Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires

Africa

Edited by
Tim Youngs

NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRAVELS, EXPLORATIONS AND EMPIRES

Volume 7

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NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRAVELS, EXPLORATIONS AND EMPIRES

WRITINGS FROM THE ERA OF IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION 1835–1910

Volume 7

AFRICA

Edited by Tim Youngs

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2004 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

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BRITISH LIBRARY CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA
Nineteenth-century travels, explorations and empires: writings from the era of imperial consolidation, 1835–1910
Part 2
1. Travelers' writings, European 2. Voyages and travels 3. Europe – Colonies – Description and travel 4. Europe – Colonies – Social life and customs –19th century
I. Middle East II. South Seas and Australasia III. Africa IV. South America
910.9'17124'09034

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
A catalogue record for this title is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN-13: 978-1-85196-761-2 (set)

New material typeset by
P&C

DOI: 10.4324/9781003113492

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to series editor Peter Kitson for inviting me to edit this volume, to Michael Middeke at Pickering & Chatto for his assistance and patience, and to Nik Smith for providing me with helpful information. Peter Hulme's comments on my earlier work have informed and influenced the work that went into this volume. I also owe a deep and continuing debt of gratitude to Roy Bridges, who once again has given generously of his knowledge and time. Any errors of fact or judgement are mine. As ever, I owe more than I can acknowledge to Gurminder and Natty.

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INTRODUCTION

DIFFERENT AFRICAS

Africa is infinitely more varied than Europe. That much most readers of the present volume would like to admit as we of the so-called post-colonial age deride the unenlightened views of nineteenth-century Europeans who we assume saw Africa as uniform.

Yet the statement of Africa's greater variety was made by probably the most brutal of all those explorers;[1] one who was responsible for aiding the creation of King Leopold II of Belgium's Congo Free State in which a death toll of 'genocidal proportions' occurred in the pursuit of profit.[2] It is popularly believed nowadays that European explorers and their readership typically saw Africans as the uncultured, shapeless, howling savages populating the river-bank (the unnamed Congo) in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.[3] Some did. But many of the explorers provided detailed and specific descriptions, distinguishing between Africans to a degree that might surprise us, though their purpose might not. True, they were no less convinced of their own superiority, and their writings are often racist (sometimes seeming so even to their contemporaries). Their motives, even when avowedly scientific, were often far from disinterested. The promotion of commerce was a prominent theme, and the imposition of it an aim they sought to justify by offering it as the means to spread civilisation and to eradicate slavery. Livingstone had advocated the spread of commerce, Christianity and civilisation. Both Stanley and Cameron called for communications, transport and trade as a way of tackling slavery. 'Why are not steamers flying the British colours carrying the overglut of our manufactured goods to the naked African, and receiving from him in exchange those choicest gifts of nature by which he is surrounded, and of the value of which he is at present ignorant?'[4], asked Cameron. All the same – and

1 'Africa is about three times greater than Europe in its extent, and is infinitely more varied.' Henry M. Stanley, *In Darkest Africa or the Quest, Rescue, and Retreat of Emin Governor of Equatoria* (London, 1890), p. 348. I concede that in this passage Stanley is referring to landscapes but he does so to challenge a view of Africa as less varied; and elsewhere he does distinguish – if, literally, to striking effect – between African people.

2 Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Central Africa* (London, 1999), p. 225.

3 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough, 3rd edn (New York, 1988). The tale was first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899 and in book form in 1902.

4 Verney Lovett Cameron, *Across Africa*, 2 vols (London, 1877), vol. 2, p. 334 (this volume, p. 239).

perhaps because of this impulse – many of the narratives, if still objectionable to us in their language and prejudices, are less shadowy, less formless in their presentation of Africa than we might expect from the stereotypes we have of these texts.

If Henry Morton Stanley's testament to Africa's variety suggests that the story of Britain's involvement with Africa in the nineteenth century is not an easy one to tell, it follows that it is a difficult one to anthologise. Not only are there different Africas but an array of different Britons explored, travelled and resided within them. As Felix Driver observes, 'the culture of exploration was heterogeneous, and the knowledge it produced took a great variety of forms'.[1] Travellers wrote up their travels in different styles and formats – including journals, diaries, letters, official reports and adventure narratives. These accounts would themselves undergo modification when rewritten or edited for publication.[2]

The extracts for the present volume have been chosen to hint, at least, at this heterogeneity. Independent travellers and adventurers, missionaries (male and female),[3] explorers, hunters, naturalists and artists are all represented here. There are, inevitably, omissions. Some types are excluded both because their own accounts of travel were not generally published and because the series in which this volume appears concentrates on published writings from Britain. Consequently, apart from western traders,[4] two other important types of traveller have not been included: the black African porters who made the European expeditions possible[5] and the Arab-African slavers whose knowledge and resources led some European explorers to their 'discoveries'.[6] The relative silence of the porters' under-heard voices is uneasily perpetuated here. Also ignored are African and African-American missionaries who visited or returned to Africa.[7]

1 Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 28–9.

2 See Roy Bridges, 'Nineteenth-century East African Travel Records with an Appendix on "Armchair Geographers" and Cartography' in Beatrix Heintze and Adam Jones (eds), *European Sources for Sub-Saharan Africa Before 1900: Use and Abuse*. *Paideuma* 33 (1987), pp. 179–96.

3 On women travellers in Africa, see Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York, 1994) and Cheryl McEwan, *Gender, Geography and Empire: Victorian Women Travellers in Africa* (Aldershot, 2000).

4 For an infamous example of one of these see Nicholas Harman, *Bwana Stokesi and his African Conquests* (London, 1986).

5 For information on these see Donald Simpson, *Dark Companions: The African Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa* (London, 1975). See also Anthony Kirk-Greene and Paul Newman (eds), *West African Travels and Adventures: Two Autobiographical Narratives from Northern Nigeria*, trans. Kirk-Greene and Newman (New Haven, 1971).

6 On the most famous of these, see Dr Heinrich Brode, *Tippoo Tib: The Story of his Career in Central Africa. Narrated from his Own Accounts by Dr. Heinrich Brode and Translated by H. Havelock with a preface by Sir Charles Eliot* (London, 1907).

7 See for example Rev. Samuel Crowther and Rev. John Christopher Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger. Journals and Notices of the Native Missionaries Accompanying the Niger Expedition of 1857–1859* (London, 1859; reprinted London, 1968), and Katja Füllberg-Stolberg, 'African Americans in Africa: Black Missionaries and the "Congo Atrocities," 1890–1910' in Maria Diedrich, Henry Louis Gates Jr and Carl Pedersen (eds), *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage* (New York, 1999), pp. 215–27.

Where space allows, this anthology reproduces whole chapters of narratives. A broader sense of context and of literary expression should emerge than would be apparent from shorter extracts. It would be a caricature of disciplinary approaches to say that historians have tended to read explorers' narratives as straightforward historical records while those in literary and cultural studies have interrogated the texts for the ideologies their discursive strategies reveal or conceal, but it is a useful caricature that carries some truth. Between these two poles lies the possibility of a reading that is attentive to history and to literary construction. It is hoped that the introduction to each extract and the length and assortment of the extracts themselves will, combined, focus attention on the historical context and literariness of the narratives.[1]

The many anthologies of travel and exploration that have been published testify to the popularity of travel writing. Paradoxically, they provide evidence of how the form is taken less seriously than other prose genres. Novels tend not to be anthologised, at least not in the same way.[2] Perhaps this is because travel writing is seen as mainly factual, consisting of information that can be pulled out in pieces, while novels are regarded as artistic wholes whose integrity would be lost by reduction. As a number of critics have observed, however, the line between fact and fiction in travel writing is more blurred than that. I hope that the compromise of presenting chapters in their entirety (as most of the extracts are) will encourage the reading of travel narratives as literary artefacts rather than just as documentary records.

