

DU CHAILLU BELLONI

THE COUNTRY OF THE
DWARFS

Paul Du Chaillu

The Country of the Dwarfs

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Paul B. Du Chaillu

The Country of the Dwarfs

TO

FLETCHER HARPER, Esq.

Dear Sir: – I dedicate this volume to you, not only as an acknowledgment of many kindnesses which I have received from you during the years in which you have been the publisher of my books, but also as a token of the personal affection and esteem of

Your friend,

Paul B. Du Chaillu.

North Cape, Norway, August, 1871.

CHAPTER I

HOW PAUL SET OUT FOR THE COUNTRY OF THE DWARFS, AND WHAT HE TOOK WITH HIM

In the month of July, 1863, if you had been in London, you might have seen in St. Catharine's Dock a schooner called the Mentor, a little vessel of less than one hundred tons' measurement, and if you had gone on board you would have encountered your old friend Paul Du Chaillu busily superintending the taking of the cargo, and getting all things in readiness for the voyage upon which he is now going to take you.

Captain Vardon, the commander of the vessel, was generally by his side, and I am sure you would have been happy to make his acquaintance, for he was a very pleasant man.

Every body was busy on board, either on deck or below deck, storing away the goods. Boxes upon boxes came alongside the Mentor from morning till evening. These contained my outfit and the equipment necessary for the expedition.

Paul Du Chaillu had an anxious look, and you need not wonder at it, for he was about to undertake a journey of explorations of about five years' duration, and had to think of many things. It was, indeed, no small undertaking. What an outfit it was! I will give you some idea of it.

Clothing for five years was to be provided; the very smallest article must not be forgotten, even to needles, thread, and scissors.

It would never do again to be left without shoes, as I was in Apingi Land, so I had seventy-two pairs of Balmoral lace-boots made specially for journeying in the great forest, with soles flexible enough to allow me to bend my feet while jumping from rock to rock, or from the base of one tree to another. Besides these lace-boots I had twenty-four pairs of shoes and twelve pairs of linen slippers. Twelve pairs of leggins were to protect my legs from thorns, briars, and the bite of snakes; so you see my feet and legs were to be well taken care of in that journey, and for my further comfort I laid in twelve dozen pairs of socks. I took so many because I do not know how to darn socks, and when a pair became full of holes they would have to be thrown away.

All my shirts were made of light-colored flannel; these were more healthy than linen shirts, and, besides economizing soap, it saved me from the necessity of getting under-garments, and consequently allotted me space which could be devoted to other articles.

With an eye to the great wear and tear of pantaloons, I had ordered six dozen pairs made of the strongest twisted blue drill that could be got. Instead of coats I ordered two dozen blouses, made of durable linen stuff, of a color not easily seen in the woods. The blouse was a very convenient garment, admitting of numerous pockets, in which I could keep many things while on the march. Every thing was made for wear and not for show, and to go through the thickest and most thorny jungle.

Several dozen pocket-handkerchiefs completed my wearing outfit. Besides their ordinary use, these were to be worn, generally wet, inside the three fine soft Panama hats I had provided to protect my head from the rays of a burning sun. No collars, no neck-ties were necessary.

Clothes must be washed, so I took with me one hundred pounds of the hardest Marseilles soap. That quantity was not much, but then I would probably be able some time to make my own soap with palm-oil.

Then came the drugs, and these gave me more embarrassment than any thing else. If it had been only to take medicines for myself, the matter would have been simple enough. A compact little medicine-chest, with an extra quantity of quinine, laudanum, and a few other remedies used in tropical

climates more frequently than in ours, would have sufficed; but I had to think of my followers and porters – a retinue that would sometimes number five and six hundred – and accordingly I purchased

- 75 ounce bottles of quinine.
- 10 gallons of castor-oil.
- 50 pounds of Epsom salts.
- 2 quarts of laudanum.

These were the medicines which would be the most needed; but, besides these, I had pretty nearly all the drugs to be found at the apothecary's.

