

On Tuesday we made a march of less than three hours, northward, to Olumbundo, and passed on the way more than thirty villages, some of them recently built by people in Ganguella.

While the men were putting up the tent, Bro. Sanders and I went off prospecting for a new station. We found a site upon a piece of high land, commanding a fine view of a large stretch of country, and lying between and in close contact to two of the main roads to the interior; while at the same time it is in the midst of a large population, and has additional advantages in the way of plenty of timber, abundance of clear, sweet water, fine locations for gardens, and good pasture land for cattle and sheep should such be required. With this point as a centre and within a circle of ten miles radius there are not less than seventy villages, and we have reason to believe there are more.

Soon after leaving camp on Wednesday we came upon a group of eight villages, called Cisengi, evidently built but recently, as the thatching on the roofs was not discolored by smoke, the fences round some of the villages only half built, and a number of huts were in process of construction at the time. We travelled westward, and before we reached the Ekungi river passed seventeen villages, several of which were quite large.

The Ekungi is as large as rivers go in these parts, and seems to be the dividing line between Kopoko's country and Cisindi. It is said to contain Alligators, and a story is told of two men who were carried away by them while engaged in picking up the fish they had poisoned in the river a few months before.

We arrived at the Ombali of Cisendi about noon. The king invited us into his private enclosure and showed us a place in which to pitch our tent. He is a man scarcely arrived at middle-life, of large frame, a great talker, and fond of indulging excessively in a loud forced laugh. At first his bearing was such as to lead us to expect an unhappy time with an offensive egotist; but after the excitement of our arrival had subsided he toned down a bit, and we enjoyed a pleasant visit with him, and found him to be possessed of a fairly intelligent idea of the surrounding country, and at the same time a willingness to communicate his impressions.

The king urged us very strongly to spend Thursday, 13th, at his village, as there was to be a hunt that day, and he wished us to take part in it; but we felt constrained to move on. We travelled east and found the country showing signs of decay. Just before going into camp we recrossed the Ekungi river, at a point a little north of our previous crossing. Evidently this river greatly overflows its banks during the wet season, for the marks of its course were clearly visible on each side of its banks, as we saw it.

We continued eastward and arrived at the Quanza river about noon Saturday, 17th Sept. On the road thither we saw comparatively few villages, and the country in sections is very barren. We passed several small caravans from the far interior, with rubber and slaves; the latter in an almost nude condition, though more robust than many I have seen. A most convincing intimation that we were nearing the river was given by the number of wooden shackles that lay strewn along the roadway or hanging from the boughs of trees; some of them rotting with age, and others thrust aside but a few hours before our arrival. These had been worn by night and carried during the day by the captives from the interior, until having crossed the Quanza they were judged a sure prize, and permitted to thrust their ugly fetters aside and regard themselves, henceforth, as lifelong slaves.

Sunday we spent in camp on the bank of the river. There were quite a number of villages near by, inhabited by people called Ganguellites. They are a fine looking, bright, intelligent class of people, who would stand a very good comparison with any blacks I have seen. With two pieces of cloth or skin four inches wide and about eighteen inches long they cover themselves remarkably well. The head-dresses of some of the women showed artistic taste far superior to anything seen among the Ovimbundu. The pottery made by the women, the spears and battle axes made by their native smiths gave proof of their natural mechanical instincts.

All being well I will finish this account next month, but I have so many things to attend to just now I can scarcely manage this.

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