FACT AND FICTION

The different treatment accorded to the two genres raises questions about their relative status and properties. The nature of travel writing has been debated by numerous scholars, many of whom see it as occupying some kind of indeterminate position: neither wholly documentary nor wholly fictional.[3] Indeed, the best-known, because the most emblematic, journey in Central Africa is one that occurs in a novella that does not even name its setting: that undertaken by Marlow, in pursuit of Kurtz, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad's narration of this journey has become so influential that subsequent travel writing on the Congo invariably invokes it. Conversely, several of the travellers included in the present volume also wrote

1 See Driver, *Geography Militant*, p. 8.

2 A point I owe to Peter Hulme.

3 See for example Jan Borm, 'In-Betweeners? – On the Travel Book and Ethnographies', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 4 (2000), pp. 78–105, and the same author's 'Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology' in Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (eds), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004).

fiction.[1] When Stanley wrote his romance, *My Kalulu*, named after and based on the former slave boy who accompanied him, he addressed it to 'clever, bright-eyed, intelligent boys, of all classes', and 'young, middle-aged, and old men, who found my first book [*How I Found Livingstone*] rather heavy'.[2] Offering that 'I have woven fact with fiction', Stanley explained that: 'I had in view, when I wrote this book, the idea that I might be able to describe more vividly in such a book as this than in any other way the evils of the slave-trade in Africa.'[3] Stanley also describes some of the different elements of the travel narrative, recognising that travel books are composite affairs and that different readers look for different things in them:

> In a book of travels some readers prefer the adventures, the incidents of the chase; others prefer what relates to the ethnography of the country; others, geography; others dip into it for matters concerning philology. The person who reads the whole book through is one interested in the subject, or is attracted to it by its style.[4]

What this shows – apart from foreshadowing the present multi-disciplinary interest in travel texts[5] – is not just that the travel narrative comprises diverse elements but that Stanley is well aware of the need to tailor his writing to his audience. As a professional journalist he brings to travel books about Africa an evident and knowing artifice. Indeed, this is attested to by the discrepant accounts he produced according to medium and audience. The most graphic example is his anecdote of the 'burning of Shakespeare' in *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) when the 'Mowa people' threaten him after seeing him '"make some marks on some tara-tara" (paper)'. Anxious not to sacrifice to 'the childish caprice of savages' his 'valuable notes' of the region, Stanley sets fire instead to his 'volume of Shakespeare'.[6] According to his diary, however, what he burned instead were some worthless scribbles.[7]

The heavy presence of Stanley in this anthology reflects not only his huge impact on what one might euphemistically call Europe's involvement with

1 Henry M. Stanley, *My Kalulu, Prince, King, and Slave: A Story of Central Africa* (London, 1873; reprinted London, 1890); Joseph Thomson and Miss Harris-Smith *ULU: An African Romance*, 2 vols (London, 1888). Cameron also wrote adventure stories for children, including *In Savage Africa*. Sir Samuel White Baker published and dedicated 'to all boys (from eight years old to eighty) a story of fiction, combined with certain facts'. Sir Samuel W. Baker, *Cast Up by the Sea* (London, 1868; reprinted London, 1911), p. xvii.

2 Stanley, Ibid., pp. v–vi, vii.

3 Stanley, Ibid., p. viii.

4 Stanley, Ibid., pp. vi–vii.

5 For a discussion of this see Tim Youngs, 'Where Are We Going? Cross-border Approaches to Travel Writing' in Hooper and Youngs (eds), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004).

6 Henry M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent or The Sources of the Nile around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean* (London, 1878, reprinted London, 1890), p. 571.

7 Norman R. Bennett (ed.), *Stanley's Despatches to the New York Herald 1871–1872, 1874–1877* (Boston, 1970), p. 387.

Africa, but also his importance as a writer about Africa. More than any others, his writings have contributed to the West's perception of Central Africa. His style was criticised by those of superior education and more fastidious taste, but he knew how to reach the popular audience and he crafted his prose accordingly. Stanley's comments and practice point to a critical shift that occurred in travel writing about Africa from the third quarter of the nineteenth century: its increasing professionalisation. Stanley's narratives are mostly self-centred, patterned around the adventurous hero, favoured by divine providence, overcoming geographical and human obstacles to reach his goal. More than by the narratives of earlier and contemporary explorers, Stanley's writing is influenced by classical and biblical tales, by romantic and children's adventure stories and by the new journalism. It is important to recognise that he was a professional writer – a journalist – before and while he was an explorer. Of course, earlier travellers had been paid for publishing their stories, while, as Debbie Lee explains in the introduction to her volume on Africa in the first *Travels, Explorations and Empires* series, writers used Africa as a metaphor for various ideas.[1] What began to change towards the end of the period covered here, with the advent of modernism, and received its full impetus two to three decades later, was the increasing use of travel to Africa for the sake of professional storytelling and art-collecting. A later, prominent case in point is Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps* (1936), in which the author, needing to earn his publisher's advance but stuck for a way of writing up his experiences,[2] came up with the idea of symbolising his journey into Liberia via Sierra Leone as a parallel journey into the childhood fears and thrills that civilisation represses.

THE CENTRAL FOCUS

For all the diversity of Africa and of European encounters with the continent, the production of an anthology such as this one inevitably imposes its own narrative. What follows can only suggest a pattern, to which alternatives exist, the most obvious being the history of travel to North Africa and traditions other than the Anglophone one.

One may remark that the chief difference from the period 1770–1835, represented in Lee's volume, is the drive towards a more formal engagement with Africa. Looking at Britain's role in the wider world Roy Bridges has written that:

1 Debbie Lee (ed.), *Africa* in Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (gen. eds), *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion 1770–1835* (*TEE*), 8 vols (London, 2001–2), vol. 5, xxxii–xxxvi.

2 Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars* (New York, 1980), p. 67.

> The era from about 1830–1880 is the period of Victorian non-annexationist global expansion characterised by considerable confidence about Britain and its place in the world. From 1880–1914 is a period of severe international competition and territorial annexations accompanied by considerable anxiety.[1]

Across the world, the first of these two periods saw the 'triumph of capitalist expansionism', with capitalism spreading by means of the emigration that created new markets, through the growth in trade as industries sought raw materials and markets, and through investment.[2] In this first phase the British government was often a reluctant partner. Calls for intervention from explorers of Africa in the 1850s and 1860s went largely unanswered and it was left to private companies, individuals and to societies (sometimes with modest official backing) to act. The second phase sees the effects in Africa of the 'new imperialism'. The direction taken during these years is reflected in the travel writing of the time, which 'became at once more strident in asserting Europe's technological and racial superiority over non-Europeans and full of fears about "falling behind" rival powers'.[3] As in so many respects, Stanley marks the transition. His frustration with the British government's refusal to respond positively to his promotion of the Congo was such that he turned instead to Belgium's King Leopold, whose role in the partition of Africa was a leading one.