Of arsenic I took one hundred pounds, to preserve the skins of animals and birds I expected to kill in my journeyings.

Most of these and my wearing apparel were packed in japanned tin boxes, which would be serviceable afterward for the preservation of my butterflies and stuffed birds. Tin boxes were safer than wooden ones; the white ants would not be able to pierce through them.

Though I did not set out to make war, I felt that I ought to be prepared for any emergency. Besides, I was to hunt, and I must have guns. After a great deal of thinking it over, I came to the conclusion that, for such a wild country, where I might get short of cartridges, the greater part of my guns should be muzzle-loaders, so I bought four splendid English muzzle-loaders, four long muzzle-loading rifles, two very short smooth-bore muzzle-loaders, and two very short muzzle-loading rifles.

Then I took a magnificent double-barrel breech-loading rifle which could throw steel-pointed bullets weighing more than two ounces. I had Dean and Adams's revolvers, magnificent arms that never got out of order, and several long, formidable hunting-knives.

These guns were for my own special use, and they were supplied with moulds for making bullets, etc., etc.

Besides these, I had ordered in Birmingham two hundred and fifty cheap guns for my body-guard and the native king, to whom I might desire to give one. Most of them were flint-locks, and of the pattern called the Tower.

I had great trouble in knowing what quantity of ammunition to take, for lead is heavy; but, then, what would a man do in a savage country without powder and bullets?

The great difficulty with rifle muzzle-loaders is, that when the charge has been driven home the bullets can not be easily withdrawn. So it is with the revolvers; and a great deal of ammunition would be lost on that account.

My ammunition consisted of 15,000 cartridges for my revolvers, in soldered tin boxes of fifties; 15,000 bullets for my guns and rifles, and lead for 20,000 more, for the practice of my men before starting into the desert; 1000 pounds of small shot of different sizes, for birds; 400 pounds of fine powder; 50,000 caps. I also took 200 10-pound barrels of coarse powder for my body-guard and to give away to my friends, or as presents.

So you see the warlike and hunting apparatus of the expedition was very heavy, but we were to depend in a great measure on our guns for food. Elephants, antelopes, hippopotami, gazelles, crocodiles, and monkeys would be our chief diet. Then came the scientific instruments:

- 4 strong, splendid hunting-case watches, by Brock, London.
- 1 watch made by Frodsham, London.
- 48 spare watch-keys and 24 spare glasses.
- 3 sextants, 8, 6, and 4 inches radius.
- 1 binocular yachting-glass.
- 1 telescope.
- 1 universal sun-dial (a magnificent instrument).
- 1 aneroid.
- 2 compasses, prismatic, with stand, shades, and reflector three inches in diameter, to take the bearings of land, etc., etc.

- 2 pocket compasses.
- 1 set drawing instruments (German silver).
- 2 dozen drawing-pens.
- 2 artificial horizons, folding roof, improved iron trough, and bottles containing quicksilver, in sling case.
- 1 hypsometrical apparatus.
- 2 bull's-eye lanterns, copper boiler, three reservoirs for spirits, oil, or candles.
- 3 thermometers for measuring heights and boiling water.
- 2 thermometers for the sun (to know its power).
- 2 thermometers graduated Fahrenheit and Centigrade.
- 1 thermometer graduated Centigrade and Reaumur.
- 1 powerful electro-magnetic machine, with 90 feet of conducting wire or cord.
- 2 large magnifying-glasses.
- 7 pounds of mercury, in a bottle, as a reserve supply.
- Parallel rule (German silver).
- Protractor, circular, with compass rectifier, in a mahogany box.
- 3 rain-gauges and spare glasses, to tell the amount of rain falling at a given time.
- Scale, 18 inches, metal, graduated to inches, and sub-divided to tenths and hundredths, in a box.
- Tape, 100 feet, to measure trees.
- 75 sheets of skeleton maps, ruled in squares, to mark out in the rough my daily route as determined by compass.
- 4 Nautical Almanacs, 1863, '4, '5, '6, to be used in my astronomical observations; and several other scientific books.
- 12 blank books for keeping my daily journal.
- 10 memorandum-books.
- 10 quires of paper.
- Ink, pens, pencils, slates.

