

An invitation was extended to us to make his own village our home. We were hungry, and accepted the invitation, and crossed the river—drums and double bell-gongs sounding the peaceful advance of our flotilla upon Chumbiri.

The dames of Chumbiri were slaves of fashion. Six-tenths of them wore brass collars, two inches in diameter. Fancy the weight of thirty pounds of brass, soldered permanently round the neck!

Yet these were the favourite wives of Chumbiri! He boasted to me he possessed "four-tens" of wives, and each wife was collared permanently in thick brass. I made a rough calculation, and I estimated that his wives bore about their necks, until death, at least eight hundred pounds of brass; his daughters—he had six—one hundred and twenty pounds. Add six pounds of brass-wire to each wife and daughter—for arm and leg ornaments—and one is astonished to discover that Chumbiri possesses a portable store of 1,396 pounds of brass.

I asked of Chumbiri what he did with the brass on the neck of a dead wife. He smiled. Significantly he drew his finger across his throat.

On the 7th March we parted from the friendly king, with an escort of forty-five men, in three canoes, under the leadership of his eldest son, who was instructed by his father to accompany us as far as the pool—now called "Stanley Pool," because of an incident which will be described hereafter.

On the 8th March we drew our vessels close to a large grove, to cook breakfast. Fires were kindled, and the women were attending to the porridge of cassava flour for their husbands. Frank and I were hungrily awaiting our cook's voice to announce our meal ready, when, close to us, several loud musket-shots startled us all, and six of our men fell wounded. Though we were taken considerably at a disadvantage, long habit had taught us how to defend ourselves in a bush, and a desperate fight began, and lasted an hour, ending in the retreat of the savages, but leaving us with fourteen of our men wounded. This was our thirty-second fight, and last.

On the right of the river towered a low row of cliffs, white and glistening, so like the cliffs of Dover that Frank at once exclaimed that it was a "bit of England!" The grassy table-land above the cliffs appeared as green as a lawn, and so much reminded Frank of the Kentish Downs that he exclaimed, enthusiastically, "I feel we are nearing home."

"Why not call this 'Stanley Pool,' and these cliffs 'Dover Cliffs?'" he said, "for no traveller who may come here again will fail to recognize the cliffs by that name."

Subsequent events brought these words vividly to my recollection, and, in accordance with Frank's suggestion, I named this lake-like expansion of the river from Dover Cliffs to the first cataract of the Livingstone Falls—embracing about thirty square miles—the "Stanley Pool."

A few hundred yards below we heard, for the first time, the low and sullen thunder of the first cataract of the Livingstone Falls.

The wide, wild land which—by means of the greatest river of Africa—we have pierced, is now about to be presented in a milder aspect than that which has filled the preceding pages with records of desperate conflicts and furious onslaughts of savage men. The people no longer resist our advance. Trade has tamed their natural ferocity, until they no longer resist our approach with the fury of beasts of prey.

It is the dread river itself of which we shall now have to complain. It is no longer the stately

stream whose mystic beauty, noble grandeur, and gentle uninterrupted flow along a course of nearly nine hundred miles, ever fascinated us, despite the savagery of its peopled shores, but a furious river, rushing down a steep bed obstructed by reefs of lava, lines of immense boulders, and dropping down over terraces in a long series of falls, cataracts, and rapids. Our frequent contests with the savages culminated in tragic struggles with the mighty river, as it rushed and roared through the deep, yawning pass that leads from the broad table-land down to the Atlantic Ocean. With inconceivable fury the Livingstone sweeps with foaming billows into the broad Congo.

On the 16th March we began our labours with energy. We had some skilful work to perform to avoid being swept away by the velocity of the current; but whenever we came to rocks we held the rattan hawsers in our hands, and allowed the stream to take the boats beyond these dangerous points. Had a hawser parted, nothing could have saved the canoe or the men in it. It was the wildest stretch of river that I have ever seen. Take a strip of sea, blown over by a hurricane, four miles in length and half a mile in breadth, and a pretty accurate conception of its leaping waves may be obtained. The roar was tremendous and deafening. The most powerful steamer, going at full speed on this portion of the river would be as helpless as a cockle-boat. I attempted three times, by watching some tree floating down from above, to ascertain the rate of the wild current by observing the time that it occupied in passing two given points, from which I estimated it to be about thirty miles an hour!

On the 17th, after cutting brushwood, and laying it over a path of eight hundred yards in length, we crossed from the upper branch of the Gordon-Bennett River, to the lower branch. On the 21st and the two following days we were engaged in hauling our vessels overland—a distance of three-quarters of a mile—over a broad, rocky point.