North, West, East and South Africa are all represented here but the focus is mainly on East and Central Africa. There are three reasons for this. First, in the early decades covered by this volume there was a fascination with the search for and discovery of the Nile sources. Second, Europe's long association with North and West Africa and its contacts with the Cape through the developing trade with the East Indies meant that what remained unknown – Central Africa, the Congo – came to stand for Africa itself. Third, the differences and similarities between types of travel and travel writing may be seen more clearly by concentrating on a single (if huge) region. Consequently, although this volume neglects important journeys to other parts of Africa, the focus on the 'heart' of Africa reflects broad contemporary views of the continent.

Physical obstacles, ill-health and native resistance helped foster an impression of heroic endeavour to penetrate into Africa's interior. Contemporary and subsequent accounts, especially during the 'new imperialist' phase of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, reinforced and circulated this idea of heroism.[4] The high mortality rate amongst missionaries in particular created a

1 Roy Bridges, 'Exploration and Travel outside Europe (1720–1914)' in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 54.

2 Ibid., pp. 59–60; quotation at p. 59.

3 Ibid., 'Exploration and travel', p. 66.

4 Among very many examples are: N. Bell [N. D'Anvers], *Heroes of North African Discovery*, 2nd edn (London, 1880) and *Heroes of Discovery in South Africa* (London, 1899); J. W. Buel, *Heroes of the Dark Continent and How Stanley Found Emin Pasha: A Complete History of all the Great Explorations and Discoveries in Central Africa, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time* (Denver, 1889); Sarah Geraldina Stock, *Missionary Heroes of Africa*, 2nd edn (London, 1898).

sense of martyrdom that could be used to counterbalance the self-interested policies of the European powers who sought new markets and imports, though often, as Livingstone had urged, Christianity and commerce went together. The European trade in African slaves had been partially enabled by, and in turn reinforced, an image of black Africans as inferior, uncivilised and without rights,[1] while the later nineteenth-century movement against Arab and Portuguese slavers fostered a paternalistic feeling that Africans required European protection. Anthropological discourse classified blacks (amongst whom the central Africans were frequently denoted the most savage) as humanity in its most primitive state. Sir John Lubbock, for example, drew on writings by Burton, Livingstone and other travellers to reach the conclusion that 'the moral condition of savages is really much lower than has usually been supposed'.[2]

The image of Africa suggested by the title of Stanley's third book, *Through the Dark Continent* (1878), and reinforced by his final expedition account, *In Darkest Africa* (1890), took firmer hold. Moreover, toward the end of the century, this idea of darkness came to symbolise a darkness within Westerners – both morally and psychologically. Thus the journey into Africa came increasingly, at the end of the nineteenth century, to be one of a journey into the heart and psyche of the West. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* represents this but the interpretation had already been made a decade earlier with the scandals and tragedies that resulted from Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, described in the introductory section to the extract from *In Darkest Africa*.[3]

On the other hand, descriptions of landscape and of people were often considerably more individual and detailed and the tone more positive than we now commonly think. They had to be. It was necessary to sound optimistic in order to attract traders and missionaries and to encourage government action. While this means that the motives were no less self-serving, the picture is certainly neither as uniform nor as negative as many suspect.

Despite their ideological baggage, the narratives offer, in addition to their geographical information, an historical and anthropological record of African society on which scholars (black African as well as white) continue to draw. For instance, Robert Harms's research on the expansion of the Bobangi people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries finds support in the stories collected by Stanley and other explorers.[4] Speke's description of the court of Mutesa has been a valuable resource to historians. Missionaries who lived for several years in Africa made important studies of African languages. Baptist

1 For attitudes towards black Africans see especially H. Alan C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society 1840–1890* (London, 1965).

2 Sir John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man. Mental and Social Condition of Savages*, 3rd edn (London, 1875), p. 387. For his use of Burton, Livingstone and the Landers, see pp. 388–9.

3 See this volume, pp. 309–10.

4 Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500–1891* (New Haven, 1981), pp.132, 140.

William Holman Bentley, for example, published a *Grammar of the Kongo Language*. Admittedly, such endeavours were usually undertaken with the aim of spreading Christianity through translations of the Bible – Bentley wanted to rescue from 'the power of the evil one' the country in which 'Violence, cruelty, savagery and cannibalism, every misery that this sad world can know ... were rife'[1] – but they have been of value to anthropologists and ethnolinguists studying African group migrations and relationships.

EXPLORATION

Europe's involvement with Africa goes back many centuries.[2] Much of North Africa had been part of the Roman Empire before coming under the power of the Arabs and of the Ottoman Turks. The Portuguese were active in West Africa from the late fifteenth century, while the British and French were especially active on the west coast in subsequent centuries. The British were participants in, and then tried to stop, the slave trade. Images of West African slaves, intensified by eighteenth-century debates about abolition, influenced the British view of Africans generally. Growing scientific interest from the end of the eighteenth century is reflected in the formation of the African Association (the Association for promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa) in 1788. The Association sent out Scots explorer Mungo Park, who, on his expedition of 1795–7, became the first European to report seeing the Niger. Although Park established the general direction of this river, his death on his second trip in 1805 occurred too soon to prove that it was not the Congo. The disastrous Niger expedition of 1841–2, sponsored by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and terminated by the number of deaths its members sustained (infection with malaria, in particular, helping to dispose of a third of the non-native crew), did not diminish British interest in West Africa.[3] In East Africa by the late 1600s the Portuguese had penetrated the area of the Zambezi and had begun trading and settling in what is now Zimbabwe. Napoleon's 1798 expedition to Egypt stimulated European fascination with that nation's ancient past (as the British occupation of 1882 did for Britons more specifically), but it also made Britain more aware of the strategic importance of North Africa to India. This became especially appar-

1 Rev. W. Holman Bentley, *Pioneering on the Congo*, 2 vols (London, 1900), vol. 2, p. 64.

2 For more information on the details that follow and on the late nineteenth-century European carve-up of Africa that followed the Berlin Conference, see for example M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Harlow, 1974) and John M. MacKenzie, *The Partition of Africa 1880–1900 and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1983). For the period immediately prior to that covered by this anthology see Lee, 'Introduction', *Africa*, pp. xix–xxxvi. For a contrasting perspective on the European presence in Africa – a Marxist one that stresses native resistance – see Part Two of Hosea Jaffe, *A History of Africa* (London, 1985).

3 For a popular history of Niger exploration see Sanche de Gramont, *The Strong Brown God: The Story of the Niger River* (London, 1975).

ent with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and with Disraeli's acquisition of the Khedive's shares in it in 1875. In South Africa Bartholomew Diaz had landed near the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, but the Portuguese preferred to use East African ports on their way to trade in the East. The Dutch, under Van Riebeeck, landed at Table Bay, what is now Cape Town, in 1652 and settlers from the Dutch East India Company were joined by other Europeans, notably French Huguenots. But it was not until the 1770s that the eastward-expanding settlers came up against Bantu-speaking Africans moving down from the north. So-called Kaffir wars ensued.