For illumination I provided 100 pounds of wax candles, 10 gallons of spirits (alcohol) for lamps, thermometers, etc., etc.; 12 gross of matches in boxes, each dozen boxes inclosed in a separate soldered tin box. Though I had fire-steel and flint, the matches could light a fire much quicker, and they were "big things" with the natives.

So you see I had a complete set of instruments, and in sufficient number, so that in case of accident I could replace the injured one; and accidents I knew were sure to happen.

If I did not explain to you why I took five watches, I am sure you would say that I was foolish to spend so much money in watches. Then let me tell you that I bought so many because I was afraid that if I took only one or two, they might stop running, and in this event it would have been impossible for me to know my longitude, that is to say, how far east or west I might be, and to ascertain the day and month, should illness have caused me to forget the calendar. No watch can be safely depended upon to run for five years in such a climate without cleaning. But as four of them had been made specially for the journey, I felt assured that at least one or two out of the five would run till my return.

But we have not yet done with my equipment. There were 18 boxes containing photographic apparatus, with tent, and chemicals for 10,000 photographs. The transportation of these alone would require twenty men.

All that I have enumerated to you constituted but a small proportion of the things that came on board, and were for my special use, with the exception of the 250 common guns and a great part of the ammunition.

There are yet to be mentioned the presents for my old friends, who had been so kind to me in my former journeys, and whom I hoped to see again. These were the chiefs whose hospitality I had

enjoyed, and my dear hunters Aboko, Fasiko, Niamkala, Malaouen, Querlaouen, Gambo, dear old Quengueza, Ranpano, Rikimongani, and Obindji, the Bakalai chief. Presents, too, were indispensable for the people who were to take me from tribe to tribe, and the right of way I knew would often have to be bought. So more than two months had been spent by me in the London clothing, hardware, and dry-goods establishments, finding what I wanted.

I bought more than 5000 pounds of beads of different sizes and colors, several hundred pieces of cotton goods, some pieces of silks, coats, waistcoats, shirts, 2000 *red caps*, a few umbrellas, files, knives, bells, fire-steels, flints, looking-glasses, forks, spoons, some *stove-pipe* hats for the kings near the sea-shore, straw hats, etc., etc.

Then, to impress the wild people with what I could do, I bought several large Geneva musical boxes, one powerful electrical battery, several magnets, and six ship clocks, etc., etc.

The abundant results of the sale of my "Adventures in Equatorial Africa," and the proceeds arising from the disposal of my gorillas, and my collection of beasts, birds, insects, and shells, alone enabled me to undertake this new expedition, for not one dollar has ever been given by any scientific society to help me in any of my travels or explorations; but I was very happy in expending a part of my means in the interest of science and for the enlargement of our knowledge of unknown countries. I only wish now I could have done more, but really I think that I did the best I could.

Years had passed away since I had gone first to Africa, my parents were both dead, I was alone in the world and the world was before me, and I thought I could do nothing better than make another exploration.

I had made up my mind, without confiding my purpose to any one, to cross the continent of Africa near the equator, from the west to the head waters of the Nile, and to set out from the Commi country. I knew my old negro friends would help me. That was the reason my outfit was on so large a scale.

The only thing that worried me before my departure was our civil war, but then I thought it was soon to end.

CHAPTER II

ON THE AFRICAN COAST. – MEETING WITH OLD FRIENDS. – CHANGES IN FOUR YEARS. – THE CAPTAIN'S MISGIVINGS

On the 5th of August we sailed from London. I will not weary you with a narrative of the voyage. The days passed pleasantly on board the Mentor. By the end of the month of August we were not far from the Tropic of Cancer. September glided away calmly, and on the 7th of October Captain Vardon said that the following day we should come in sight of land.

