individual and spasmodic. Central Africa was a blank space on the map of the world. Many believed it was a counterpart, or rather a continuation of the Great Sahara Desert; others thought it was a vast stretch of marsh and jungle; on all hands it was regarded as a huge pest-house and totally unfit for European occupation.

It is a strange fact, carrying its own commentary, that whilst the New World had developed in a manner truly marvellous since its discovery, the greater part of an Old World continent, always known to history, had not even been discovered. When the early Phœnician colonies were first established in Africa is one of the lost dates of history; but it is positively certain that Cambyses conquered Egypt in the sixth century before the Christian era. It is still a matter of scholarly dispute whether Africa was or was not circumnavigated before that time by order of King Neku II., who tried to connect the Red Sea with the Mediterranean by means of the Nile and canals; but it is a fact that evidences of ancient occupation are being discovered in parts of the continent now being opened up by the boasted enterprise of to-day.

But whatever may have been known of or accomplished in Africa in the olden times, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century, for Portuguese colonies were only coast settlements always—that modern Europe began to realize that a large continent lay undeveloped at its feet, and that it might be worth while to find out what it contained.

At first it was regarded as an empty shell. The mere contour had been measured, but as everyone agreed that there was nothing worth having inside, nobody took the trouble to look. Some few ventured to peep here and there, and gave strange reports of what they saw; but they were regarded as travellers' tales. Suddenly Africa became magnetic ground to explorer, scientist, philanthropist and missionary, and it has continued to attract for about a century; but, in looking over the records of African enterprise, one fact stands out clear and bold above all others—a fact so startling and sad that, however great and prosperous the future of the great Unknown Land may become, the material and civilizing progress gained for future generations will never erase the long and ghastly list of deaths and disasters connected with early attempts at exploration. It has been a subject of mournful comment for all African travellers that the milestones marked by their brave predecessors were mostly their grave-stones. The loss of life has been appalling, and many of the lives lost were irreplaceable. Among the heroes who died in the service of humanity were Mungo Park, Lacerda, Hornemann, Oudney, Clapperton, Laing, Duncan, Van der Decken, Richardson, Keith-Johnston, Livingstone, Gordon, and other famous pioneers. Of the followers—the rank and file—whose labours are not individually remembered, but are none the less worthy of honour, no guess or approximation can be made. They have been slain in their thousands by the fatal climate of certain localities, by the accidents of adventure, and by the treacherous antipathy or open hostility of disturbed natives.

Although they are gone the result of their great work remains, and the army of civilization is now marching along the roads opened up by those brave beginners.

Central Africa is approachable by three great river-ways, the Nile on the north, the Congo from the west, and the Zambesi from the east. At the present time the Nile route is practically closed. Since the death of Gordon and the abandonment of the Sudan the hope of moulding Christian order out of native chaos has been deferred. Various rebel forces are engaged in internecine feuds, the Arabs are harassing the Egyptian outposts, and the slave traders are again in the active pursuit of their old nefarious traffic. The Congo district is at present the scene of international rivalry, and British enterprises and interests have been largely swept away and superseded by the recent efforts of Belgium, France, Germany and Portugal. Of these colonizing forces, the last-named power, though the oldest by far, is the least efficient and most retarding in civilizing effect. The history of Portugal in Africa is not a record of progress. Beyond holding trading stations and kidnapping or buying negroes to send to the Brazilian mines the Portuguese never did much on the West Coast; nor has their influence been healthy for the natives. True enough, the Jesuits, in their usual missionary manner, had long ago established the Christian religion, nominally, and tried hard to implant it as far as they could extend their influence inland; but that influence never extended many miles from the fort and the factory. It is over 400 years since the Portuguese proclaimed their sovereignty on the West Coast of Africa, but the blue and white flag has never been far from the sight of the sea.

Beyond a few exploring invasions by the Dutch and the French in the eighteenth century, nothing was really done to examine the unknown land to which the great River Zaire or Congo led until Captain Tuckey, in 1816, an expedition led which was soon broken up by sickness and the death of the leader. The record of the travels, well known as "Tuckey's Last," contained the only knowledge of that district for the next fifty years. Owen, Grandy, Bastian and others tried to penetrate the country, but were more or less unsuccessful. In 1867 Livingstone found a great river-source from the Zambesi country in

the east, and, believing it to be the spring of the Nile, followed it for about 1,500 miles. After that explorer's death, Stanley, in 1876, followed this river for 1660 miles more, and found it to be the Congo. The result of Stanley's expedition "Across the Dark Continent" opened the eyes of the world to the immense possibilities of commercial aggrandizement in the Congo District and indeed all Central Africa.

