

STANLEY'S EXPLORATION OF THE CONGO

It is difficult to realize that the vast and rich territories of the Congo basin, now the subject of delicate and even perilous negotiations between France and Germany, were in the memory of men still in early middle age an absolutely unknown region. Until Stanley descended the great river, the second largest in the world, from Nyangwe to the Atlantic, a hundred miles from its mouth, and the immense hinterland, with a population estimated from eighteen to twenty million inhabitants, living in a land of tropical luxuriance and full of minerals, was a blank upon the map. Although the mouth of the river was discovered either in 1482 or 1483, by the Portuguese explorer, Diego Cao, nothing further was known about it until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first real attempt at its exploration was made by order of the British Admiralty, when Capt. J. K. Tuckey, R.N., pushed upstream as far as Isangila, and died there. Livingstone reached Nyangwe, on the Luabala, one of the great tributaries of the Congo, in March, 1871, but thought the river was a tributary of the Nile. He was deterred from following the course of the stream by the reports from the Arab traders, and wrote, "I have no fancy to be made into 'black-man's lot' for the sake of the Congo."

The time, however, was at hand when the secret of the great river was to be revealed. Stanley, on his return from the expedition to find Livingstone, was full of the idea of further exploration in Africa.

How the Congo Was Discovered

In his book "Through the Dark Continent," he tells the story of how his famous journey across Africa and down the Congo to the sea came to be undertaken. He called one day at the office of The Daily Telegraph, and was discussing African exploration with a member of the staff (now the managing editor) when Mr. Edward Lawson, the present Lord Burnham, came into the room.

"Stanley has just been telling me," said the gentleman with whom he had been talking, "of the unfinished tasks in African exploration which Livingstone has left behind him. The outlet of Lake Tanganika is still undiscovered; we know scarcely anything of Lake Victoria, and, therefore, the sources of the Nile are still unknown, and, moreover, the western half of the Continent is still a white blank."

The editor of The Daily Telegraph, turning to the great explorer, said, "Do you think you can settle all this if we commission you?" "While I live there will be something done," replied Stanley. "If I survive the time required to perform all the work, all shall be done."

Stanley was then attached to the staff of the New York Herald, and the proprietor of

that journal had the first claim on his services. A telegram was at once sent to Mr. James Gordon Bennett asking him if he would join The Daily Telegraph in sending Stanley out to complete the work already done by Burton, Speke, and Livingstone. Within a few hours the expedition was determined upon, and The Daily Telegraph announced in a leading article that its object was "to complete the work left unfinished by the lamented death of Dr. Livingstone; to solve, if possible, the remaining problems of the geography of Central Africa; and to investigate and report upon the haunts of the slave traders."

Stanley's Expedition

Three Englishmen—Francis John Pocock, Edward Pocock, two experienced young Kent boatmen, and a young man named Frederick Barker—accompanied Stanley. The party sailed for England on August 15, 1874, to Zanzibar, and on August 9, 1877, the 999th day after leaving the East African port for the interior, Stanley reached Boma, at the mouth of the Congo, the only white survivor of the expedition.

It is unnecessary here to trace the course of the expedition in the earlier portion of its journey, or to narrate Stanley's exploration of the new well-known territory of Uganda, and the neighborhood of Lake Tanganyika. Cook's tourists now penetrate those regions as freely and as safely as they do the Engadine. The events of the present day make more interesting his progress from the day he turned westward from Tanganyika and reached the Luabala at Nyangwe, the farthest point down the headwaters of the Congo reached by Dr. Livingstone. From Nyangwe to Isangila, Tuckey's "farthest east"—and it was but an infinitesimal portion of the Congo's 3,000 miles—the course of the river was absolutely unknown. At Nyangwe Stanley met the notorious Arab slave-dealer Tippoo Tib. The Arab did his best to dissuade the explorer from attempting to descend the river to the sea, and his henchmen painting the terrors of the journey in lurid colors, with frightful accounts of the dangers of the navigation and of the savage cannibals who infested its banks. Nor, as experience proved, were these exaggerated. The long voyage in canoes was fraught with appalling perils. The river was full of cataracts and whirlpools, and the inhabitants along its banks were cannibals of the most blood-thirsty description. Every stranger to them was an enemy, and there was the additional incentive to their destruction that everyone captured or slain meant additional supplies for the latter.

