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PROCEEDINGS
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ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
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A Visit to Mr. Stanley's Stations on the River Congo.

By H. H. JOHNSTON.

Map, p. 632.

IN the month of November 1882, I arrived at the mouth of the Congo, with the intention of spending a few weeks on the river, for the purpose of studying its natural history. I had previously passed a very pleasant time in South-West Africa with Lord Mayo, who had invited me to go with him to the river Cunéné. I remained about a month on the Lower Congo, and then went to pass a few days with a member of the Baptist Mission at Underhill, a pretty little station higher up the river, about 35 miles from Boma, and from here I contemplated making a short expedition into the interior. I had just engaged some men, and bought cloth and beads to pay my way, and was preparing to start, when the chief of Vivi, the first station of the Belgian International Association, sent me an invitation to come over and see Mr. Stanley, who had just arrived from his brief visit to Europe. I went there, and met with the kindest possible reception, not only from Mr. Stanley, but from all the Europeans who were with him. I spent a very enjoyable evening, and left with regret the following day. Mr. Stanley advised me to give up my expedition on the opposite bank, telling me I had not sufficient men or resources for such an undertaking, and offering to start me off into the interior along his road, but I thought I would see how far I could get along the south bank, which had been little visited, and, in case of failure, return to Mr. Stanley and accept his kind offer. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the day on which I quitted Vivi, the 19th of December, I started to walk from Underhill to Pallaballa, with five men to carry my luggage—five rascals, as they turned out, but they were all I could immediately procure in the neighbourhood.

Leaving Underhill, I first toiled up a steep and stony hill, most exasperating in character, my feet slipping back at every step off the sharp-edged stones. Then, as Underhill vanishes behind, shut out by the brow of the hill, a fresh stretch of the river Congo, rolling swiftly

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along through narrowing banks, comes into view, with Vivi rising high above its north bank, a crest of white houses surmounting a scarped red cliff. The road winding down from this eagle's nest to the river's side is seen very distinctly. The stream of the Congo here is of immense depth (90 fathoms), and in the rainy season flows at the rate of nine miles an hour; but, to any one not knowing this, it is hard to believe this river, 500 yards broad at most, is the same stream as the great Luālabā.

As one descends the valley the river finally disappears from view. It is flowing nearly northwards, and we are going due east. We pass through two or three native villages of a comfortable and prosperous appearance, and suggesting here and there by certain cunning shifts and contrivances that their inhabitants are not bereft of *savoir vivre*. There are well-cultured plots of maize and cassada, here and there a lime, and even an orange tree (these latter rare), papaw trees, and the beautiful passion-flower, which gives the fruit known as maracujā, or grenadilla, is carefully trained over a framework of sticks. Little plots of ground are being assiduously hoed, and are marked out with geometrical accuracy by means of the same device as our gardeners employ at home—a tight string tied from peg to peg—only that in this case a sort of bast is used instead of string. There are clucking fowls with small chicks about them, carefully housed in large hencoops made of withes and grass, to protect the chickens from their many enemies. In a rough sort of shanty, constructed principally of overlaid palm-fronds, the goats and sheep (the sheep are of the usual Central African stock, with short hairy coats, supplemented in the ram by a splendid silky mane from his chin to his stomach); and even, rarely, one may see a black, high-shouldered bullock stalled in a not ill-fashioned manger made of the same material.

The houses are well and neatly built, generally raised a foot above the ground on a platform of beaten earth. There is first of all a framework of stout poles, one very long pole forming the apex of the slanting and wide-spreading roof—and on this is fixed a covering of thin laths and dried grass. The roof extends some feet beyond the body of the house and, in front, is prolonged to a sort of verandah, further supported by two extra poles, and susceptible of any modification, from being the shady space of a few feet, where the inmates of the house pass most of their time, to becoming the great reception-place and palaver-ground of kings. Here, as we pass, the inhabitants of each house are nearly always assembled. The women look up from pounding palm-kernels and show all their teeth in a grin at the “Mundélé” (white man); the men, squatted in lazy ease, take their large-bowled pipes from their mouths and call out a salutation, generally “Mavimpi”; whilst, irresolute between the threshold and the interior, large-headed, round-eyed children mutely and distrustfully regard the white man, who must embody as much in their eyes some notion of uncanny bogymism as the traditional “black man” does to English children.

