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Notes on the Lower Congo, from Its Mouth to Stanley Pool

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an account published in the 'Proceedings' of the Royal Geographical Society. A fever contracted on the march to Isanghila stopped my progress, and I was again taken to Vivi, and eventually to Banana Point. A short voyage to S. Paul de Loanda and back enabled me to revisit the mouth of the Congo for a day or two, but my companions had then nearly completed their journey to its extreme limit, and an attempt to rejoin them before their return seaward would have been vain. Rather than compress into a few words my impressions of the people, of the climate, and other matters of interest to travellers and readers of books of travel, I will now refer you to Mr. Delmar Morgan, who, with Dr. Leslie, remained some weeks longer in the country than I did, and went some 130 miles further up the Congo.

Notes on the Lower Congo, from its Mouth to Stanley Pool.

By E. DELMAR MORGAN.

(Read at the Evening Meeting, February 11th, 1884.)

ON September 20th, 1883, we started from Vivi, our party consisting of General Sir Frederic Goldsmid, Major Parminter, Mr. Valcke (a Belgian Lieutenant of Engineers), Dr. Leslie, myself, and a caravan of about 40 Zanzibaris. We had intended making an early start that morning, but it was half-past seven before we were off. Turning to the right we crossed a brook which flows at the foot of Vivi Hill and followed a path bordered on either side by tall withered grass. On our left was a range of hills terminating at Leopold Rock, which frowns over this station.

According to the compass our direction was E.N.E., or allowing for magnetic variation, which is 17° in this meridian, about N.E. true.

We ascended at first gradually and afterwards more abruptly to the summit of a hill where large boulders of quartz lay strewn about, and whence we had a view of Vivi about four miles off. We then descended into the open valley of the Loha, a small stream which falls into the Lufu, and this again into the Congo to the west of Vivi. Passing through two small villages, and leaving the larger one, Ganghila, on our right, we encamped for the first night at Buata Tulula, belonging to the chief Makaka. We pitched our tents close to the small native huts made of a grass called "Loango"; these are neatly thatched, with no windows, but with a low door at one end, to enter which it is necessary to bend almost double. The dwellings of the chiefs are generally better made and decorated on the outside with grass woven into patterns, the roofs, too, project along one side of the edifice to form a kind of verandah. The village of Makaka was half hidden among palm-trees, plantains, and plantations of manioc. Fowls are abundant;

every village has its poultry-houses raised on four poles about six feet from the ground, with light ladders leading up to them.

Our next day's march was to the village of Banza-Banza. The house of its chief Nsanda Samuna is surrounded by a tall cactus hedge. We reached Dédé's village, shaded by splendid palm-trees, on the same day. Dédé is one of the most important chiefs in this part of the country, and is youthful and intelligent in appearance; his dress was a red coral necklace and white loin-cloth, and in his hand he carried a staff studded with brass nails—symbol of chieftaincy.

On the morning of the 22nd we started at 7 A.M., and marched in the same direction as before, towards hills which were soon hidden from our sight by the long grass. Passing through Kapitán Lutete's village, we found that chief arrayed in a blue and white blanket. He had been at the "palaver" of the previous day, but though he saluted us with "Mboté," the word for "good-day," he showed no particular desire to see more of us, and his women ran away at the sight of our mules.

Outside this village was the grave of a chief, or at least such we presumed it to be, for none but these receive post-mortuary honours, and we had nowhere noticed burial-grounds of any kind. The grave in question was a mound of earth with a coarse earthenware dish placed at each of the four corners and a grotesque figure in the centre. In some cases vessels of glass and earthenware are supported on sticks above the grave, and over one, near the village of Kibandi, a roof had been constructed, beneath which was raised a pyramid of clay, with two figures representing a man and a woman placed on either side, the fence surrounding it being also decorated in the same way. It seems to be the custom of these people to bury along with the deceased all his valuables; his body is bound round with cloth, and the gunpowder he has collected during his life-time is expended in firing salutes after his death. Another custom attending these native funerals on the Congo is that of killing one or more slaves in order that their master may not go unaccompanied to the other world.