An Awful Voyage

Stanley, in his narrative of that awful voyage, when every day was a struggle for life against the perils of the river and the even

more dangerous inhabitants of its littoral, tells how the advent of his canoes was hailed from the banks with yells of "Meat, meat!" as the savages leaped into their canoes and dashed against him in frantic haste to kill or capture the voyagers to fill their cooking-pots. Yet Stanley pushed on undeterred. With the fervor of the true explorer, he tells how "a secret rapture filled my soul as I gazed at the majestic stream. The great mystery that for all these centuries Nature had kept hidden away from the world of science was waiting to be solved. For 200 miles I had followed one of the sources of the Livingstone (Luama) to the confluence, and now before me lay the superb river itself! My task to follow it to the ocean."

Tippoo Tib had been prevailed upon to accompany the explorer for twenty marches from Nyangwe, with a force of armed followers, and these, with Stanley's own party, numbered some 700 individuals, men, women and children, every one Arabs or negroes, except Stanley and Frank Pocock, Edward Pocock and Barker having already succumbed to privations and disease. Tippoo, however, soon repented of his contract, and at the end of a few marches withdrew with his followers. It was at this point that Stanley decided to attempt the remainder of the journey to the sea in canoes, as it was almost impossible to force a way through the dense tropical vegetation springing from the rich soil, through which at times the explorers had to burrow on their hands and knees. The growth Stanley describes as "a miracle of vegetation," in which rubber vines (since one of the great sources of wealth of the Congo) formed a considerable part. Snakes swarmed in the "steamy hot-house atmosphere," and a multitude of insect-plagues drove the men frantic with their incessant attacks. So Stanley took to the river, here over a mile in width, and continued his voyage in canoes.

Along the river at every village attacks were made upon them, and piles of human skulls showed the horrid feasts in which the inhabitants indulged. At one of these, Kam-punzu, two rows of skulls completely surrounded it. No day, for many weeks, passed without fighting, but still the fearless explorer pressed ever forward along the river "downward to the unknown," to night-black shades of mystery and fable. "Mayhap," he writes, "past the lands of the anthropoids, the pigmies, and the blanket-eared men of whom the gentle pagan King of Karagwe spoke, by leagues upon leagues of unexplored lands, populous with scores of tribes, of whom not a whisper has reached the people of other continents; perhaps that fabulous being, the dread Maccoco, of whom Bartolomeo Diaz, Cada Mosto, and Dapper have written, is still represented by one who inherits his ancient kingdom and

power, and surrounded by barbarous pomp. Something strange must surely lie in the vast space occupied by total blankness on our maps between Nyangwe and Tuckey's "Farthest!"

A strange feature of the river was the market-places here and there on its banks or on the islands in mid-stream, where the people assembled to exchange their wares, and where tribal feuds were settled for the brief hours of barter. Up till the hour of noon on market day these places were busy marts, and then the truce ended, and the savages dispersed into the forests, and became man-hunting fiends once more.

Explorers' Hardships

The plight of the explorers was a horrible one. Short of food and savaged with smallpox, scurvy, itch, fever, pneumonia, pleurisy, and typhoid, no day passed but two or three bodies were tossed into the river as the easiest method of burial. "Frank and I," says Stanley, "endeavored our utmost to alleviate the misery, but when the long caravan was entering camp I had many times to turn my face away lest the tears should rise at the sight of the miserable victims of disease who reeled and staggered . . . wandering, ever wandering in search of graves."

Many of the canoes were filled with sick, and when camp was formed for the night these had to be carried ashore and a zareba built to check the savages, who tried to rush the resting-place. One such scene is described.

"About fifty yards of ground outside the camp had been cleared, which, upon the retreat of our scouts, who had been keeping them in check, was soon filled by hundreds of savages, who pressed upon us from all sides but the river, in full expectation that we were flying in fear. But they were mistaken, for we were at bay, and desperate in our resolve not to die without fighting. Accordingly, at such close quarters, the contest soon became terrific. Again and again the savages hurled themselves upon our stockade, launching spear after spear with deadly force into the camp, to be each time repulsed. Sometimes the muzzles of our guns almost touched their breasts. The shrieks, cries, shouts of encouragement, the rattling volleys of musketry, the booming of war horns, the yells and defiance of the combatants, the groans and screams of the women and children in the hospital camp, made together such a medley of hideous noises as can never be effaced from my memory."