Around each village will be a grove of bananas or plantains, a perpetual source of food-supply to their cultivators. There are principally two sorts of fruit eaten here: the plantain, which has no sweet taste, but is delicious roasted and eaten with butter, and the richly-sweet banana.

The style of scenery on the road to Pallaballa is typical of the cataract region of the Congo. A succession of stony hills covered with rough grass, and rich fertile valleys, with luxuriant forests and running streams in their depths. About midway to Pallaballa you have to cross by means of a native ferry the river Mposo, a rapid stream that rises near San Salvador. Beyond this it is all up hill and down dale, till at length we see a fringe of forest, which marks the site of Pallaballa, on the crest of a great hill 1600 feet high. As I pass through the native village the people all cry out "Mundélé, mundélé," and several come forward and salute me with "'Morning," a contraction of "Good morning," which they have learnt from the missionaries. The missionary of the Livingstone Inland Mission, who was resident at Pallaballa, gave me a very kind reception, and a dainty and welcome meal was soon prepared. There were delicious fried bananas, pounded pea-nut sauce with roast chicken, "palm-oil chop," and many other native dishes, supplemented with European luxuries. After dinner the missionary asked me if I would object to attend prayers. I of course replied "Certainly not," and followed him to the school-house, where Miss Spearing, a lady missionary, was residing. Here some twenty people are assembled, principally boys. There is a little giggling at my presence, otherwise they are well-behaved. The missionary prays in *Fiote* (the language of the country) and in English, and also reads a chapter of the Bible in the same tongues. The subject in *Fiote* is generally badly chosen, being wearisome records of Jewish wars, where familiar sounding Bible names are strangely mixed up in unintelligible *Fiote*. All the while the black congregation (swelled this evening by my five porters) sits stolidly unmoved, although the missionary strives to infuse the greatest interest into the slaughter of the Canaanites. After this follows a Moody and Sankey hymn in *Fiote*, in which I feel anything but at home, and can only make semblance with my lips to be following. Finally, a short and fairly sensible prayer finishes up the whole, and then begins a ceremony which the natives would not miss for the world. Each one comes separately and shakes hands with the missionary, Miss Spearing, and myself, accompanying the shake-hands with a "goo' night, sir," applied indifferently to either sex. We also retire to our rooms, and although mine is rather damp (there is a fine crop of mushrooms—alas! not edible—and waving grass growing on my bedroom floor) I have a comfortable bed and sleep well.

My succeeding journey as far as the river Lulu, which, owing to the rapacity of the natives and the robberies of my own porters, was unsuc-

cessful in its results, I will pass over, and give instead a few notes on Pallaballa and the manners and customs of its inhabitants. I do this somewhat in detail, as once you describe one Lower Congo village you can pass over the rest without mention ; they are so much alike between Vivi and Stanley Pool.

It is very damp at Pallaballa. Every morning and evening a thick mist surrounds everything and renders the place clammy and unhealthy. There are four kings in this neighbourhood, Kagumpaka, Nikiangila, Tantia, and a small boy, whose name I forget. Kagumpaka is the head king and only owes allegiance to the king of Congo at San Salvador. A little while ago one of the queens of this king of Congo made a sort of progress through his dominions and was received with great respect at Pallaballa. There are decided traces of Portuguese influence here, and many words of that language are introduced into the local dialect. At Pallaballa the natives are disposed to be impudent and even aggressive towards white men. They are very superstitious, and, for every person that dies, somebody is made *ndokki* (or "devil-possessed"), and has to take the *casca* poison. This is usually administered in such a way as to be merely a strong emetic, under the idea that the victim may "bring up" the devil and cast him out with his bile. They think a great deal of their *Inkimba*, and woe to the white man who shall offend them. When the *Inkimba* are on the road, they announce their coming by a sort of drumming noise like *dur-r-r-r!* and then all who are not initiated into their mysteries must clear out of the road. A young missionary who refused to give way to these fanatics was seized and badly treated. The *Inkimba* are in all probability males undergoing circumcision and an initiation into the rites of marriage. They may be of any age, boys of 11 or men of 40, but generally the *Inkimbaship* is undergone by young men.