Our route now lay in a south-easterly direction, and then again towards the east. Pushing on, we left Sari-Kabanzi on our right, and from the summit of a ridge had a fine view of two distant hills bearing nearly east. These twin peaks guarded the entrance to the celebrated Bundi Valley, a place with an unpleasant notoriety for fever and sickness. But before reaching its swampy solitudes we were cheered by the beautiful scenery of the river Mvusi—a clear stream flowing in a rocky bed between banks thickly wooded by tall trees. These were leafless, for the season of the year was winter, or at least early spring, yet so thickly were they covered by vines and other creepers, and so luxuriantly did these grow that the forest looked as brilliant as though it had been midsummer, while walls of green, stirred by the slightest wind and waving from every bough, gave a look of enchantment to the whole

scene. Nothing would have interfered with our enjoyment had it not been for the persistent attacks of a small insect called a "jigger," a troublesome little pest, said to have been introduced from the Brazils.

We encamped the night of Saturday the 22nd, on the Bundi, and the next day being Sunday, we had almost decided to rest and remain in camp. Unfortunately, however, some chiefs to whom messages had been sent to meet us, were absent from their villages. This necessitated some alteration in our plans, and we determined to pass through the Bundi Valley that day. The atmosphere was hot and sultry, and the road, after crossing the lesser Bundi, passed through a desiccated swamp, the grass in some places growing above our heads, even when mounted on our mules. Up to this time our party had all been in good health; Sir Frederic, as usual, had insisted on walking a great part of the way, in order that others might ride, and when we reached Pomungola on the banks of the Congo, he was too tired to proceed; here, therefore, we halted under some fine trees and decided to pass the night. The soil was white sand, great rocks projected to the water's edge, and the spot abounded with lizards of the most brilliant colours. The following day we crossed the Lufu, and noticed the tracks of buffaloes, antelope, and hippos. This is considered the best time to hunt buffalo and antelope, for towards the end of the hot season many brooks and rivulets dry up inland, and wild animals, which are numerous in the Bundi Valley, come down to the Congo to drink. We now entered what is marked on the map as Valcke's Causeway, and whatever doubts we may have had as to the possibility of levelling and widening roads in this part of Africa were dissipated on seeing this really fine highway. It runs almost parallel with the Congo through a glade of tall trees. We rode along it for half an hour, catching glimpses every now and then of the great river on our right, and hearing the roar of the Ngoma cataract.

We halted this time after only a very short march, for the General again complained of illness and fatigue, and we pitched our tents on a level sward close to the river. A small creek intervened between us and the forest where the Zanzibaris could be seen chasing snakes, with which the place swarmed. But these were not the only unwelcome visitors, hippopotami came close in shore, and seemed disposed to dispute our right to territory which probably they had been in undisturbed possession of for many years. All night long these animals snorted near our camp, kept at bay by blazing fires, lit by the Zanzibaris. The General, too, was ill, seriously ill with the bilious fever so prevalent in this country, and there was no possibility of moving him; towards the evening, however, of the following day, a hammock arrived from Isanghila, distant only a short march, and the next morning he was placed in it, and carried to that station.

We had now accomplished the first part of our journey up the Congo, and were at the second station of the International Association. The

country we had passed through was but thinly inhabited, and the villages small and far apart. There can be no doubt that formerly this was very different, but the slave trade which was successfully carried on here not so many years ago helped in a great measure to depopulate the country, and condemned to a life of misery the inhabitants. The story we heard was that a French firm, with many establishments along the coast, was employed by the French Government to purchase and export slaves for their possessions in the West Indies. In order to legalise this traffic, a Government official went through the formality of taking depositions from these unfortunate beings that they went of their own free will, and were engaged by contract for a certain number of years. This was merely a blind to conceal the real nature of these transactions. The natives of the Congo were carried away never to return, their deserted homes and abandoned lands were soon obliterated, and wild beasts roamed over their fields. This detestable and inhuman trade was at length discontinued, but not before whole districts of the Lower Congo had been depopulated by it. Farther inland, the population is more dense, but it seems an anomaly that white men who have caused such untold misery to the people in times past, should now pass through their country, and expect hospitality at their hands.

One chief remarked that all white men who came to the Congo were criminals and outlaws, who were not allowed to live in their own country, and therefore came to seek their fortunes in Africa, an idea doubtless originating from the fact that the Portuguese formerly made a convict colony of their possessions in this part of the world—in fact, Angola is still their penal settlement.