Accordingly, the next morning I heard from the main-top the cry of "Land! land!" Two hours afterward from the deck I could discern the low lands of the Commi country. Nearer and nearer the coast we came, until we could see the white surf breaking with terrific force on the shore, and hear the booming sound of the angry waves as they dashed against the breakers. The country was so monotonous in its outlines that we could not make out exactly where we were; we only knew that we were south of Cape Lopez, and not very far from it. I thought it strange that I could not recognize the mouth of the Fernand Vaz or Commi River.

No canoes could ride through the surf, so no natives could come on board. In the evening we stood off the land and shortened sail, and afterward we cast anchor.

The next morning we sailed again in a southerly direction, and at last we saw a canoe pass through the breakers; it came alongside, and the negroes in it shouted in English, "Put down the anchor! Plenty of ivory, plenty of every thing; load the ship in a fortnight."

We had passed the Fernand Vaz, having sailed too far south. The mouth of the river itself is very difficult to discover. Perhaps you may recollect my having formerly described it as discernible only by the white surf combing over its bar, by large flocks of fish-eating birds hovering in the air above it, and by a long, white sandy point forming the extremity of the land on the left bank.¹

As we approached the river, two canoes left the shore and made for the vessel. In the first, as it neared us, I recognized my friend Adjouatonga, a chief belonging to the clan Adjiéna, whose villages occupied the mouth of the river. He climbed up the vessel's side, and went to shake hands with the captain, and then advanced toward me to do the same. I had not said a word, but upon my raising my hat, which had been pulled down so as partly to conceal my face, and turning round upon him, he stepped back in astonishment, and, recognizing me at once, cried out in his own language, "Are you Chally, or his spirit? Have you come from the dead? for we have heard you were dead. Tell me quickly, for I do not know whether I am to believe my own eyes. Perhaps I am getting a kendé" (an idiot, a fool). And I said, "Adjouatonga, I am Chally, your friend!" The good fellow embraced me in a transport of joy, but he hugged me so tight and so long that I wished his friendship had been less enthusiastic. Four years had nearly gone by since I had left the Commi country.

As the second canoe came nearer, I ordered Adjouatonga not to say a word. My heart leaped for joy, for in it were my own people from the dear, good old African Washington of mine. Sholomba, the nephew of King Ranpano, was there, and my boy Macondai; all my former canoe-men, Kombé, Ratenou, Oshimbo, were in that canoe. I longed for them to come on board. I could hardly restrain myself; but I felt that I must appear like as if I did not know them, and see whether they would recognize me.

In a moment they were on deck, and a wild shout of joy came from them, "Our white man has come back! Chally! Chally!" and they all rushed toward me. Good fellows! in their savage natures

¹ Explorations in Equatorial Africa.

they loved me, and they remembered the friend who had never wronged them. I was seized and almost pulled to pieces, for they all wanted to hug me at the same time. Captain Vardon looked with perfect amazement at the scene of greeting. They seemed to be crazy with joy to see me again.

Then followed a long and confused account of what had taken place since my departure, all talking at the same time.

When we had come back to our senses, the next subject to be considered was how I was to get ashore. Of course I wished to go by the mouth of the river, but Sholomba assured me it could not be done. The mouth of the Fernand Vaz had changed much for the worse, and it would be less dangerous to run a canoe through the surf to the beach than to attempt to cross the bar of the river. It was now the beginning of the rainy season, when the winds are less violent than in the dry season, but the surf had not subsided from the agitation of the heavy south winds of the dry season.

The anchor was cast, and I left the Mentor in Adjouatonga's canoe, which was a better one than the other.

All was excitement in the canoe, and the men sang. Adjouatonga, looking more and more anxious as we approached the rollers, rested outside for a while, and then, at the proper moment, skillfully directed the frail canoe over the crest of a huge wave, which bore us with lightning speed to the beach, where I was caught up by the natives that were waiting for us, and carried safely to dry land. Tremendous huzzas were given.

Once more I stood on African soil.

The people recognized me, and I was hurried along, amidst a crowd of several hundred savages, all dancing and shouting with frantic joy, across the sandy tongue of land to the banks of the Commi, my own Commi River, where canoes were waiting to take us to Washington and to old King Ranpano.