For one native year (six months) the ceremonies last, and there are three or more stages of initiation, said to be marked by changes in their grass coverings. They chalk themselves all over a ghastly white with some argillaceous earth, and do not wash once during their six months' probation, though they often renew the white colouring. They are taught a different language by the *nganga*, or medicine-man, which language appears to be quite different from the ordinary tongue, and is *never* taught to *females*. During the whole period of their initiation they live like the lilies of the field, being sustained at the common expense of the village or community. They renew their hideous white colour every few weeks, and it is a great ceremony with them. An *Inkimba* in a shower of rain is a dolorous spectacle. No one has yet been able to examine into their sacred tongue. Might it be some original and more archaic form of Bantu language conserved for religious purposes, like the Sanscrit, the old Slavonic, and the Latin?

The *Inkimba* also receive a new name when they pass through the

mysteries, and it is a great offence to call a man by the name of his childhood only, though one may join it to his new name for purposes of identification.

The people of Pallaballa may be said to "patronise" Christianity. When the missionary holds a Sunday service in king Kagumpaka's house, some twenty or thirty idlers look in, in a genial way, to see what is going on, much as we might be present at any of their ceremonies. They behave very well, and imitate with that exact mimicry that only the negro possesses, all our gestures and actions, so that a hasty observer would conclude they were really touched by the service. They kneel down with an *abandon* of devotion, clasp their hands and say "Amen" with a deep ventral enthusiasm. The missionary gave a short sermon in Fiote, marvellously expressed, considering the short time he had been studying the language. The king took up constantly the end of some phrase and repeated it with patronising interest after the missionary, just to show he was attending, throwing meanwhile a furtive glance at his wives, who were not pursuing their avocations with sufficient diligence outside. A short prayer concluded the service, and when the king rose from his knees he promptly demanded the loan of a handscrew to effect some alteration in his new canoe.

Round Pallaballa the vegetation is very rich. There is beautiful forest in the valleys, pine-apples grow wild, and a fern similar to the bracken gives a familiar air to the woodland glades. The Cucurbitaceæ are very noticeable here; particularly one species that has most gorgeous fruits. They are egg-shaped, about the size of a pear, and covered with prickles; the outside is the most brilliant orange colour; when ripe, the husk splits into four sections, displaying the interior, where the black seeds are lying enveloped in pulp of the richest crimson hue I have ever seen in nature. The commonest birds round Pallaballa are the grey parrot, the *Gypohierax* vulture, and a small black hornbill.

I returned to Vivi on the first day of the new year, and began to make active preparations for my departure up the Congo. Mr. Stanley had fitted me up with everything likely to make my expedition successful, and had, moreover, given me three of his pet Zanzibaris, three men whom I found simply invaluable in every difficulty. I left Vivi on the 7th of January to walk to Isangila, the next station, a distance of 58 miles. Our road was continually up and down, over stony hills and into thickly forested ravines, across tumultuous rivers and through muddy marshes. The road was a mere native path, often lost in a morass or untraceable in high grass. The scenery, however, though very similar to that already described at Pallaballa, was distinctly beautiful, and about the falls of Ngoma became positively grand. I reached Isangila in three days and a half, having suffered much from the violent rains. Isangila is a neat little station set on a breezy hill, facing the splendid rapids of the Congo. The journey thence up the river to the next

station, Manyanga, was a distance of 80 miles, accomplished in four days with a little river steamer, now removed to Stanley Pool. The scenery all along the route is comparatively uninteresting. Manyanga is a fine station, well built of locally made bricks, and advantageously placed on the top of a very steep hill. In the native market close by there is abundance of provisions, and 500 eggs may not infrequently be bought in one week if necessary.