Domestic slavery is a deeply rooted institution among the natives of the Congo. Every chief has a number of dependants, over whom he exercises powers of life and death. We have seen the chief of Isanghila come down to the rocks below the station, accompanied by his wives and slaves, to spend the day there, his men setting basket traps to catch the half-stunned fish as they were dashed against the rocks by the violence of the current, his wives chewing sugar-cane, while he himself devoted his attention solely to a bottle of malafu or palm-wine. Apart from this group, behind one of the rocks, we came upon a lad handcuffed, with a log of wood fastened to his neck by a chain, one end trailing on the ground. This was a punishment for some offence he had committed, but it reminded us of the illustrations of slave gangs in the books of Livingstone and other African travellers.

There are various kinds of fish in the Congo; one of the most curious is the elephant fish, about six inches in length, with a long trunk and no mouth, of this there are several varieties; we were also shown one of the carp species, weighing about twelve pounds; but the best of all were the whitebait: we bought some of a native fisherman near Baynesville, and found them, when fried, quite as good as any we had

tasted at Greenwich. The river had not risen much by the time we reached Isanghila, and it was possible to walk over the rocks and see the leap of about ten feet made by the water here. Below the fall are islands, and a long promontory projects on the opposite side forming a bay. The country on the south bank, as far as one could see, was hilly but there were no peaks, the outlines of the hills being rounded. Isanghila is upon the whole the best situated of the International Association's stations on the Lower Congo. It stands sufficiently high to command a fine view both up and down the river, yet the country is open near it, higher hills rising two or three miles away, where in a direction almost due north the village of Isanghila can be seen. Game is abundant, the long grass conceals many an antelope, an occasional pheasant or partridge may be flushed, while flocks of guinea-fowl tempt the sportsman to long and frequently unsuccessful stalks, for these birds are very wary.

Up to the 4th October I had kept a daily register of the temperature, the minimum in the shade averaging about 70° and the maximum from 85° to 90° . On the 27th September the maximum rose to 104° in the shade, but this was exceptional. Generally the forenoon was the coolest time of the day; after midday it became very hot, particularly when there was any sun. Cloudy days are characteristic of the climate, and this makes the heat quite endurable, particularly as a breeze often blows from the west. It is said that there are not more than 100 days of sunshine in the year, but for more exact particulars on this subject reference should be made to Professor von Danckelmann, late of the International Association, who is, I hear, about to publish the results of his observations conducted at Vivi.

On the 5th October we prepared to start up the river, and I had the misfortune to break my thermometer, thus putting an end to my observations. We had been nine days at Isanghila, during the whole of which time the General had been very ill, and though now a little better he was in far too weak a state to think of continuing his journey up the Congo, and his only chance lay in getting down to the coast as soon as possible and trying the effect of sea-air. As had been arranged in Brussels, he deputed me to act as his delegate, with instructions to continue the work begun by him. The 5th of October was occupied in a preliminary boat excursion to ascertain the feasibility of taking the mules across the river Intombe, which falls into the Congo just above Isanghila, and like many of these smaller affluents has steep banks densely wooded near the water's edge. This difficulty was overcome by placing boards across the large steel boat in which we were to make the journey, and lifting the animals bodily on to them, a task which was accomplished by our Zanzibaris under the supervision of Major Parminter.

On the 6th, every arrangement being completed, we embarked a party

of three Europeans; the Zanzibari porters, numbering 40, marched overland, meeting us each evening at pre-arranged camping-places on the river. Besides these we took two native guides, one accompanying the caravan and the other remaining in the boat. Our rate of progress being mainly regulated by the work in hand, it would be unnecessary and very wearisome to my audience to enter into the details of each day's proceedings, to mention the number of chiefs who attended the palavers, the presents they brought, consisting mostly of goats and poultry, the gifts they received, &c.; therefore only the more important points of our journey will be touched upon. We were made known to the natives as children of "Bulu Matadi" * (or "stone-breaker"), the name for Stanley on the Lower Congo, given to him, it is said, on account of the extraordinary efforts made by him and his gang of 150 men in transporting steamers for the Association overland to Stanley Pool. Gigantic difficulties had to be overcome, rocks had to be removed, and trees felled before the task could be accomplished, and to this day may be seen the marks of the broad iron wheels on which the heavy boilers and sections of boats were carried. As children then of Bulu Matadi, flying the flag of the Association, a gold star on a blue ground, we were generally well received.