Time had wrought great changes in the land of my former explorations. The mouth of the river had altered so much that I could hardly recognize it. The long, sandy, reed-covered pits, which projected three miles from the southern point of the river's mouth, and which had been the scene of many hunting adventures with ducks, cranes, and sea-gulls, had disappeared, and the sea had washed the sand away, and taken the greater part of it to the northern side of the village of Elinde, whose chief, Sangala, had given me so much trouble in former times. The spot where Sangala's village had stood had become untenanted, and the people had removed. Many a dear little island, where I used to hide to shoot birds, had also been submerged or washed away, and I no longer saw the flocks of sea-fowl which formerly frequented the locality.

I felt sad indeed; a pang of sorrow shot through me. It was like a dream; the scene of my former hunting had vanished, and nothing but the record of what I had written about the land was left. I can not express to you the lonely feeling that came over me. Though every thing was changed, the former picture of the landscape was before me. I remembered every island, every little outlet, the herd of hippopotami, the "Caroline" inside the bar quietly at anchor.

Oh, I would have given any thing if I could have seen the country as it was when I left it! I had been so happy, I spent so many pleasant days there, I had so loved to roam on that sandy point, and to lie on its sand! Now it was nothing but a dream; it had been swept away.

The canoes in the river being ready, I embarked in one, followed by all the others, the people singing, "Our ntangani (white man) has come back. Oh, how we love our white man! Oh, how our white man loves us! for he has come back to us. Yes, we never stole from our white man; our white man remembers that, and he comes back to us, for he is not afraid of us."

Paddling up the stream, many, many sights I recognized; many mangrove-trees I remembered; the old banks of the river were familiar to me. I looked eagerly at every thing around.

Halloo! what do I see yonder? a herd of hippopotami motionless in the water, and looking for all the world like old logs stuck in the mud. Familiar species of cranes stalked about here and there, the pelican swam majestically, the kingfishers were watching for their prey, with white cranes and ducks not far from them.

Thus we glided along up the river. My heart was full; I did not speak a word. Soon we came in front of my old settlement of Washington, of which I gave you a picture in my Apingi Kingdom.

Oh! what do I see? Nothing but ruins! The houses had all tumbled down; a few bamboos and rotting poles alone remained to show me where my big house stood. The four trees between which my house had been built were still there; the gum copal tree was in front. The little village for my men was not to be seen; desolation had taken possession of the place. One single house was still standing. The men stopped their singing; their faces became sad. A feeling that some misfortune had happened seized me.

I got up and shouted, looking the men steadily in the face, "Where is Rikimongani, my friend, he whom I intrusted with the settlement of Washington?" "Dead, dead," said they. "The people were jealous that you loved him so well, and they did not want him to see you again, and they bewitched him; he fell ill, and died."

"Rikimongani dead!" I exclaimed. I took off my hat as we passed the place, and said, "Oh, how sorry I am, Rikimongani! What shall I do with the fine old coat I have for you? what shall I do with the nice cane and the fine hat I have brought for you? Oh, dear Rikimongani, I have many presents for you. Rikimongani, did you know how much I loved you?"

"See," shouted the men, "how much he loved Rikimongani!"

"Oh yes," said the canoe-men, "he always talked of you, and said he was sure you would come back, though we all said that you would not, and that you would forget us. Rikimongani used to say, 'One day we shall see a white sail, and Chally will be on board, and he will land and come to see us again.' In the evenings he would talk of you to us boys."

Tears filled my eyes. Then Sholomba whispered to me, "When the wizards who were accused of having bewitched Rikimongani were about to drink the mboundou, they said, 'Chally has killed Rikimongani, for he will never come back here, and he loves Rikimongani so much that he has killed him, so that he might have his spirit always with him.' And," said Sholomba, "many believed them, but many did not."

"We must not land here," said Sholomba. "Chally, you must never build here; the people are afraid of the place; nobody will dare to come here, for people die always in this place. Several times villages had been built, and the people had to leave this spot. Witchcraft is here."