There are two roads from Manyanga to Stanley Pool, one along the north, and the other along the south bank of the Congo. The southern road is the most easy and direct, and runs through more amiable peoples than the other, so I chose this route for my journey. I stopped a night at Lutété, the next station, and reached Léopoldville, the great establishment of Mr. Stanley on Stanley Pool, in six days. They were six days of most agreeable travel (the distance was 95 miles), for the road ran through undeniably beautiful scenery, the people were kindly and courteous, and last, but not least, the pathway, which is one of the great ivory routes to the coast, was bordered with masses of pine-apples, whose golden, luscious fruit we ate freely, but fortunately with no disastrous results. Léopoldville, when I first arrived, was not in a very flourishing condition; it lacked the master-hand of Stanley to set matters going more briskly. The stock of European provisions had been too rapidly eaten up, and after a few months of fat living a time of very meagre nourishment ensued. During the three weeks that I first passed there my blood got very poor, and I suffered much from the many ulcers that broke out all over my body. I owe my restoration to health to the kind care of Mr. Comber, a Fellow of this Society, and a member of the Baptist Mission established on Mr. Stanley's ground at Léopoldville. However, although Lieutenant Braconnier could not manage to give me or himself a good dinner, he and his subordinates did everything in their power to aid me in my researches, not only because of the letters I had brought from Mr. Stanley, but because of the natural kindness of heart that characterises most Belgians.

Stanley Pool is a great expansion of the Congo, and is about 25 miles long and 16 miles broad. There are seventeen islands of noteworthy dimension, the largest of which is 13 miles in breadth. But the surface of the Pool is also strewn with sandbanks alternately covered and uncovered according to the season of the year, and there are also many floating islets formed of masses of aquatic vegetation, which are so strongly interknitted by their fibres and roots that a man can stand on them.

The Pool forms as it were a great cup-like basin with a rim incompletely formed by ranges of peaked and picturesque mountains, ranging probably from 1000 to 4000 feet in height. The banks of this great expanse of water offer considerable variety in character. At the northern or north-eastern end, where the Upper Congo enters it through a somewhat

narrow passage, the scenery is very beautiful. High woods rise so steeply above the water that as you sail beneath their shade they seem to mount indefinitely towards the sky. It is a wall of forest. Then almost opposite, following the northern bank, are the "Dover Cliffs," their scarped sides white and glistening, and their crowns being covered with soft green grass. They more resemble, however, the scenery round Lyme Regis, in Dorset and Devon, than the harsher and more rugged cliffs of Dover. Then on both sides of the Pool the shores dwindle down into flat forest land, the encircling girdle of mountains trending off towards the interior, and when you reach Mfwa, or "Brazzaville," the coast is low and nearly on a level with the water. "Brazzaville" is at present merely a little low-lying native village with some half-dozen huts buried in bananas, palms, and thick vegetation. It has little or no advantages as a site for a European station. Nearly opposite is a curious cliff, apparently of red clay, which rises abruptly from out of its flat surroundings about 50 feet above the river. This is called Calina Point, for here a member of the Belgian Expedition, Lieutenant Calina, was recently drowned. The current is terribly swift as it races round this promontory, and is very dangerous to native canoes ascending the stream. Calina Point is in the possession of the inhabitants of a very large native village in the proximity called Kinshasha. They are very adverse to Europeans, and have hitherto refused to allow a station to be built either in their village or on Calina Point. Should De Brazza ever reach the Congo in his present expedition, and succeed in establishing himself at Mfwa, it is rumoured* that he would like to take Calina Point and make it the Gibraltar of the Pool, and then with this fortified post and the station of Mfwa opposite he would be able to close, if necessary, the mouth of Stanley Pool where it commences to narrow into the rushing lower portion of the Congo. Léopoldville, the great central station of Mr. Stanley's expedition, is situated on a commanding height, and not exactly on the Pool itself, but rather on the short bit of navigable river beyond this expanse of the Congo, a little distance from the first fall. As to the falls of the Congo, I might mention that they are nothing but immense rapids, and do not exhibit anywhere a grand descent or cascade of water.