One of the first districts to come under our notice was Yongho, or Yongha, a collection of villages situated on a high hill about seven miles from Isanghila, commanding an extensive view of the Congo and the country to the south of it. Towards the north we learned that it extended to some high land bearing 45° by compass, whilst on the west and north-west it bordered with Kionzo. I visited it, and found the inhabitants, who brought me delicious palm-wine, living in clean huts surrounded by plantations. The descent from Yongho on the east side is very steep, to a wide valley where the rivers Kikai and Lufudi unite before pouring their blended waters into the Congo. The Lufudi here bursts through a narrow passage of rocks between a small island and the right bank before joining the Congo, making navigation extremely awkward. Up this passage in flood time the boats have to be dragged by ropes, in order to avoid the cataracts in the main river, which may be safely passed in the dry season. It takes upwards of an hour to pull the boat a few yards. Here Major Parminster and I met with an accident that might have been serious. Arriving at camp early in the day, we took a canoe with one Zanzibari to help paddle, and proceeded up the river to try and get a shot at crocodile, hippo, or bird. In making our way through the passage just described the canoe stuck fast, and,

* Bullamatatare, or Bulomatadi. Even this title is not new, for I find the same expression applied in Pigafetta's report of the kingdom of Congo (translated into English by Mrs. Hutchinson) to Dom Francisco, a noble at the court of the king of Congo in the sixteenth century. This man is described as a bad character, who exercised great influence over the king and his court, his full title being Dom Francisco Bullamatatare. No reason, however, is assigned for this appellation.

being very rotten, went to pieces on the rocks, while we found ourselves on a desert island completely cut off from the mainland, and beyond call of our companions. Our Zanzibari, however, pluckily volunteered to swim across below the rapid, and he soon brought a boat to our assistance. The adventure did not quite end there, for the wrathful owner of the canoe made his appearance that evening, and describing his ancient craft as one of the best on the river, demanded heavy compensation. His chief, however, was fortunately present, and insisted upon his taking a reasonable price for it, and so the affair was amicably settled.

On the 11th October we encamped opposite a wide valley, which, we were told, was that of the Kwilu. On the maps, however, of the Baptist missionaries this river is made to discharge into the Congo above their station of Baynesville, and having on the return journey followed the southern bank and crossed the Kwilu 15 miles from its mouth, there could be no question as to the missionaries being in the right. What we had mistaken for the valley, in the first instance, was merely a plain watered by a reedy brook, and frequented by buffalo and other big game.

On the 12th October we camped nearly opposite Baynesville. The situation is a fine one; the buildings, which are constructed of native materials, grass and bamboo, are lined inside with mats, in the manufacture of which natives show considerable taste. The floors were boarded, in spite of white ants, and a few tables and chairs, with a well-filled book-case, gave a homely air to this station.

On the 15th October we were at Bemba, about half-way to Manyanga. This was formerly a station of the Livingstone Inland Mission, but it did not prove a success, and was abandoned. The krooboys attached to this station left a bad name behind them, and we found the natives disinclined to treat with white men; the villages were extremely poor, the inhabitants supporting themselves mostly by fishing. The men wear loin-cloths of coarse texture and but few ornaments; they pierce the cartilage of the nose, and insert a porcupine quill, or even a piece of bamboo, which gives them a somewhat grotesque appearance. On the 16th we were at Eluala, and tried to explore it in a canoe, but were soon stopped by rapids. The following day we ascended the Itūnzima Rapids, Major Parminter lying helpless with fever in the boat, his sufferings much aggravated by the intense heat. These rapids present a formidable obstacle to navigation at this season of the year. For nearly two miles, keeping close to the left bank, our boat had been dragged by the united strength of the crew, from rock to rock, against a violent current; and it was late in the afternoon before we reached our camping place at Sonomamba. The scenery here becomes bolder, the banks higher and steeper, and in places cliffs rise up from the water's edge, always leaving room, however, for a thin fringe of trees at their base. A short distance inland are some curious rocks, which tower up

to a great height, having the appearance of ruined castles. We were now approaching the end of the second part of our journey, and on the 23rd October we landed at the foot of a steep hill, on which the station of Manyanga is built. This station is placed in a very rich and populous district. Every week a large market is held, to which all kinds of produce are brought for sale—manioc, peas, palm-wine, a variety of fruits and vegetables, and articles of native manufacture. To this market no white men are admitted; but one on a smaller scale, also held weekly, is open to all comers. Europeans resident here say the climate is unhealthy, and attribute this to malaria rising from the surrounding marshy land.