I felt that I had come back to a wild life, full of superstitions and legends.

We paddled till we came two miles above my place of Washington, which had brought back so many reminiscences to me. Though I would have liked to build again there, I could not think of it on account of the superstitious dread of the natives for the spot.

When we stopped, Sholomba and Djombouai had reached their little village. Ranpano was away from home, on the Ogobai River. So I resolved to build a new settlement close to their village.

Messengers were sent to King Ranpano to tell him to come, and the news spread over the country that Chally had come back, and the people from all the villages and the country round came trooping by land and water to see their old friend, and to hear about the stores of good things he had brought with him. They came pouring in day after day, camping in the woods, on the prairie, every where. They would endure hunger rather than go home. Many, many an old face I saw; many a kind-hearted woman came and told me how glad she was to see me; many boys and girls who had grown up said they wanted to work for me; many people brought me presents of food.

How pleased I was! Oh yes, I had tried to do right with these savages, and they knew it, and they loved me for it. I knew that not one of them thought unkindly of me.

The day after my landing I dispatched Sholomba with a canoe filled with paddlers up the river. Those among you who have followed me in my former adventures must guess where I sent that canoe.

To the village of King Quengueza, that dear old chief. I wanted to see his face. I had brought great numbers of presents for him, to show him that in the white man's country I had thought of him.

I had brought presents for many of his people, his nephews, sons, and nieces. His old faithful slaves were not forgotten – good old Etia among them; and his head slave Mombon.

So one canoe had gone for friend Ranpano, and another for good old Quengueza.

Canoes strong enough to go through the surf were coming from all the villages. Huts were given to me in which to store my goods, and now we had reached the point of bringing them ashore.

It was necessary for me to go on board the Mentor, and arrange the mode of disembarkation of my extensive outfit and stock of goods. As the mouth of the river had become unsafe on account of the breaking-up of the sandy spit, and was now an uninterrupted line of breakers, we resolved to land every thing on the beach through the surf, and then carry them across to the river, and put them in other canoes, which were to carry them to my new settlement.

So on the 14th I went to the schooner, and slept on board that night. Captain Vardon was somewhat anxious; he had never been on this wild and unfrequented part of the coast, so far from any civilized settlements, and when he saw me he was delighted, and said that he began to think that the natives had murdered me. He had kept an armed guard on the watch all the time, for, said he, such a country looked exactly like one where the natives could pounce upon the unsuspecting vessel, murder the crew, and rob the ship. I assured him that there was no danger; that I could do what I wished with the Commi people, as he would be able to see for himself; and that, though many of the boxes would have to be opened, and the goods deposited loose in the canoes, not a single thing would be stolen.

Knowing the negroes of the Coast (for he had been a trader), he seemed somewhat incredulous at my statement.

CHAPTER III

LANDING GOODS. – AMONG THE BREAKERS. – KING RANPANO. – LOSS OF INSTRUMENTS. – KING QUENGUEZA. – A PALAVER. – CHANGING NAMES

The next morning, at daybreak, three canoes came alongside to take off the cargo. The men brought the news that King Ranpano had arrived, and was on the beach.

My most precious things were lowered into the canoes, and when every thing was ready, the captain concluded to go ashore with me.

The captain and I got into the canoe containing all my scientific instruments, medicines, some of my best guns, my watch chronometers, five Geneva musical boxes, etc., etc. Before we left the captain ordered the mate to keep a sharp lookout, and fasten to the anchors seventy fathoms of chain, for the sea was heavy. The crew came to say good-by to me, and as our canoes left the side of the Mentor they gave three cheers for me. Then, as fast as our paddles could propel us, we made for the beach.

As we approached the breakers, the faces of the canoe-men looked anxious, for the swells were heavy, and I could hear the roar of the surf. Nearer and nearer we came. The two other canoes were ahead of us.

The men were watching the swells, resting on their paddles. At last we hear their cheers; they plunge their paddles into the water, and onward they go toward the shore, rolling on the top of a heavy, long swell.