On the 20th of February I left Léopoldville in a large lighter or whale-boat, rowed by a sturdy crew of Zanzibaris, to ascend the river as far as Bólóbó, a large native village about 250 miles beyond Stanley Pool, where the last station of the Expedition had then been founded. My departure was inauspiciously signalled by a downpour of rain that

* Since De Brazza himself left Stanley Pool to return to France some three years ago his Senegalese sergeant, Malamine, arrived at Kinshasha on a mission from him, but the people, although they received him kindly, would not listen to any proposals for receiving a French station in their midst, and they have equally rejected Mr. Stanley's overtures.

was almost exceptional in its force and duration. We had just managed to row as far as Kinshasha, the place I have before mentioned as being somewhat unfriendly towards Europeans, but not knowing this at the time, I yielded to the Zanzibaris' invitation to descend, and whilst the boat was put into a little creek we went up into the village and took refuge in a native house placed at my disposal by the natives. Here the contrast to the raging storm outside was for the next few minutes delicious, for we found perfect dryness and a comfortable bed of matting to sit upon. The other occupants of the house, excepting the many and constant visitors, were a middle-aged man, with his hair *en chignon*, his wife, suckling a baby, whose forehead was ornamented with a band of scarlet pigment, and an old man who might have been a poor, broken-down uncle of the family. There was a wood fire in the middle of the floor, and its smoke was very disagreeable. The house was clean and tidy, and round the walls were ranged many neatly made articles. Long pipes with little bowls, a clarinet, a white mug (these two last presents from the white men); a *marimba*; a collection of skilfully made little pouches of goat-skin, containing I know not what; hippopotamus harpoons, fishing nets, horns, and a multitude of odds and ends only to be classed under that convenient term *et cetera*. I opened my case of provisions, laid the cloth on the bed, and sat down to my frugal repast with considerable appetite. All this time visitors were flocking in; many children, some of them pretty little things, made friends with me, and were wonder-stricken at my ticking watch.

Next day, Feb. 21st, the Pool began to widen out into all its magnificent breadth. There were numberless islands on which the *Borassus* palm was growing. These palms are extremely beautiful and symmetrical in shape, and the hanging clusters of fruit are bright orange. The vegetation that clothes the shores of the islands is very rich and pleasing in colour; brightened with masses of yellow flowers, lilac-coloured papilionaceæ, and mauve convolvuluses. The beautiful scarlet seed-vessels of a sort of bean form blazing clusters of gorgeous effect amid the tender green foliage. On the many snags that rear their withered branches over the rushing stream many little birds have for safety's sake hung their pendant nests of grass, and there is a continual twittering and fluttering of dainty forms round the gnarled old trunks and whitened twigs. We saw many herds of hippopotami as we passed, nine or ten animals generally going together. They approached the boat with a boldness and confidence that led one to think they had been little persecuted; the natives, however, hunt them assiduously with the harpoon. Indeed, in one creek where the hippopotami were indulging in the uncouthest gambols, we saw a group of men some twenty yards from their prey actively preparing for the chase. The tameness of these huge beasts is wonderful; one could almost fancy oneself in the inclosure of some zoological gardens, and when they opened their huge mouths

from time to time, displaying their glistening tusks, I sought involuntarily for the bun of my childhood to deftly throw into the pink chasm that yawned before me. Flocks of grey parrots flew across the sky, alternately screeching and whistling melodiously. I have seen it erroneously stated that the grey parrot never whistles in a wild state; on the contrary, it does so very sweetly, and with a great variety of note.