The language spoken on the Lower Congo is the Fiote, a branch of the Bantu, a wide family, embracing a large part of Africa, from the West Coast to Zanzibar, and southward nearly as far as the Cape. Zanzibaris, who speak the Swahili dialect, find means of making themselves understood by the people of the Congo, and hence their great utility in all relations between Europeans and natives. Considerable progress has recently been made by English missionaries in learning the Fiote tongue, no less than 20,000 words having already been collected by Mr. Bentley of the Baptist Mission, who intends shortly to publish a dictionary. They have no written character, their history is a blank, except where tradition preserves a few traces of their wars and migrations.

Two miles above Manyanga are the falls of Ngoma, extending right across the river from bank to bank, and placing an effectual bar to farther navigation. Henceforward the journey must be continued overland, by either of two routes: the one crosses to the south bank at Manyanga, and passing through the rich and fertile district of Lutete, where the Association has a station, crosses the Inkissi, a wide and swiftly-flowing river, and so reaches Stanley Pool; the other follows the right or northern bank as far as Nsandu ferry, and falls in with the southern route near the village of Vemba, about 25 miles from the Pool. We chose the former of these, and having tried both, I have no hesitation in saying it is the best.

On the 27th October, our mules and caravan, which now numbered seventy men, having been ferried across the Congo (here at least a mile wide), we proceeded on our journey. The rainy season had now begun in earnest, and the first night after leaving Manyanga, we experienced a violent thunderstorm, accompanied by torrents of rain. About midnight our tents collapsed, and we took refuge in a shed where our servants and some of the caravan were sleeping. Here we made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit till the weather improved. Towards morning, the natives collected in large numbers to see us start, and great was their astonishment at the mules, which they believed we were taking with us to eat. The previous evening

we had witnessed one of the native dances. A circle was formed, with men on one side and women on the other, the music consisting of huge drums made of goat-skin: the clothing of both sexes was extremely scant, but they wore beads all over their bodies, and danced with great vigour.

At Lutete we visited three powerful chiefs, Lutete, Makito, and Ngombi. Lutete's village was far the best of any we had seen, its houses were larger and better built, and its plantations more extensive; here, too, wherever there was shade and moisture we found pine-apples growing wild, forming fences round the villages. Sheep, goats, and poultry are kept by the natives. Glass beads are the usual currency, those of a dark blue colour being preferred. On November 1st we took our departure from Lutete and rode over undulating country, occasionally having to cross deep gullies; every now and again we had a distant view of the Zingha fall on the Edwin Arnold river, and could see that its waters were muddy after the recent rains. Our next difficulty was taking the mules across the Inkissi. The native ferrymen had never seen animals of this kind, and were taken aback at the proposal that they should ferry them over; by lashing two canoes together, however, and placing our leading muleteer in one holding a rope attached to the head-piece of the animal, all three were landed safely on the opposite side. The Inkissi is a noisy turbulent river about 500 feet wide; immediately above the ferry it forms a cataract on either side of a small island; its banks are very steep and the water deep up to the landing place. Once across this river we were within three days' march of Stanley Pool, the goal of our wanderings. We had heard reports of Stanley's return, but these had been contradicted, and expectation was still on tiptoe for news of him. Ngoma was the last station before reaching the Pool, hence five hours' march would take us to Leopoldville or Kintamo. These last 15 miles lay mostly through dense forests, where a clearing had been cut to bring up the steamers. We had a glimpse of the Congo where the Jué or Gordon Bennett falls into it, and looked without envy at De Brazza's territory, to which his countrymen have recently been refused admission by the natives. Turning to the right we soon lost sight of the river, which we were not to see again till we had rounded the foot of the hill on which the station of Leopoldville stands and were actually on Stanley's terrace. This is a level earth-work cut away from the hill-side 300 yards long. On it stands the principal building, a long clay magazine containing stores, where cloth and a variety of articles are bartered with the natives for brass rods or *mitakos*. On the second story is the apartment of Mr. H. M. Stanley himself; here he passes whatever time he can spare from superintending works. Higher up the hill is a building for the European staff, divided into seven rooms, with an eighth where they meet for their meals. Leopoldville overlooks a bay formed by the Congo before

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escaping by the rapids of (Itzi?) towards the sea. There are dangerous currents in this bay, a fatal accident occurred there shortly before our arrival. Five Houssas had gone in a canoe to hunt hippopotami, when they were carried dangerously near the rapids. Seeing the peril they were in, they tried to cross to the opposite side, but this brought them broadside on to the worst part of the cataract, and they were all drowned within sight of the station.