CONGO

The history of European travel (writing) to the Congo had begun with Portuguese expeditions in the fifteenth century which were motivated by a concern to get south of the Moslem-controlled Sahara, an urge to 'discover' the source of the Nile and by legends of the riches of Prester John, the mythical Christian king.[1]

In 1482 Diogo Cão 'found' the mouth of the Congo to the north of the kingdom of the Bakongo. Exchanges of people and goods between the Portuguese and the Bakongo, not always voluntary, followed. Each learned the other's language and acquired some knowledge of the other's culture. In 1491 the Portuguese established a permanent representation in the capital Mbanza Kongo.

Cão had sailed one hundred miles up the estuary to today's Matadi but could get no further. After the death of King Affonso I, a convert to Christianity, who, as Nzinga Mbemba Affonso, had ruled as Manikongo for nearly forty years since 1506, the power of the Manikongo declined. The kingdom descended into chaos as opposing factions fought. After the Portuguese 'discovery' of Brazil in 1500, the slave trade to the Americas and to the Caribbean had grown massively and slaving became more attractive than exploration. In 1665 the Portuguese defeated the army of the Kingdom of the Kongo. Successive internal conflicts further weakened the kingdom and by the late nineteenth century its territory belonged to European colonies. Portugal then annexed the territory of the Kongo kingdom to its colony of Angola.

Up to the nineteenth century Europeans had still not identified the source of the Congo. Captain James Tuckey's 1816 expedition to locate the Congo's

1 Much of the detail on the early history of the Congo that follows is taken from Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Central Africa* (London, 1999) and from Peter Forbath, *The River Congo: The Discovery, Exploration and Exploitation of the World's Most Dramatic River* (New York, 1977). Some of my summary also draws on Tim Youngs, 'Africa/The Congo: the Politics of darkness' in Hulme and Youngs (eds), *Cambridge Companion*, pp. 156–73.

origins got no further than 150 miles along the river.[1] Only thirty-three out of fifty-four people survived the expedition, the rest (including Tuckey) dying from sickness (or in the case of two former slaves who acted as interpreters and guides, remaining in the Congo). For a while afterwards, Europe's focus remained on the Niger rather than the Congo. The interior of Africa remained a blank, which held a 'singular fascination' for Stanley, who 'mentally peopled it, filled it with most wonderful pictures of towns, villages, rivers, countries, and tribes' and was 'burning to see whether I am correct or not'.[2]

If the Congo had been mistaken (by Mungo Park and others) for the Niger, so, too, at mid-century, would it become confused with the Nile. Another Scot, the explorer-missionary Dr David Livingstone, became so obsessed with finding the Nile's sources (perhaps because of biblical and classical allusions to the river) that when he 'discovered' the source and headwaters of the Congo he did not know it. He reached the Chambezi on 24 January 1867, but it would be months before he realised he had mistaken the direction of the river.

The source of the Congo would be 'discovered' by the man who made his name by 'finding' Livingstone in 1871 while in the service of *The New York Herald*: Henry Morton Stanley.[3] On 30 November 1872 the Royal Geographical Society, embarrassed by Stanley's scoop, sent out three expeditions to meet and help Livingstone. The more important of these was led by Lt Verney Lovett Cameron, who became the first European to cross tropical Africa from east to west and mapped much of the Congo basin.[4]

In 1874 Stanley set out on a monumental expedition designed to complete Livingstone's work. The journey of more than 7,000 miles lasted three years. Backed financially by *The New York Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*, he 'mapped the great lakes of Central Africa, settled the mystery of the Nile's sources, and proved that the Lualaba was the Congo'.[5]

On Lake Victoria occurred the notorious Bumbireh Island massacre. During initial fighting with natives, Stanley used explosive bullets from his elephant gun. On 4 August 1875 he gained bloody revenge, killing between thirty and forty and wounding 100. None of his party was wounded. When news of this attack reached Britain a year later there was an outcry, which was not made any quieter by the boldly dramatic way in which he narrated these

1 An extract from the narrative of Tuckey's expedition is included in *TEE*, as is an extract from Mungo Park. See Lee (ed.), *Africa*, pp. 171–258, 59–92.

2 Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, p. 449.

3 The best biography of Stanley remains Richard Hall, *Stanley: An Adventurer Explored* (London, 1974). Frank McLynn's more recent two-volume biography is detailed but marred by psycho-speculation. Frank McLynn, *Stanley: The Making of an African Explorer* (London, 1989), and *Stanley: Sorcerer's Apprentice* (London, 1991).

4 For more on Cameron and his expedition, see this volume, pp. 239–54.

5 Forbath, *The River Congo*, p. 308.

events, seriously misjudging his audience.[1] British criticism of Stanley's methods, though mixed with anti-Americanism and class prejudice, nevertheless shows a real debate about the role, manner and purpose of African exploration.

Belgium's King Leopold, desiring to create his own private state, was attracted by Stanley's and Cameron's reports of the Congo's commercial potential. Cameron had urged support for what he and others thought to be Leopold's philanthropic and scientific interests as a means of opening up the Congo. Leopold invited Stanley to lead a five-year expedition during which Stanley was to sign treaties with African chiefs although power was to rest with the white heads of the stations that were to be established. On this expedition, which began in August 1879, Stanley and his men built roads and trading stations, including Leopoldville and Stanleyville. His narrative of this expedition, *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State* (1885), is of a very different kind to those that resulted from his others: less sensational and more positive in tone, it stresses the natural riches of the country and the prospects for commerce. When he left for Europe in June 1884 Stanley had 'connected the Congo with the sea and opened it to European exploitation. He ... had firmly built the foundation for Leopold's private Kingdom of the Congo.'[2]

Stanley's activities in the Congo while in the employ of Leopold stimulated commercial interest and political competition in the region. In November 1884 the European powers met at the Berlin Conference, which lasted for three months, in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Scramble for Africa. Under the Berlin Act of 26 February 1885, France was awarded 257,000 square miles, Portugal 351,000 miles and Leopold's Congo Free State nearly 1,000,000 square miles (containing perhaps 15,000,000 people). The agreement obliged Leopold to keep the area open for free trade and missionary activity – he had proclaimed philanthropic motives – but critical voices soon began to make clear that these conditions were not being kept. It was in the context of Leopold's ambition to expand his state northwards into southern Sudan and to gain the Nile that the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition took place.

Two of the most prominent figures to expose and publicise the evils of the Congo Free State were E. D. Morel and Roger Casement. Morel's publications made use of testimony provided by missionaries and others.[3] Casement, who had gone out to the Congo in 1884 and, like others, was taken in by Leopold's claims of humanitarianism and philanthropy, had worked for Stanley. Later serving as British Consul in Boma, Casement found increasing evidence of Leopold's profiteering and in 1903 was instructed by Parliament

1 Reaction to the slaughter is discussed by Driver, *Geography Militant*, pp. 132–8.
2 Forbath, *The River Congo*, p.358.
3 See for example Edmund D. Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* (London, 1904).

to report on the Congo Free State. The report was published the following February. It detailed cases of amputation and mutilation (including that of children), of women held hostage and of murders – all committed as punishments for collecting insufficient rubber. A Belgian commission of inquiry confirmed Casement's charges in 1905. In August 1908 the Belgian Parliament voted for an annexation treaty and on 15 November the Congo Free State became the Belgian Congo. Exploration had led to this; other travels had exposed the atrocities. Our extracts and further reading give some of the culpable and conflicting voices.