The 25th saw us at work, at dawn, in a bad piece of the river, which is significantly styled "The Cauldron." Our best canoe, seventy-five feet long, was torn from the hands of fifty men, and swept, in the early morning, down to destruction. In the afternoon, the *Glasgow*, parting her cables, was swept away, but, to our great joy, finally recovered. Accidents were numerous; the glazed rocks were very slippery, occasioning dangerous falls to the men. One man dislocated his shoulder, and another had a severe contusion of the head. Too careless for my safety, in my eagerness and anxiety, I fell down—feet first—into a chasm thirty feet deep, between two enormous boulders, but, fortunately, escaped with only a few rib bruises, though for a short time I was half-stunned.

On the 27th we happily succeeded in passing the fearful Cauldron; but, during our last efforts, the *Crocodile*, eighty-five feet long, was swept away into the centre of the Cauldron, heaved upward, and whirled round with quick gyrations, but was at last secured. Leaving Frank Pockock in charge of the camp, I mustered ninety men—most of the others being stiff from wounds—and proceeded, by making a wooden tramway, with sleepers and rollers, to pass Rocky Island Falls.

By two p.m. we were below the falls. The seventeen canoes now left us were manned according to their capacity. As I was about to embark in my boat to lead the way, I turned to the people to give my last instructions, which were: To follow me, clinging to the right bank, and by no means to venture into mid-river into the current. While delivering my instructions, I observed Kalulu in the *Crocodile*. When I asked him what he wanted

in the canoe, he replied, with a deprecating smile and an expostulating tone: "I can pull sir—see!" "Ah! very well," I answered.

The river was not more than four hundred and fifty yards wide; but one cast of the sounding-lead, close to the bank, obtained a depth of one hundred and thirty-eight feet. In a very few moments we had descended the mile stretch, and before us, six hundred yards off, roared the furious falls, since distinguished by the name "Kalulu."

With a little effort, we succeeded in reaching a pretty camping-place, on a sandy-beach. I was beginning to congratulate myself on having completed a good day's work, when to my horror, I saw the *Crocodile* gliding with the speed of an arrow towards the falls! Human strength availed nothing now, and we watched it in agony—for it had five men on board. It soon reached the island which cleft the falls, and was swept down the left branch. We saw it whirled round three or four times, then plunged down into the depths, out of which the stern presently emerged pointed upward, and we knew then that Kalulu and his canoe-mates were no more.

Fast upon this terrible catastrophe, before we could begin to bewail their loss, another canoe—with two men in it—darted past the point, borne by irresistibly on the swift current. Then a third canoe darted by, and the brave lad, Soudi, cried out: "La il Allah, il Allah!"—"There is but one God! I am lost, master!" We watched him for a few moments, and then saw him drop; and then darkness fell upon the day of horror. Nine men lost in one afternoon!

The commencement of "Lady Alice Rapids" was marked by a broad fall, and a lengthy dyke of foaming water. Strong cane cables were lashed to the bow and stern, and twelve men were detailed to each, while five assisted me in the boat. But the rapids were more powerful and greater than usual.

We had scarcely ventured near the top of the rapids when the current swept the boat into the centre of the angry, foaming, billowy stream.

"Oars, my boys, and be steady! Uledi, to the helm!" were all the words I was able to shout; after which I guided the coxswain with my hand—for now, as we rowed furiously downwards, the human voice was weak against the thunder of the angry river. Never did the rocks assume such hardness, such solemn grimness and bigness; never were they invested with such terrors and such grandeur of height, as while we were the cruel sport and prey of the brown-black waves, which whirled us round like a spinning-top, swung us aside, almost engulfed us in the rapidly subsiding troughs, and then whirled us upon the white, ragged crests of others. Ah! with what feelings we regarded this awful power which the great river had now developed! How we cringed under its imperious, compelling, and irresistible force! What lightning retrospects we cast upon our past lives! How impotent we felt before it!

"La il Allah, il Allah!" screamed young Mabruki. "We are lost! Yes, we are lost!"

The flood was resolved we should taste the bitterness of death. A sudden rumbling noise, like the deadened sound of an earthquake, caused us to look below, and we saw the river heaved bodily upward, as though a volcano was about to belch around us. Up to the summit of this watery mound we were impelled; and then, divining what was about to take place, I shouted out, "Pull, men, for your lives!" A few frantic strokes, and we were precipitated over a fall, and sweeping down-towards the lowest line of breakers; but at last we reached land, and my faithful followers rushed up, one after another, with their exuberant wel-