The Pool does not actually begin for two miles above Leopoldville, where Point Kalina facing Mfwa or Brazzaville might, if fortified, command the entrance. Hence it extends in a north-east direction for about 20 miles to the mouth of the Upper Congo. This vast lake contains several islands, the longest of which stretches nearly the whole length of the Pool, and is inhabited by elephant and buffalo. While at Leopoldville an iron boat was placed at our disposal by Mr. Comber of the Baptist Mission, and crossing over to Brazzaville we were invited to land; our time did not allow of our interviewing the head chief, but we parted on good terms with the natives who gave us a pressing invitation to return. Of the French commandant all we could learn was that he had gone away to some distance, and they pointed beyond the hills and spoke of a place called "Gobi." Mfwa is a scattered collection of villages, each having its own chief. After leaving Mfwa the lake soon opens out and discloses a deep bay on the west with islands. We landed and passed the night on Long Island. Our course next day was towards Dover Cliffs, which were supposed by Stanley to be of chalk, they are, however, silver sand, which crumbling away, makes it dangerous to go too near. It was almost dark when we moored our boats in a creek almost opposite the entrance to the Upper Congo. The cliffs rise to a height of 500 feet on either side and approach so near one another as almost to exclude the light, giving it a singularly gloomy aspect.

On the morning of the 14th November we started homewards. The 15th, the birthday of King Leopold II., was kept with due honours at Leopoldville, and all the Europeans dined together. Messrs. Comber and Grenfell represented the Baptist Mission, Dr. Sims the Livingstone Inland Mission. These missionaries find it uphill work; the Batekes, though glad to avail themselves of their medical skill, will not send their sons to be taught at their schools. At their stations lower down the river they have had more success, and at Manyanga Mr. Bentley showed me a letter from a native boy, in English, well written and well expressed. Both these missions are expecting steamers, to enable them to ascend the river, and continue their labours higher up.

The general impression produced by the Congo is a melancholy one. But few villages are seen along the banks, all being a short distance inland, and if it were not for an occasional canoe upon the water, one might at times almost suppose it deserted. The crocodile,

the river-horse, the wild fowl, and fishing eagles are left in undisturbed possession, while a few small birds, some of brilliant plumage, such as kingfishers, frequent the smaller streams. The river itself is full of eddies and whirlpools, its width averages from three-quarters of a mile to a mile wide, but the sudden bends which it makes give it the appearance of a succession of lakes.

The country had a parched appearance, owing to the long withered grass which clothed the slopes of the hills; in many places this grass had been fired by the natives, leaving dark patches. When we were leaving, everything was beginning to look green. Near Stanley Pool there are extensive forests, and we saw beautiful flowers and butterflies among the trees, but having little time for collecting, we did not secure specimens of either. Among the wild animals of this country, besides those mentioned, is the ichneumon, very common, and easily tamed; one they had at Manyanga played fearlessly with the dogs of the station. Chameleons were also brought to us at Stanley Pool. Leopards are sometimes killed, their skins are greatly valued, and are a sign of chieftaincy; leopard's teeth, too, are worn in a chief's headdress. The hairs of an elephant's tail are also highly prized; they are used for the strings of a musical instrument something the shape of a small harp. The country abounds in minerals; we were shown specimens of copper, malachite, and lead.

Among the curious customs of the Lower Congo is that called *Inkimpí*. This is a kind of freemasonry to which every youth aspires to be admitted. He has to undergo a preliminary ordeal, which lasts about a year: during this time he lives out of doors, and holds no communication with his fellows; he paints the upper part of his body white, and wears a dress of palm-leaves from the waist downwards. He undergoes the rite of circumcision, and receives a name by which he is ever afterwards known. Lutete, Sakala, are favourite names. When the period of probation is over, a grand procession is formed, and thousands assemble to see it.

The International Association has, during the last few years, accomplished a great work in opening out Africa. Upwards of 5000 miles of navigable rivers are accessible from Stanley Pool; three steamers are already launched on its waters, and accompanied Stanley on his last expedition, while a fourth is on its way out.

As St. Petersburg was termed by Peter the Great the window through which Russia looked into Europe, so may Leopoldville be termed the window opened by Leopold II. through which Europe may look into the heart of Africa.