Parkyns: Life in Abyssinia

Mansfield Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia: Being Notes Collected during Three Years' Residence and Travels in that Country*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1853), vol. 2, pp. 310–30.

Mansfield Parkyns (1823–94) was born in Nottinghamshire to a father from the landed gentry and to a mother from a rising commercial class. He left Trinity College, Cambridge, prematurely for reasons now lost. He then travelled through Europe in 1842. After visiting Switzerland, Italy and Greece, he met by chance with Member of Parliament, poet and pornographer, Richard Monckton Milnes on the island of Syra. Parkyns went with Milnes to Istanbul, aiming to proceed to Egypt with him. From Cairo Milnes returned to London. Parkyns journeyed to Abyssinia from Suez. Some of the time in Abyssinia he spent with Walter Plowden (who would be appointed consul at Massawa in 1847) and John Bell, whom he had met in Cairo, but he preferred to travel by a shorter route to the Nile and beyond and to do so without other Europeans.

In Abyssinia Parkyns pursued his interests in shooting and collecting wildlife and in gaining a knowledge of the people and some of the local languages. He spent three years in the country, including nine months in the Rohabeita district in1843–4 and a year in Tigré. He left Adwa in June 1845, taking the direct route of 500 miles to Khartoum, where he remained, sick, for five months, leaving in 1846.

Back in England, Parkyns met with the publisher John Murray. In 1850 he left for Constantinople, where he served as an attaché to the embassy. He returned to London in 1852 and his book was published the following year. He married in 1854 and fathered eight daughters. He was made Lieutenant-Colonel of the 8th Sherwood Foresters and in 1884, after twenty years' service as comptroller of the bankruptcy court in London, retired to Woodborough Hall in Nottinghamshire.

Parkyns, who says he was persuaded by friends to work up his journals for publication, told John Murray that he wished his narrative to remain in his own style as far as possible. His is one of the most literary of narratives of African travel, alluding to such authors as Chaucer, Cervantes, Dickens and Samuel Johnson. Published two decades before the rise of the 'new imperialism', *Life in Abyssinia* retains something of the exoticism and of the attractive, adventurous hero associated with the romanticism of the earlier part of the century. It is comparatively free from the hard-edged racism that characterised the later years. His writing is not free from racial stereotypes, however, and his more sympathetic

DOI: 10.4324/9781003113492-1

descriptions of the Abyssinians – he even hints that he would prefer 'uncivilisation' to its opposite – seem intended to distance himself from British life and thus to establish his own individuality. He sheds many of the trappings of civilisation, adopting Abyssinian dress and eating habits, for example, and he claims to have 'identified myself with the natives, perhaps more than any of my predecessors, not only in habits, but also in feelings' (vol. 1, p. 3). Yet his narrative remains silent on his taking of an Abyssinian wife, Tures, with whom it seems he had a son, John, and has little to say about his Sudanese servant, Said.[1]

When Parkyns returned to England he named his home 'Abyssinia Cottage' and brought back an Abyssinian servant, Gabre Mariam. Correspondence with his publisher, in which he indicates that he was 'only half an Englishman' when writing part of his book, shows him to be experiencing some difficulty in readjustment.[2] Reviews of his book labelled him an agreeable savage and an eccentric. In the decade after the publication of his travels, attitudes towards Abyssinia hardened with the taking by 'King Theodore' of British hostages and the launch in 1867 of a military expedition to free them (attention turned on Abyssinia at this time led to the publication in 1868 of a revised edition of Parkyns's book).

In the chapter presented here Parkyns gives more details of how he spent his time while at 'Àdoua'. The engaging address to his readers is typical of his style; and the nostalgia for an existence that he found happy but which most of his readers would find barbaric is characteristic of the tone and persona adopted by him in his narrative. His remarks on the difficulty of cultural translation anticipate the problems addressed more than a century later by theorists of ethnography. But his use of the word 'nigger', which would acquire a harder edge four years later after the Indian rebellion, reminds us of the limits of such travelling.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JOURNEY TO THE TACCAZY.

It would be very discourteous in me to leave my readers in such an out-of-the-way place as Àdoua, else I might here bring my narrative to a close, for what remains will merely serve to show them the way into a rather more civilized district. Before entering upon the details of the long and very rough journey before us, I will just say a few words on what has already passed.

It must not be imagined that I was a fixture in the capital from the time of my return from Addy Abo till my final departure, although for convenience sake I may have allowed this to appear to have been the case. I made excursions into various of the provinces, and paid several visits of more or less duration to my old country friends as soon as the conclusion of the rains permitted me to move about. But I am not going to bore either myself or the reader with a journal of these excursions: I could at the best only tell of a few more quarrels with the inhabitants of the various villages I may have passed, or a few more kindnesses from them; of plenty here, and starvation there, &c. &c. As for the mode in which I spent my time in Àdoua, it will be

gleaned, from the notes on the manners and customs, that I was leading the life of an Abyssinian gentleman "about town," my hair well tressed, my pantaloons always of the newest, frequently of an original, cut; in dull weather setting fashions, disputing and deciding on the merits and demerits of shields and spears; in fine weather swelling about the town with a quarter of a pound of butter melting on my head, face, neck, and clothes, and with a tail of half-a-dozen well got-up and equally greasy soldiers at my heels; doing the great man, with my garment well over my nose at every festival and funeral worth attending; "hanging out" extensively when I had a few shillings to spend; sponging on my neighbours when, as was oftener the case, I had nothing!—in fact, living a most agreeable life on a very limited income. I cannot deny that I look back to those times with a certain feeling of regret. It was the only period of my life in which I ever felt myself a really great man. I "cry very small" in England, with a much greater expenditure. The men will not look after me with admiration, nor the girls make songs about me here.

The details of my Abyssinian life may, with the materials I have already supplied, be left to the reader's imagination. Like all happy moments, those years passed over very quickly, and now appear to me more like a dream than anything else. I had no annoyances of any kind; was fortunate enough to leave the country without, I believe, a single personal enemy; and beyond having received a lance through my clothes, between

my right arm and side, when endeavouring to separate some combatants who had got drunk at a wedding—and, on another occasion, having been rather badly hurt with a blow on the back from a club or stone—I may say that neither my life, limbs, nor health, were ever in danger. Meanwhile, as I have before hinted, I was living without any means; my supplies and letters having been unaccountably detained on the way, so that from the time of my leaving Cairo, two years and a quarter before, I was in the dark about Europe and European goings on.

I must here mention that I had, during this period, much cause to be grateful to Captain Haines, I. N., political agent at Aden, who, hearing of my distressed condition, kindly directed the master of a merchant brig, which happened to call at Massàwa, to lend me some money on his account. I esteem this great act of good nature the more, as at that time I had never seen him, nor even had any letter of introduction to him. However, near the end of May, 1845, I was one morning congratulated on the arrival, at Massàwa, of the 'Constance' (H.E.I.C. schooner), which I was told had brought me one or two large boxes. I had so often before been disappointed by such reports, having no less than three times sent messengers to the coast to bring up imaginary supplies, brought by imaginary vessels, and then, after ten days or a fortnight's painful suspense, finding that I had to pay the couriers, and had not a farthing to receive, that I was inclined at first to disbelieve the report of my good fortune; but a

coincidence settled the matter in my superstitious mind, and I sent again. This time report had not lied, for scarcely had my people left me three days when an Arabic letter from Houssien Effendi confirmed it. In due time the boxes themselves appeared, and I realized a pleasure in reading letters and newspapers which I had by no means expected, my ideas and feelings having become rather Abyssinian.