The International Association, founded by King Leopold, of Belgium, in 1876, aimed at acquiring as much African territory as possible for trade purposes, and sent out several expeditions to the West Coast to further its designs. Portugal, the old occupier of certain seaboard lands, not liking this aggression of European powers in what it foolishly considered its privileged domain, sought the alliance of England, and in 1884 Earl Granville committed Great Britain in a treaty with that country to recognize its rights on the Congo. This was a most unwise and unnecessary step, and provoked great opposition both in and out of England. It was certainly strange that free-trade England, with her traditionary policy of just government, should ally herself with a country that had always maintained a policy of utter hostility to other traders than its own, and was as arbitrary with the natives as it was exclusive of foreigners. The International Association had by this time acquired considerable territorial and trading rights on the Congo, and regarded the Anglo-Portuguese treaty with aversion and suspicion.

It is unfortunate that the spirit of retaliation overcame the international spirit professed by the association, and led it to make an agreement with France, appointing that country heir to all its privileges and possessions should it cease to exist. In the meantime Germany had developed a colonizing policy, which is still on trial and not unlikely to fail. Prince Bismarck created the German Empire; but the unification of the states did not altogether assure the unity of the people. The rather iron-glove policy of the Chancellor placed many restrictions on individual liberty and progress that were not compatible with the German spirit. Love of the Fatherland could not induce many children of the empire to forego the manifest advantages to be gained by living outside of it. Emigration resulted, and grew to large proportions. The great Chancellor therefore planned a colonization scheme, whereby the Germans, though going abroad, would not altogether leave the Empire.

West Africa was one of the localities looked to, and in 1875 Von Homeyer explored certain regions near the Congo, as a preliminary. Later on, Luderitz made treaties with the native chiefs around Angra Pequena, which led to a serious correspondence between Prince Bismarck and Earl Granville, with the result that the German claims were allowed, and Germany was from that time an interested and recognized power in West African affairs. The rupture between the Anglo-Portuguese party and the International Association gave an opportunity for the diplomatic skill of the great German minister, and at the end of 1884 he arranged a conference at Berlin, where representatives of all the powers met. Its results were chiefly the formal recognition of the Congo Free State and the delimitation of the territory belonging to it, as well as of that claimed by France and Portugal on the West African Coast. The present extent of the Congo Free State includes some 1,056,200 square miles and over twenty-seven millions of inhabitants. Up to the present the growth has not been as rapid as was expected. The decrees of all the greater and lesser powers, issued from the Berlin conclave, have not as yet produced any appreciable effect upon the slave-traders, and the Congo Free State is not at all the International Arcadia it was intended to become. The country is rich and productive, the climate is such, excepting certain malarious belts, as Europeans can endure, and the inducements to settlers are advantageous; but the natives are thoroughly indolent, and the facilities for inland trade are not yet numerous or secure. The employment of Tippoo Tibb, an influential trader, is not likely to produce the effect on the slave trade intended, unless that old slaver proves very different from other chiefs, who have ever been ready to take prepayment for services not to be rendered.

Another mournful chapter to the history of African expeditions has recently been added by the deaths of Barttelot and Jameson in connection with the Emin Pasha Relief. The Arab slave-dealers are hostile to all civilizing agencies; the natives are averse to compulsory labour, and the Mahomedans are opposed to the spread of Christianity. Trouble must therefore be expected from all these quarters for a long period. It can only be by a very careful and thoroughly slow progress that a firm hold is to be had and held. It is useless marching into the interior and establishing small stations, under the delusion that either native or Arab will be over-awed by a handful of settlers and a flag. In that case history will repeat itself, and the settlers will be settled in the same certain and painful fashion as in the past. The country must be treated as in war. The invading army of civilization must not push its front too far before its line of communication with the supplies at the rear is fully and thoroughly protected. Already many stations have been destroyed, and the work that was done too soon has to be again commenced.

The third route to Central Africa is by way of the river Shire, an affluent of the Zambesi, which flows from Lake Nyassa. Until late years Zanzibar was the central point on the East African coast from which the interior was to be reached; but the great Zambesi water route is rapidly displacing it, and Quilimane is the port that should naturally take its place, but unfortunately Quilimane is claimed