Previous to the reading of the above papers—

The PRESIDENT said that both the authors had on previous occasions appeared before the Society, and that it was therefore almost superfluous for him to introduce them. He could not, however, refrain from calling their attention to the public

services of Sir Frederic Goldsmid in many parts of the world. Upwards of forty years ago he entered into her Majesty's service. After being engaged on the coast of China, and in Scinde and Persia, he was employed by the Government on the important work of deciding on the boundary between Beluchistan and Persia. Subsequently he filled important posts in Mauritius and in Egypt, and he has lately been employed in the service of that most philanthropic association which was started by the King of the Belgians in connection with the exploration of Africa. Unfortunately Sir Frederic Goldsmid was taken ill in an early part of the expedition, but he had with him Mr. Delmar Morgan, who went on and ascended the Congo to complete the task which Sir Frederic otherwise would have performed. The Society had recently had the advantage of listening to Mr. Johnston's account of a journey in the same region, but it was well to have also the results of the sagacity and experience of such observers as Sir Frederic Goldsmid and Mr. Delmar Morgan.

After the papers had been read,

The Rev. HORACE WALLER said it was quite clear from the lucid sketch of the Congo which had been given that great difficulties would beset philanthropists, missionaries, travellers, and merchants in gaining the navigable part of the river. Much climbing up stairs would have to be undergone before a good look was obtained out of the window into the interior of Africa. The question arose how the country was to be got through. It might be said it could be either traversed on foot or with mules, but he was sorry to say from his former experience on the east coast that the chief difficulty arose from a Western nation. He wanted to know what the position of Europeans who went out to the Congo would be with regard to Portugal. The question cropped up in the House of Commons last year, and there was a very hot debate upon it. If he was rightly informed the position was exactly this. Mr. Gladstone closed the debate last year by giving a positive assurance that even supposing it might be necessary during the recess to conclude a treaty with Portugal that treaty should not be ratified until ample opportunity had been afforded for holes to be picked in it if possible. He thought it was the duty of everybody who looked forward to the opening up of that great country to keep his eye upon the matter as it now stood. It was evident that as soon as a traveller entered the mouth of the Congo he must land and proceed over land. His goods must be disembarked, and if the journey had to be taken over Portuguese territory, Portugal would inevitably levy black mail to support her convicts, whose presence on the coast tended towards the destruction of everything like morality. If the English Government were to empty the convict establishment of Chatham into some station in Africa the last state of the place would be worse than the first; and it behoved everybody to get a sight of the treaty with Portugal as soon as possible.

Mr. H. H. JOHNSTON said the papers had described the country round the Congo with photographic accuracy, and therefore he would only add a little piece of news which reached him a fortnight ago from a Belgian officer out there. He learnt that canoes had come down to the station and brought the news that Stanley had had rather a bad reception beyond the Mangala river, and had been forced to retrace his steps, and that De Brazza's lieutenant, accompanied by a French missionary, was chased by the natives away from Mwfa, and had to appeal to Stanley for help. He had it on the authority of Mr. Stanley himself that if ever a railway was made to Stanley Pool it would be along the valley of the Kuilu, in which case Landana would be its outlet. When he was there Mr. Stanley was very anxious that it should not get into the hands of either the French or Portuguese. The Dutch merchants at Banana had informed him that there was an arrangement on foot by which the Portuguese Government would occupy both sides of the Congo mouth. In that case everything else would be in the hands of Portugal. He read in the daily papers that

the Portuguese were prepared to allow the same liberal terms as were at present in vogue in Mozambique; but those who knew anything of Mozambique would think that the terms were rather illiberal than otherwise. He therefore thought it would be a very unfortunate thing if Portugal was allowed to occupy Landana and Banana, the two points which would affect the Congo in the future.

Commander V. L. CAMERON called attention to the fact that the route *viâ* the Zambesi and the Shiré to the north-west of Nyassa had now become a frequented highway, and that not very far from that lake were the head-waters of the Congo—the river Chambezi—where Livingstone worked. To descend that river would be an easier task than to ascend it, and by transporting boats built in sections a traveller might without much difficulty descend the great river and ascertain where all its great tributaries came in and also decide how far the Lomame was navigable. He had no doubt that a large portion of the Congo might be utilised for navigation and commerce. He had read a good deal lately in English papers about M. De Brazza. He himself was not only acquainted with De Brazza but with members of his family, and a more modest man could not be found. He was an enthusiast in his work, but he did not think any Englishman ought to set that down as a failing. He had travelled hundreds of miles alone, without a shoe to his foot, and in rags and tatters, and worked his way from the Ogowé to Stanley Pool. He had not a single man, white or black, to accompany him for a long portion of his journey.