The rains were just setting in; still I felt that I must make up my mind for a start, or wait for another remittance; for, after my debts of honour, and the still more numerous and equally imperative debts of gratitude, were discharged, the balance would barely carry me to Sennár, and would be insufficient if I remained a few months longer in Abyssinia. Accordingly I set about my preparations *instanter*. These are soon made when a man travels as I do, with next to nothing in the baggage department; but what between paying the necessary visits of adieu to my many friends, and a decided tussle between duty and inclination, I did not get away from Àdoua till late in June (I will not be sure if it was not the first week in July). I will spare myself the recollection, and my readers the perusal, of a very moist, unpleasant leave-taking: a crowd of both sexes came to see me off, although to avoid such an occurrence I had secretly fixed my departure for an early hour in the morning. Suffice it to say I was nearly wet through before I left my own doors. At last, off we were—for myself I confess to having experienced a very queer, indescribable feeling about the nose, throat,

and pit of the stomach, and I believe that for the first time since my arrival in the country I wished I had had a pocket-handkerchief. Whatever were the sensations of her rider, they did not seem at all to communicate themselves to my mule, and we reached successively Axum and Maitowáro without any occurrence save an attack of ophthalmia, which kept me a day in the latter village. Our road branched off from Axum to Addy Ăbo, just after entering the plain of Solekhlekha. Three more days' ride, over a fertile and well-watered table-land, brought us to Devra Abbai (the great monastery), after passing the villages of Bellíss, Addy Giddad, and Adega Sheikha. This part of our journey was somewhat devoid of interest; we had a few words at Belliss with a party of soldiers who stopped our porters, pretending that they wanted customs duty, but on my coming up the matter was soon set to rights, as the leader of the party happened to be an old acquaintance of mine.

As for the scenery by the road, I heard say that it was tolerably monotonous, with the exception of occasional glimpses of distant mountains, but I saw nothing, for my eyes were bandaged from the effects of my late attack. About half-way across the plain we passed a ravine and stream called Gammalo, where may still be seen scattered bones of some of the fugitives from the great battle of Mai Islamai, the field of which is about two days' journey further on. This serves to show with what cruel determination the Gallas pursued and slaughtered their vanquished foes even to this distance.

At Adega Sheikha we left the Gondar caravan route, which turns in a south-westerly direction, while ours continued westward. We found the village of Devra Abbai built in a deep hollow or chasm, and so nearly concealed, that, when approaching it from some directions, you would scarcely imagine yourself to be near habitations, seeing nothing but a wide tract of table-land before you.

We were shown into a large oblong building, in shape and size much resembling an English barn, but here built of stones and mud, and thatched over; it was, I believe, intended for religious festivals, and occasionally for the reception of travellers. My three days' journey in the sun had been the means of bringing on a most violent return of ophthalmia, but, as some of my readers may not know what that complaint is, and I am sure I hope none of them ever will by experience, I may as well explain that it is a severe inflammation of the eyes, and, when it reaches the height it generally does in Africa, those useful organs are completely glued up, so that they cannot be opened till they have been bathed for a considerable time in warm water, and when they are opened, which is only done for the purpose of putting in some collyrium, nothing is distinguishable of what should be white, and blue, grey, or black, but a blood-red mass. It will be easily guessed, that to be laid up for a few days, or, as often happens, for weeks or months, stone blind, and with the agreeable sensation of having your eyes filled with sharp, coarse sand, red hot, is by no means an enviable situation. Well, this was

my case at Devra Abbai for about ten days. The servants had made me a sort of tent inside the barn, more completely to secure for me the darkness I required, for, though the building was of very great area, and lighted only by a door at each end, it was a great deal too brilliant for me. While upon this subject I may as well say how I treated myself—who knows but it may be of use? I ate next to nothing, took plenty of jalap, &c., had some blood taken from behind the ears, and a few drops of solution of sulphate of zinc dropped into each eye three or four times a day. I believe this to be as good a recipe as any for ordinary cases: I have tried it often with success; but I must say that the dropping-in part of the business is not agreeable. First the eye is opened as I have before described, and then it must be held open, for the faintest glimmer of light is unbearable, while an assistant drops in the collyrium by means of a bit of rolled paper or a small reed. I cannot make up my mind whether this operation or poking in bits of red-hot wire would be the most disagreeable, but should guess that the sensation would be nearly the same.

I remained a close prisoner till the day before we started, so that I had little time to make many inquiries or observations respecting the place. I walked about for a few hours only, and visited the church, which is built at the bottom of the hollow, the village rising like an amphitheatre from it; behind the church is a large plot of grass, backed by a wood of considerable size; a stream, forming in one place a natural cascade, ripples among the trees, which are the homes of many families

of the small grey monkeys which were playing about them, apparently unconscious of the wickedness of Beni Adam, many of them sitting quite composedly on the nearest boughs, scratching themselves and looking at me. Several parroquets also fluttered about, seemingly with equal confidence. The sanctity of the place is their sure protection; no one, not even the most profane, would dare to molest them in this holy retreat.

It would be as useless for any man, even the most graphic describer, to attempt to convey a just idea of tropical climate and scenery to a person who has never seen anything of the kind, as to describe music to a man born deaf, or colour to one who has never known the light. An initiated reader may, even from the little I have said, appreciate the exquisite beauty of the place. But not in scenery only does a traveller feel the great difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of conveying to his readers anything like an idea of the original; in manners and customs, even in adventures, the utmost he can hope for is a correct but hard outline—a sketch, such as a young lady, innocent of all artistic talent, would manufacture with the aid of a camera lucida, wanting in feeling, spirit, and colour; I do not mean to deny that some men, who have never been within 5000 miles of Abyssinia, could take this very book of mine as a basis, and from it make another with lots of feeling, abundance of spirit, and colouring enough to give one the ophthalmia. What I mean is, that a description of things so totally different from what we are accustomed to, as everything in those remote countries is, cannot

help losing its African feeling and becoming Anglicized, first by an English description, secondly and mainly by passing through the English imagination of the reader. This is the least that can happen to the best of books. For my own part, when I look back over these pages, and thence to the original as depicted in my memory, I say, as I should of one of the afore-mentioned young lady's sketches, "Yes; that's as long as it should be, and that as short; it might have been done with a pair of compasses; but as for a likeness—Faugh! I could cut a better portrait of my ladye love out of a swede turnip!"—and then I throw down my pen in disgust and leave it idle for a month or two. Amiable but rather impatient reader, I am not digressing, for we are not on our journey, but seated in the most delightful shade that ever came to the relief of sore eyes; we don't start till to-morrow,—to-morrow will soon be here.