At dusk the enemy retreated from the vicinity of the clearing, but the hideous alarms produced from their ivory horns still continued, and now and again a venomous arrow flew by with an ominous whizz to quiver in the earth at our feet, or fall harmlessly into the river behind us."

So the dreadful journey went on from day to day. The noise of drums and warhorns would be heard, and then a swarm of canoes would dart out, their savage occupants yelling, "Meat! Meat! Bo-bo-bo, we shall have plenty of meat!" "Sometimes," writes Stanley, "the suspicion came to my mind that this was all but part of a hideous dream. Why was it that I should be haunted with the idea that these were human beings, who regarded me and my friends only in the light of meat?"

Many were slain in these ceaseless encounters, and yet others were drowned by the capsizing of canoes in the rapids, among them Frank Pocock, but at last the survivors, only 114 in number, worn to shadows with privation and filled with disease, straggled into Boma on August 9, 1877, and hardships and dangers were at an end.

The Future of the Congo

And all this happened only four-and-thirty years ago. The vast territories of the Congo Free State and the French Congo were then a howling wilderness, inhabited only by naked cannibals. Today steamers ply on the thousand-mile reach above Stanley Falls, railways have been built through the dense forests, civilization is permeating the savage tribes, and the collection of rubber and ivory, the cultivation of the soil, and the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the hills has superseded hunting for human flesh.

England as little or no share in the fabulous wealth of the Congo basin. When Stanley came home no ear in England was open to his suggestion that the rich lands he had traversed were worth exploration. Gold, tin, iron, ivory, rubber, and other products, vegetable and mineral, were there in abundance, and the explorer had to go to King Leopold and the Belgians to find those who would exploit the wealth of the Congo. France also saw the possibilities of the new region, and secured some 700,000 square miles of it, and now Germany thinks it worth while to bring Europe within the shadow of war, in order to extort a slice of this territory from the Republic. German ambitions do not end with the French Congo. Behind the present demands of the Kaiser's advisers there lurk keen desires with regard to the northern portion of the Congo Free State. If the bargain with France enables Germany to stretch her territory to the borders of the Free State, some day there will come a demand for the cession of a tract which will enable her to unite the German possessions on the East Coast of Africa with the Cameroons, and a broad band, under the German flag, will lie across Central Africa, shutting off British South Africa from the Sudan, and compelling the Cape-to-Cairo railway to run across German soil.—London Daily Telegraph.

Something About Eyes

There are scores of little eye-signs which give the key to a person's thoughts and betray that person when he or she is unaware of it. An ordinary man, bent on deception, will flinch his eyes if someone looks him "straight in the eyes." The accomplished rogue, however, will not. The eye that never flinches when challenged is not, as many people—especially young women—suppose, the sign of an open and affectionate character. More often than not it betrays the criminal. A detective declared that the worst rogue he ever came across was possessed of a pair of over-steady eyes, and that their unswerving gaze kept him above suspicion for a couple of decades. He would probably never have been suspected of his many crimes had he not been caught red-handed while attempting to cash a forged check.

The unsteady eye—that is, the eye that jerks rapidly from eye to eye when the owner is excited or accused of a crime—does not express guilt, as is often believed. In nine cases out of ten it is a sign of honesty and an unsettled mind.

If you measure the distance between your eyes you will probably find that it is the breadth of one eye. If by chance your eyes are farther apart than that you are possibly very intellectual and have a tenacious memory. Eyes that are very close together very often signify a deceitful, cunning nature.

Clever People's Eyes

Blue eyes are considered to possess more attractions than eyes of any other color. Among the Greeks and Romans of classic times, girls possessing eyes of this color found great favor among men, and it must not be forgotten that the goddess Minerva received a surname to signify the blueness of her eyes. There are, of course, several kinds of blue eyes, and physiologists declare that the pure blue eye, while denoting a sincere, honest nature, is also possessed by a person with large intellectuality. On the other hand, the large, dark blue eye indicates not only great mental power, but sincerity and honesty. The eye which is half blue and grey, and is absent of orange specks, denotes a practical and pure mind; but the china-blue eye, when it is glassy and unchanging, is generally a sign that the owner is of a cold and selfish nature. This eye is generally the property of criminals.