The "Dover cliffs" came into sight towards the further end of the Pool, their white sides glistening in the sun. The banks here begin to be festooned with a curious species of palm, apparently a climber. The fronds are prolonged into a long bare stalk, curiously notched. The fronds are alternate; the reason of the notches does not seem to be very obvious.

A little further on the scenery changed a little. On the north, or, more properly, the *western* bank, the high wooded hills continued, but on the other side stretched a flat and sandy woodland, with occasional tiny rills of delicious water, water infinitely preferable for drinking purposes to that of the Congo, which is tepid in temperature, weak-tea-like in colour, and often full of sediment or sand.

We were six days voyaging up the river, which, beyond Stanley Pool, varied in breadth from 600 yards to 1000, before we reached the station of Msuāta. Throughout this distance of about 110 miles only one affluent of any size greater than a mere brook enters the Congo, and this river, which comes from the south-east, has waters of an indigo-black colour that flow for some mile or two side by side with the yellow stream of the Congo without mingling. The northern bank of the river, until Msuāta is reached, is quite uninhabited owing, it is said, to the depopulation caused by frequent wars. Msuāta is one of the brightest and prettiest of all Mr. Stanley's stations, and is fortunately surrounded by very amiable natives whose feelings towards the white men are extremely cordial. We stayed one night at this station to rest ourselves and dry the baggage, soaked by the almost incessant rains, and then started for the mouth of the Wabūma-Quango river (originally called by Stanley the Ibari-Nkutu), where we intended to stop the night in a large Bayansi village. On our way we passed the curious promontory of Ganchū, a long spit of land advancing into the river which seems to alternate between island and peninsula. Here is situated the village of Ganchū, ruled by an important chief of the same name. It was this village that Stanley on his first and celebrated descent of the Congo called "pirates' village," misconceiving the peaceful intentions of the inhabitants. The river Wabūma at its juncture with the Congo is about as broad as the Thames at Westminster. The scenery along its banks is pretty, being mostly rich forest, but it is otherwise unimposing. The mouth of the river is somewhat ill-adapted for navigation. On one side is a long sandbank, on the other a line of rocks, and only a tortuous

passage between, but when these obstacles are passed the navigation is fairly simple and the channel deep. I have ascended this river but a short distance, only some eight or ten miles at most, so that I am unable to give much information respecting it from my own observation, and can merely repeat what I have heard from Mr. Stanley respecting its course and origin. It appears that the main stream, the Wabūma, flows out of Lake Leopold II. (a sheet of water about 70 miles long reaching to latitude $1^{\circ} 40' S.$), and after running nearly parallel with the Congo for some distance, flows, as it were, a little away from this river, towards the south, and broadens out greatly, as does the Congo in its upper course. Like the Congo, also, this river narrows greatly towards its mouth. It is in this southern bend of the Wabūma that the great Quango from Angola enters it, and after their junction, the two rivers, distinct in colour, the Wabūma indigo, and the Quango a muddy yellow, flow together towards the west and enter the Congo about lat. $3^{\circ} 20' S.$

The name Ibari-Nkutu given by Stanley to this big river is quite unknown to the natives, and probably arose through a misconception. It is called Wabūma near its mouth, from the tribes of that name who inhabit the shores along its lower course, and this name would generally seem to indicate the stream which flows from Lake Leopold II. The natives know nothing of the Quango, but the large river that Stanley has seen flowing into the Wabūma can only be that stream, judging both from its direction and the volume of its waters. There are one or two small affluents to Lake Leopold II. which may extend this river system farther, and the Levy Hills, marked on Stanley's first map, probably form the watershed between the great Ikelemba and this newly discovered lake.