Alas, poor Yakoub! to-morrow came—another morrow saw him no more! I have been selfish, in not having already mentioned him as a kind friend, though a servant, and one who nursed me tenderly during my blindness. My introduction to him was as follows:—A few days before our final departure from Adoua I was astonished at the sight of a strange white entering my yard. From a note of introduction which he brought me from Mr. Schimper he proved to be a German, who had just arrived in Abyssinia expecting great things, but who, finding that all was poverty, and that no money was to be made, was anxious, by any means, to leave the country, but had not wherewithal to pay his

expenses to the coast. I spoke to him on the subject, and he told me that, having heard that Mr. Schimper was a prince, he had little idea that his principality only produced him a few dollars' worth of native cloths and some corn per annum. He had hoped to have obtained a situation with his countryman, and truly he was a man who would have been very useful to any one in those parts, for he seemed to have been of almost every trade, and to be able to turn his hand to anything. I never exactly knew what had brought him into such an outlandish country in search of a livelihood, nor do I remember whether I ever asked him his name; he was many years older than myself, but, with the quiet steadiness of manhood, retained all the vigour of youth. In fact, he was everything that one could wish for as a servant or companion in such a country. I offered to assist him to return to Massàwa, representing to him that the journey I was about to undertake would not perhaps be the most agreeable one, excepting for the novelty and adventure it might afford; he accepted a small loan from me for present purposes, but declared that he should much prefer my route, and, as for roughing it, the more of that the merrier. He refused for the time any fixed salary, as I was taking him to do him a service, suggesting that when we arrived at Khartoum I should give him what I liked for the time that had passed, and that, if we suited each other, he should accompany me in the journey through Africa which I proposed undertaking. Thus much, coupled with his kind attendance on me when laid up at Devra Abbai, is all

I know of his life; his melancholy and untimely death will follow almost immediately.

We started early, in order to effect our passage of the Taccazy as soon after noon as possible. Every moment was precious to us; the rains had already so much swollen the river that no one had attempted the upper ford (on the ordinary Gondar road) for several days past. We procured a guide, whose business was to assist us in crossing the torrents, and to show us the way over the wild, uninhabited district that lies between this part of the country and Walkait. He told us that we should perhaps have to retrace our steps, if we found the river too deep and strong for us; but that, as the ford to which he was about to conduct us was very broad, and consequently shallow, we might possibly get over.

Never did I feel in better spirits than that morning. We rode for some hours over a very wild picturesque country varied with table-lands, valleys, and hills of all shapes and sizes, passed near the scene of the battle of Mai Islamai, and about noon began the actual descent towards the river. For an hour or two we were buried in deep ravines, with rocks and trees overhanging us, till at length we emerged into a broad and woody flat, through the trees of which the reflection of the afternoon sun on its waters showed us the Taccazy, now swollen to a majestic river, at a distance of about half a mile. Most of our party set off at a run, eager to get a nearer view of it. I, for my part, had seen nothing like a river since I left the Nile; for the Mareb is, as I have said, but a rivulet in the dry season. Some of

our people had never before seen a river of any sort, and looked upon it with awe and wonder. Indeed, it was a noble stream, in many places nearly, if not quite, as broad as the Thames at Greenwich; but in its rapid, boisterous descent, more like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva. On the opposite shore appeared a belt of forest similar to that we had just crossed, though neither so wide nor so flat, and in rear of this rose a dark mass of abrupt rocks. We ascended the stream for a considerable distance before we arrived at the ford where we were to cross. As the river did not appear so high as the guide had feared, he recommended a short halt before we entered the water; and, in the mean while, the baggage was made up into convenient parcels, and perishable articles packed in skins, so as to protect them as much as possible from a wetting. After sitting a few minutes we began to strip, and tie up our clothes in bundles, which we were to carry, each man his own, turban-like, on his head. I was proceeding very leisurely in my preparations, finishing a pipe, and waiting to be summoned, when I heard one of the Abyssinians call out, "Come back, come back!" A black who was with us answered him, "Oh, never fear, he's a child of the sea!" I looked up, and saw Yakoub wading out in about two feet of water, and occasionally taking a duck under as if to cool himself. Aware that he was ignorant of the language, I called to him, telling him that he had better not go alone, but wait till some one, acquainted with the peculiarities of the river, should guide him; he answered,

laughing, that he was not going much farther, and that he could swim. I did not think there could be any danger if he remained where he was, the water not being more than a yard deep, and he had told me before that he was an extremely good swimmer; but the guides had cautioned me of the danger of the whirlpools, currents, and mud, which they said rendered it impossible for anything, even a fish, to live in some parts of the torrent; so when on looking up I saw him moving about, I again called to him, begging of him with much earnestness to return. He answered something that made me laugh, at the same time swinging his arms about like the sails of a windmill, so as to splash the water all round him. He might have been thirty yards from the shore, and a little lower down the stream than where I sat. Still talking with him, I looked at what I was doing for a single instant, and then, raising my eyes, saw him as if trying to swim on his back, and beating the water with his hands, but in a manner so different from his former playful splashing, that, without knowing why, I called to him to ask what was the matter. He made no answer, but seemed as if moving a little down the stream for a yard or two, and then quicker and quicker. I was up in an instant, and ran down shouting to the people to help him, though at the same time I thought that he was playing us a trick to frighten us. A thick mass of canes and bushes, under the shade of which most of the servants had been sitting, overhung the river for several yards' distance, just below where I was. Having to pass behind these, I lost sight

of him, and before I reached the other end of them the horrible death-howl of the Abyssinians warned me that he had sunk to rise no more. We ran along the shore for some miles, in the melancholy hope that perhaps the torrent might cast his body on to some bank, or that he might be caught by a stump or bough, many of which stuck up in the water, but it was an almost hopeless chance. The swiftest horse could not have equalled the pace of that fierce stream, and probably the body had been carried several miles before we had got over one. At times our attention would be attracted for a moment by a clot of white foam left on the mud, but at length we retraced our steps, sad, fatigued, torn to pieces by the mimosa bushes through which we had forced our naked bodies, and having seen no signs of Yakoub since he sank. From the time I saw him, full of health and spirits, standing splashing the water in the bright sunshine, what a change had come over our whole party! Twenty seconds after, his death-wail was raised—

> " One moment, and the gush went forth
> Of music-mingled laughter,—
> The struggling splash and deathly shriek
> Were there the instant after.

And now that we were again on the spot, as if to make everything more gloomy, the sun was set, and scarcely a sound was to be heard but the dull moaning of that fatal river.

The guide, who had remained behind, or returned sooner than the rest, urged us to cross immediately, as the water had already risen several inches, and was still

rising fast. So we entered two and two together, each pair of us connected by a couple of large poles laid across our shoulders, to which were tied portions of the baggage and some heavy stones. This last addition was a good precaution to give us greater weight to resist the stream; we edged upwards for some distance, and then, gradually crossing, arrived in safety on the opposite shore. It took us a long time to get over, and not one of us but acknowledged to having several times been very nearly carried off his legs. The water reached my breast in the deepest part, and consequently the chins of most of our people. We passed within a few yards of the very spot where I had seen poor Yakoub for the last time. In the morning we had looked forward to the crossing with the greatest pleasure, the risk attending it only appearing as a little spice to make it all the more agreeable. When we first saw the water, it seemed all bright from the sunshine and our own cheerfulness; when we crossed it, it was dark, chilly, and the grave of our comrade. The dangers were doubled by the rising of the river, and every spark of excitement or adventure had been quenched by the melancholy occurrences and fatigues of the day. I must say for the Abyssinians and blacks also, that on this occasion they manifested much sympathy and kindness of heart, appearing to feel as deeply for our poor friend's fate as if he had been a near and dear relation to them, although he had only been with us a few days, and, except by signs and a few broken words, he could converse with none of the party. Moreover, not one of