There are no eyes which are coal-black. What are called black eyes are of a very dark brown, and as a rule they are possessed by men and women who are constant in their affections and perfectly honest in all the business they undertake. Dark brown eyes which,

while sparkling, are very shifty, denote that the owners are selfish, unscrupulous, and of a cruel disposition. Light brown eyes express deceitfulness and lack of imagination, while the small, penetrating brown eye, of medium shade, is a sign of a mercurial nature, vivaciousness, and deceitfulness.

It has been declared that all clever men and women look upon the world with grey eyes. That there is a considerable amount of truth in this statement can be gathered from the fact that a large proportion of living writers and artists have eyes of grey, and that among great ones of the past whose eyes were of this color were Shakespeare, Coleridge, Byron, Charlotte Bronte, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, and Charles Reade.

Grey eyes, by the way, denote creative temperament, but not always honesty. What novelists and poets term the cold, grey eye is considered to be a sign of selfishness and cruelty, though it often denotes shrewdness and talent. Very clever people whose eyes are grey generally have small spots of orange in the iris round the pupil.—Tit-Bits.

ANONYMOUS DONORS

A romantic little incident occurred in Rugby workhouse some time ago. As the chairman of the board was going the round of the institution with the visiting committee a lady stepped up to him and handed him a letter, requesting him to read it after she was gone. In the letter the lady said: "I herewith enclose Bank of England notes to the value of £250 in discharge of parish relief received when I was a child." When the matter was reported to the guardians at their meeting it was received with applause, the chairman remarking that although they might have failures they still occasionally scored a success.

A Queenslander called upon his pastor the other day and handed him a document which had a distinctly legal appearance, telling him it was a little matter connected with the church which he could attend to at his leisure. On examining it the pastor found that it was the title deeds to sixty acres of land duly conveyed to him by his generous parishioner. The pastor in question is proverbially brief in his sermons, and the donor indicated that this gift pastor in question is proverbially brief in his pastor's brevity.

What Dr. Barnardo Received

Some time ago a person rang the bell at the house of a certain popular canon in a Midland

town who was greatly interested in a church extension fund. The caller handed in an innocent-looking parcel, giving neither name nor message to the servant. Judge of the canon's pleased surprise when he found that the parcel contained no fewer than thirty £5 notes, as a contribution to the work he had in hand.

Dr. Barnardo had many stories to tell of people who did good by stealth and never returned to find it fame. He once estimated that he received at least £10,000 yearly from anonymous contributors. One such gift, the largest he had ever received, was £3,000. This was not only the largest but the most remarkable gift of the kind received by him. A very plainly-dressed, undistinguished-looking woman called at Stepney Causeway, asked to see the doctor, and when she was ushered into his room, handed him one, after the other, three £1,000 notes. As she gave them to him she specified the exact branch of the work to which each was to be applied. Before the good doctor could recover from his surprise, she had walked away, leaving no name and not even waiting for a receipt.

Surprising the Secretary

The secretary of the Lifeboat Institution, a good work which appeals to all classes, has many similar stories to tell. One of these is of an old gentleman who explained, as he came into the secretary's room, that he had "just looked in as he was passing, as he had often heard of the Lifeboat Institution." He took a seat and seemed as if he were going to settle down for the morning. He even began a discussion on politics. Then, just when the secretary was beginning to fear a wasted hour, he placed a pile of notes to the value of £2,000 on the table, walked out, and was never seen again.—Tit-Bits.

Marie—You see things in a different light now you are married.

Rose—I ought to. There were fifteen lamps among our wedding presents.

Smith—Goldmore is a very generous old fellow. Do you know, he's always helping somebody out.

Jones (sadly)—Yes, I know. I was down to see his daughter the other night, and he helped me out, too!