The large and populous Bayansi village, situated at the confluence of the Wabūma and the Congo, is very picturesque, as seen from the water, a broad lane leading up to a grove of oil-palms and bananas, with compact and tidy-looking houses interspersed among them; but on landing the impression is rather spoilt by the horrible black fetid mud, strewn with decaying offal, that one has to cross. The people of course are assembled to greet us, and the chief is there, clad in a rusty-red garment, and looking not half such a fine fellow as many of his subjects. The people here are a finer looking race than any I have yet seen on the Congo. Some of the men are perfect Greek statues as regards the splendid development and poise of their figures. They have all pleasing faces, because of the good-humour that enlivens their features. Another remarkable point about them is their comparatively great development of hair. Though the hair is curly and crisp, it often becomes quite long, and is twisted and tortured into all sorts of fantastic coiffures. The men wear it in horns, either on the top of the head, or in a pig-tail, or depending on each side of their cheeks; also in a sort of "chignon." The women sometimes just frizz

it up round the head, or comb it out smoothly and strain it over pads in a manner much resembling a style in vogue (chignons) some years ago or they will plait it into an infinitude of little rats' tails, that from their stiffness stand up all round their head in a bristling manner. A red dye, which is got from the bark of a certain tree, probably camwood, is used to a great extent for colouring their nails, and often their bodies and clothes, with a warm tinge of maroon.

I slept the night at the Bayansi village in a comfortable house, divided into three rooms, which might be described as kitchen, parlour, and bedroom.

Passing over many days of voyaging up this glorious river, I will give from my diary a brief description of one of the days spent at Bólóbó, the last of Mr. Stanley's stations, and practically the furthest point which I attained on the Congo.

"*March 7th.*—This morning early, King Ibaka arrived to pay us a visit. After the necessary palaver was over, I asked permission to take his portrait, which was accorded, but he had not the slightest intention of sitting for it, and moved about at will, but I was nevertheless able to get his exact likeness by availing myself of his complete immobility whilst drinking palm wine, during which very strange ceremonies were performed. There is a legend that a king of Bólóbó, long, long ago, in the legends of the Bayansi, was drinking Málafu (palm wine) at his ease, one day, when a leopard stole up behind him unawares, jumped on his back, and strangled him before the king could cry for help. To avoid such a catastrophe in future, the following ceremony was instituted by his successor. Before the king is about to drink, he imposes silence on the people assembled, by snapping his fingers towards them and crying 'Mà.' ('Mà' is an exclamation to call attention to anything—it is used to dogs.) A wife is crouched behind him, a little boy on his left hand. The wife then also calls 'Mà,' and clasps her lord tightly round the stomach with both hands. The little boy covers his face with one hand, and claps the other continually on his extended leg. Then the king, sticking the first finger of his left hand into his throat below the ear, with the right hand raises the glass and drinks. After he has quenched his thirst he passes his hand across his mouth, and then points with his finger in the direction where he next intends to levy war. When he has not any quarrel immediately on hand, he simply points his finger upwards; then snaps his finger, says 'Mà' again, and the ceremony is at an end, and talking is resumed. All these ceremonies he went through carefully whilst he drank the Málafu in our presence. The Málafu here is made from the sap of the *Borassus* palm. I prefer it to any other.

"In the afternoon I went into a neighbouring town to make a sketch of a house. The natives received me very well, and took great interest in my work: too much interest, in fact, for certain officious friends

among them, in their efforts to keep the course clear, showed an ill-judged severity towards the unwitting persons who came between me and my object. They beat a woman, who beat a boy, who threw a stone at some one else, and soon there was a general row, in the middle of which I thought it best to retire, in case the general excitement which was surging amongst them should be turned against the white man who had unwillingly brought discord into their village with his sorcerish practices of 'scratching images on white cloth with a piece of stick' (*sic*). Indeed, had I doubted as to the propriety of retiring, my hesitation would not have lasted long, for a friendly young man who had in a measure constituted himself my guide, took my sketch-book with an apologetic smile, closed it gently, and taking me by the hand, led me out of the crowd. Fortunately my sketch of the house itself was finished, and I was only obliged to leave incomplete a group of natives in the foreground that I had commenced. I tried to make my retreat seem as little like one as possible, and stopped frequently to play with children and admire the arms and spears of the natives that were closing up behind me. All the same, I felt myself being as politely as possible ejected from the village, and the smiling natives insisted on accompanying me till I was well out of the precincts and on the road to the station. This was the first time a white man had ever entered their village, though it was barely two miles from the station, and as I was alone and unarmed in a village of about three thousand inhabitants I think they treated me exceptionally well."