them for a moment hesitated, when his turn came, to enter the river, though none could swim except the guide and three others. We never arrived at any satisfactory conclusion as to what could have been the cause of our loss. What could have produced the sudden change in his position which I first noticed? Everything was suggested; one thought a crocodile had taken him, and to sustain this argument it was said, by those who had seen him from the lower end of the bushes, that as he got into deeper water his head sank gradually down, till it disappeared in a deep pool nearly opposite to where they were standing, and that he struggled in the water, but did not appear to swim. This seemed probable, as, of course, if the animal kept at the bottom, his victim's head would gradually disappear as the water deepened. Others, again, said that an eddy had caught him, and that he had lost his presence of mind, and had not thought of swimming; and as to his sinking, that was accounted for by the fact of the hole in which he disappeared being (as it evidently was) a powerful whirlpool, which might have drawn him down into the mud. I leaned to the former of these opinions, though, certainly, the principal argument against it was that he never uttered a sound; while it was most probable that a man, feeling himself suddenly bitten, would call out if only from the shock. These melancholy thoughts and discussions occupied us for a time, as we prepared our resting-place on the western shore; but one of the people in gathering wood happening to light on a human skull reminded us that we were in the imme-

diate neighbourhood of our old *friends* of Rohabaita, the Barea. This little incident served to turn our thoughts into a more agreeable channel, for it led the guide into a series of interesting anecdotes relative to their former attacks on travellers in that immediate neighbourhood, and also on the convent of Devra Abbai, and some others in Waldabba. Two caravans had been waylaid during the past season on the hills just above us, and he judged that the vultures must have brought the skull thence. Thus for a time forgetting our sorrows, we were a little more cheerful. Having passed a hard day, and knowing that many such were before us, we tried to rest, but, the conversation ceasing, nothing was to be heard but

> "The jackal's cry—the distant moan
> Of the hyæna, fierce and lone;—
> And that eternal, saddening sound
> Of torrents in the glen beneath."

I doubt if any of us slept soundly; for my own part, I started up twice, once fancying that I heard the death-howl again, and once that poor Yakoub was calling me by name.

Among other disasters connected with the crossing of the Taccazy was the unaccountable disappearance of a talisman which I had worn round my neck during the whole of my stay in Abyssinia. The natives attributed all the misfortunes of the day to this loss, which must have occurred before our reaching the river, or while I was undressing, though we did not become aware of it till I was dressing on the other side. Now, many

clever men of my acquaintance take great interest in the revelations of clairvoyants, the magic crystal, and such-like mysteries; they may also have faith in charms, and perhaps my readers would like to know what mine was. I believe it was as good as any other. I myself own to having had much faith in its efficacy; I may truly say that I can date the commencement of all the troubles, illnesses, and other human miseries which have hitherto fallen to my share from the day it left me; for, up to that time, beyond the ordinary complaints of childhood and many a sound and well-deserved whipping at school, I had led a life of sunshine. The remainder of this volume will show that a few clouds immediately succeeded the heavy one I have just described. During the next three or four years passed in Africa I had a succession of all the worst tropical fevers, which nearly caused me to "settle" for ever and a day in their country; and since my return to England I have, in every sense of the word, experienced truly English weather, few and transient glimpses of sunshine, a heavy storm or two, and lots of nasty, muggy, bilious, drizzly days—and all this is doubtless attributable to the loss of my talisman. I hope my readers are most eager to be told of what this wonderful charm was composed. Its history was this. When I was unpacking some boxes and getting rid of my European clothes at Cairo, I chanced to light upon a small and very much withered bouquet wrapped up in a bit of paper, a date on which proved it to have been worn by me about the time of my first appearance in the glorious, manly, and

picturesque costume of a swallow-tailed dress-coat. It being of no use to any one as a gift, I kept it, had it neatly wrapped in a waxed cloth, and afterwards cased in leather by an Abyssinian saddler, so that it made a very respectable-looking amulet. I have been asked what it was: I always answered "A relic"—of a saint, no doubt. From speaking of it with respect, I at last got to reverence it myself, and to have great faith in its efficacy. Perhaps some of my mesmeric readers may be able to explain that a man's directing his ideas to any one particular object, for a length of time, may give that otherwise passive object some influence over him, and thus the efficacy of charms might be established. For my part, I really don't know anything about it, but I may as well mention the opinion that a Turkish friend of mine gave on the subject; he was a rough old soldier, and had seen a great deal of powder-smoke, but had never been scathed by lead or iron either in a general action or in a gin-shop quarrel. He told me that he wore a powerful charm against these metals. I asked him if he truly believed that he owed his good fortune to its protection? "Undoubtedly," he at first answered; "and, besides myself, I know many more who, wearing them, have passed unhurt through the fiercest battles." But after a while he added, "If you want to know my *real* opinion, between ourselves, I fancy that, of the many men who go to fight with bits of paper tied on their arms, a part get shot, and don't take the trouble to rise again and tell us the story, while the rest, returning unharmed, swear by the efficacy of their talisman."

Some of my readers may vote that I have (to use a schoolboy term) been attempting a "sell" on them in this matter; in truth, I fear that many who expected to hear of hyæna's hair, newt's blood, toad's fat, or other such ingredient of witchcraft, may have been disappointed, but still my withered roses had a charm to me, even besides that of superstition. I could not make up my mind to throw them away, for they formed the last link, as it were, the only memorial that connected me with the life I had been brought up to. They had a curious power of representing England and English customs to me in different lights according as was best for the state of mind in which I happened to be at the moment. At times, when, lost in the excitement of a savage life, and dazzled by the splendour of a tropical climate, I might have almost wished to forget that there was such a place as home, they would remind me of friends and scenes I had left behind, paint civilization in her brightest colours, and even so far "humbug" me as to persuade me that a drizzly November day was only a foil to set off the brightness of an English fireside. At other times, when I may have been a little desponding from feeling that I might never be able to leave Abyssinia, they would amuse me vastly, by showing up European manners and customs in another light, so as to console me with the thought "Well, I should like to go back again, because, after all, it is home, but certainly this is a great deal the better place of the two."—Europe in general, but perhaps England in particular, has customs which, to a stranger, or even to a native who, like myself, has the power of

closing an English mind's eye and opening a nigger one whenever he pleases, appear as wonderful and unaccountable as any that I have described or that could be found among the most barbarous nations in the world. When I say that in looking back to my recollections of home, and comparing them with what was passing around me at the time, I preferred the latter, it was because the two pictures I thus placed before my imagination (I suppose it was my nigger one) appeared to me, the one like the bold, rough sketch of a great master, the other like a similar sketch when worked up by an inferior artist, who, thinking to improve it, had resorted to every device of sponge, brush, handkerchief, thumb, sugar-candy, gum-water, body colour, and scratching, till he had made a picture, highly finished in regard to detail, but totally devoid of clearness, nature, and truth.

I must put a stop to this subject rather abruptly—civilization *versus* uncivilization is a dangerous question for me to enter upon: little gifted by nature, and more than half a savage by education, I might fall into conclusions which would not tend to raise me in the opinions of many of my readers. These last pages have served the purpose for which they were solely intended—to divert my mind from unpleasant recollections. So remembering that, having crossed the Taccazy, we are now out of Tigrè, and in the province of Waldabba, we will make a fresh start on our journey.