An aged colored man was engaged in burning the grass off the lawn of a young broker when the latter returned to his home and, thinking to have some fun with the old man, said:

"Sambo, if you burn that grass, the entire lawn will be as black as you are."

"Dat's all right, sah," responded the negro. "Some o' dese days that grass grow up an' be as green as you are."—Judge.

Snakes as Mousers

It has been suggested by a French professor that every household should have its snake, instead of its cat or dog, for the purpose of keeping rats and mice away.

In view of the fact that the bubonic plague, which is now raging in Europe and Asia, is spread by rats, and there are many billions of rats in our cities ready to spread this pest as soon as it makes its appearance here, the suggestion is well worth consideration.

It is not new. In the days of the Romans snakes were kept by housekeepers for precisely this purpose. Since those early times, however, the household reptile has been supplanted by the cat and dog, and the modern housewife, as a rule, has nothing but revulsion for every species of snake, harmful or harmless.

The hostile attitude toward snakes, however, is largely due to ignorance. Thus it is commonly supposed that snakes are "slimy." As a matter of fact, they are not. Their skin is cold to the touch, but absolutely dry. It feels as if it were made of china or porcelain.

Then again, the sharp, worm-like tongue of the snake, which darts in and out at lightning speed, is harmless, although it is commonly believed to be the medium by means of which the snake ejects its venom.

Snakes which have venom communicate it by means of special teeth called fangs. Harmless snakes are not equipped with these fangs.

The principal disadvantage about a dog or a cat is that these animals are apt to carry the same disease-spreading vermin as the rats and mice they are supposed to destroy.

Both the dog and the cat frequently kill rats and mice without eating them leaving them to decompose in invisible places. The snake never does. Every rat killed by a snake is at once swallowed. The snake is much cleaner than either of the other house pets.

The tussle between a rat and a dog is often a most harrowing sight, and the spectacle of a cat cruelly toying with a mouse which is but half alive, is most pitiful. A snake, however, captures its prey without any of those disagreeable preliminaries. Reptiles move so quickly that rodents fall a ready victim to them. The conflict is over in a minute, and the snake at once swallows its prey.

Then, again, the modern house dog or house cat is such a pampered creature that it gets lazy, and often allows rats and mice to infest a house with impunity.

There are half a dozen types of snakes particularly suitable for the purpose.

The king snake averages about three and a half feet in length. It is, perhaps, the best rat-ter for homes where rats are particularly

numerous, large, and dangerous, because of its great strength and pugnacity.

Of the smaller varieties there are the chicken snake, the corn snake, and the milk snake. Every one of these snakes will answer the purpose of a household pet.

OBEYING THE COLONEL

A young sub-lieutenant on foreign service left his regiment on sick leave, and put up at an hotel at a neighboring coast town, where he was immediately smitten by the attractions of a lovely maiden who was staying there. He proposed, was accepted, and the happy day was fixed. The Colonel, however, disapproved of sub-lieutenants getting married, and particularly of the marriage of the "sub" in question. As he happened to be a friend of the young man's father, he thought to prevent the union of the fond couple by sending a peremptory telegram couched in the following words: "Join at once."

The young man was in despair. He went to his intended, with the fatal missive in his hand and anything but a look of pleasure on his face. But the lady was equal to the occasion. With a blush of maidenly simplicity, she remarked:

"Dear me! I'm glad your Colonel approves of the match; but what a hurry he is in! I don't think I can get ready so soon; but I'll do my best, because of course, love, the commands of your Colonel must be obeyed."

The young warrior was puzzled. "Don't you see, my darling," he said, "that this confounded telegram puts a stopper on our plans? You don't seem to understand the telegram. He says peremptorily, 'Join at once.'"

The lady's blushes deepened; but, with a look of arch simplicity, she raised her lovely eyes to her fiancé's and replied:

"It is you, darling, who don't seem to understand it. Your Colonel says plainly, 'Join at once,' by which, of course, he means get married immediately. What else can he possibly mean?"

Without another word the young man accepted the explanation and was enabled to answer the Colonel's telegram forty-eight hours afterwards in these words:

"Your orders obeyed. We were joined at once."

Pupil (to schoolmaster)—Sir, would you mind taking great care how you draw up my report? My parents suffer dreadfully from nerves.