I left Bólóbó a day or two afterwards and descended the river as far as Msuāta, the station I had previously visited near the Wabūma river. Here I passed six very pleasant weeks painting the scenery and studying the natives, and here I collected vocabularies of three important dialects, the Batéké, the Bayansi, and the Wabūma. These tribes are the principal races on the Congo between Bólóbó and Stanley Pool, but they appear to be comparatively recent arrivals on the river and to have dispossessed or enslaved the former inhabitants of its banks. The Batéké are mere resident colonists from the north-west, between the Ogowé and the Congo; the Bayansi come from the Equator and north-east, and are the great travellers and traders of the Upper Congo. The Wabūma inhabit the river Wabūma (Quango) in its lower course. All these natives are kindly, merry, and courteous in behaviour; with splendid physical development and great artistic power shown in decorating all their utensils and arms. They are very fond of music, and from their five-stringed instruments draw many harmonies of plaintive tone and perfect rhythm. Their artistic designs are often indelicate, although in their language and gestures they have a great regard for decency. Their languages are Bantu of the most thorough character. That of the Wabūma is strangely guttural; otherwise, in many words it offers some resemblance to the Mpongwé of the Gaboon.

The Batéké is more allied to Congo, and the Bayansi recalls in many of its expressions the tongues of the eastern coast. In all these languages there are many words almost identical with the Kaffir, Ki-swahili, and Congo tongues. Zanzibaris can often make themselves understood in conversing with the natives.

On my return to Léopoldville, I again found Mr. Stanley, who had just arrived. I passed nine most agreeable days with him here, going about the Pool in all directions to attend palavers with chiefs that "Bula Matade" (Mr. Stanley) was holding. At last, however, the time drew nigh when we had to separate, Mr. Stanley to commence his great journey on the Upper River, and I to continue on my road back to the coast. I parted from my kind host with much regret, and I can only say that the hospitality that I met with on the Congo from Mr. Stanley and the members of his expedition was almost princely in its character. I must also thank the employés of the Dutch Trading Company and the English missionaries for the assistance and information they afforded me at various times during my Congo explorations.

Returning to Vivi, I made several minor excursions, visiting the falls of Yellála and certain villages in the neighbourhood. Then as the time for meeting the Portuguese steamer drew nigh, I embarked in a whale-boat with my three Zanzibaris and some supplementary Krumen and rowed down the river to Banana, where I went on board the steamer *Portugal* that had just arrived, and took a regretful leave of the three faithful servitors that Mr. Stanley had lent me, between whom and myself a warm attachment had arisen.

A Visit to the Wa-itumba Iron-workers and the Mangaheri, near Mamboia, in East Central Africa. By J. T. LAST.

IN October and November 1882 I was able to make two little excursions amongst the tribes living around Mamboia; the first was to the Mangaheri and Wa-itumba tribes of the Sagala nation. These live to the south of Mamboia. The latter tribe is famous for smelting and working up iron into hoes. The second and more important excursion was to the redoubtable Masai, who live near the borders of the Nguru country, an account of which has already been communicated through Sir John Kirk to the Society. The object of the present paper is to give some details of my visit to the Mangaheri and Wa-itumba tribes.

The Mangaheri tribe inhabit a district some 35 miles long by 15 miles wide. It is a mass of mountains and hills with narrow valleys intervening; situated between 6° 20' and 6° 40' S. lat., and about 37° and 37° 40' E. long. The north-western corner of the district is about 12 miles S.S.E. from Mamboia. The highest mountain, Msonghi, is