Sir FOWELL BUXTON said although he had nothing to contribute to our geographical knowledge of the Congo he wished to put one or two questions to the gentlemen who had so recently returned from the river. It would be interesting to know what, if any, traces were still to be found of that Portuguese dominion which was of great importance several centuries ago. Formerly that dominion was a real thing, and it was administered to a great degree on the best Christian principles of that time. The old Portuguese governors wished that their government should be for the benefit of the governed, and they exercised their control with a great deal of masterfulness, guided by Christianity. It could not be doubted that their government extended over a very large area and lasted for a long time. If all trace of their dominion had vanished it would be a fact worth knowing. He also wished to know if the readers of the papers were able to measure the effect of Stanley's and De Brazza's work—whether trade had sensibly increased, and, if so, whether that increase had led to greater communication between the different tribes and therefore to more friendly intercourse and to the diminution of intertribal wars. He believed that such had been the effect where communications had been opened out in other parts of Africa, and it might reasonably be hoped that the same result would be experienced in the valley of the Congo.

General Sir F. GOLDSMID, in replying to the questions that had been put, said that from the little he had seen of the Congo, he was only able to answer imperfectly; but he thought there was now scarcely any trace whatever of Portuguese dominion in those parts. At the present day he did not suppose that the Portuguese were better known along the river banks than the English, Dutch, French, or other nations there represented. At Loanda, of course, Portuguese influence prevailed, as also further down the coast for some distance; but it was generally understood that a "white man" could not go from Loanda to Ambriz without being molested by the natives. A statement to this effect will be found in Mr. Monteiro's clever book on Angola, published about nine years ago, and he (Sir Frederic) had learnt on trustworthy local authority, corroborated, to the best of his recollection, by a Portuguese gentleman on board the steamer in which he travelled, that such was still the case. With regard to the trade on the Congo, he did not think that as yet there had been any palpable increase in the imports and exports, but this result

could hardly be expected so soon. He had little doubt that when more stations had been formed, and the aims and objects of the Association were more clearly understood, the whole would in time become centres, as it were, of traffic, and a great impetus would be given to commerce and the march of civilisation.

The PRESIDENT, in proposing a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers, said he would not be tempted by the political hints that had been thrown out to enter into the question whether or not Mr. Gladstone was going to violate his promise that the treaty with Portugal should be submitted to the House of Commons, nor whether the Dutch merchants had received information as to the contents of the treaty, which were not known in this country. He had no doubt that in process of time it would be found that Her Majesty's Government would do all that they had promised to do, and submit their treaty to the consideration of Parliament; and he was bound to say that if they had shown too great consideration for the interests of Portugal, it could not be for want of ample notice, in Parliament and out, of the opinion of the mercantile community in this country. With those considerations, however, the Geographical Society had nothing to do. Their interests were geographical, and the progress of geography led to commerce, which, when conducted as it was in these days, generally led to the advantage and improvement of a country. It may not have been so in the past, when the most active commerce in those districts was in human beings; but things were altered now, and with little exception commerce was now the handmaid of progress.

New Guinea: a Summary of our Present Knowledge with regard to the Island. By COUTTS TROTTER.

Map, p. 244.

AN abstract of a paper on New Guinea, read at the last meeting of the British Association by the present writer, appeared in the 'Proceedings' for November last; but the increasing importance of the subject, besides the impossibility of obtaining the desired information in a collected form, may warrant a more detailed sketch of the progress of discovery in that island, with a few notes on the character and habits of the people, on the resources of the country, and its political relations.

Area. First Discoverers.—New Guinea, the largest island in the world after Australia, with an area of some 306,000 square miles,* i. e. as large as France and Great Britain together, was probably discovered, or at all events first sighted, in 1511, by Antonio de Abreu, for he penetrated eastwards as far as the Aru Islands, and sailed thence north to the Moluccas. In 1526 Don Jorge de Meneses, on his way from Goa to Ternate, whither he was proceeding as Portuguese governor, being driven out of his course, anchored at a spot which he calls Isla Versija, "lying under the Equinoctial," and which is perhaps to be identified with Warsia, a place on the north coast, in about 131° 45' E. and 0° 50' S.; but it may possibly have been the Papuan island of Waigiu.

* According to a careful re-computation in Perthes' *Geographical Establishment at Gotha*, the area is 234,768 square miles (geographical). 'Geographische Mittheilungen,' 1881, p. 48.—[Ed.]