My men thought we were too late, as we were behind, and had better wait for the next lull. In the mean time we watched the two canoes; they seemed for a while to be buried in the foaming billows. "Surely," I said to Captain Vardon, "those canoes will never reach the shore safely."

"I don't believe they will," was his answer.

"We had reached a point just outside the breakers, where we watch; the two canoes appear again; they have not capsized; the men are covered with spray; they are paddling as hard as they can; they are over the breakers; they land safely; the people on the shore seize the canoes, and bring them up the beach.

Now our time has come, and the men are watching anxiously. I have the finest canoe-men of the Commi tribe in my canoe. Oshimbo holds the steering-paddle. Kombé, Ratenou, Ondonga, Gonwe, Sholomba, and the others, are not only splendid paddlers, but they all swim like fish – a very important thing for me if we capsize. My sixteen men are resting on their paddles; they are all looking outside, and watching the heavy rollers as they come in. Generally six of these come, and then there is a kind of a lull. "Get ready! paddle hard!" shouted Oshimbo. The men gave a terrific Commi hurra, and down went their paddles, and with heavy strokes we got on what we thought a gentle swell. We had hardly got on it when the swell became higher and higher, carrying us almost with lightning speed; then it began to crest itself; we were caught, and finally were dashed upon a white foaming wave with fearful force. "Be careful!" shouted Oshimbo. "Have your eyes upon our white man!"

Though we did not upset, our canoe was partly filled with water, and the rush of the wave had prevented Oshimbo's paddle from acting as a rudder, and the canoe was now lying broadside at the mercy of the next wave that should come.

"Hurry!" shouted Oshimbo to the men; "let us bring back the canoe's head on to the waves!" and the men put forth all their might to rescue us from our perilous position. Just as we had succeeded in bringing the canoe round, a second immense roller, coming from far out at sea, and mounting

higher and higher as it approached, threatened our destruction. We were in fearful suspense. Perhaps we will be able to ride upon it; perhaps it will break ahead of us. It was a terrific one. My men cried again with one voice, "Let us look out for our white man!"

These words were hardly uttered when the huge wave broke over the stern of our canoe with appalling force, instantly upsetting it and hurling us into the sea, where we were deeply submerged in the spray.

I do not know how I ever got back on the surface of the water, but when I did I was some forty feet from the canoe, and all the men were scattered far and wide.

I was almost stunned. Breaker upon breaker succeeded each other with awful rapidity, sending us rolling about under them, and giving us hardly time to breathe. The sea all round became a mass of foaming billows. By this time all my faithful negroes were around me, shouting to each other, "To our ntangani – our ntangani (white man)!" It was indeed high time, for I felt myself sinking. A minute more, and I would have sunk helpless to the bottom of the sea, never to rise again. The Commi swam round me and held me up, till another wave would scatter us again, and then they came back to my succor.

In spite of all their efforts, I became weaker and weaker. They had succeeded in ridding me of the greater part of my clothing, but, notwithstanding this relief, my strength was fast failing me, and I had drunk large quantities of salt water.

I cried, "Where is the captain? Go for him!" My cry was just in time, for he was in his last struggle for life. Once we had got hold of the canoe, but the waves had made us loose our grip. Loud shouts came from the shore; the people were almost frantic. Canoe after canoe was launched, but only to be swamped in the breakers the next instant.

At length the tumult of the waves subsided; there came a lull, and the rising tide had driven us toward the beach. We were not far from it, indeed, and now we rested a little, holding fast to our capsized canoe.

At last a canoe succeeded in leaving the shore, and came to our rescue. As it reached us the crew jumped into the sea to give us their places, and, in order not to load it too heavily, they swam alongside, holding fast to it to keep it steady.

As we neared the shore, the natives did not wait for me to land, but ran into the water, and, seizing me, carried me off in their arms, in the midst of deafening cries and cheers, the women wringing their hands and shouting, "The sea wanted *to eat* our white man; the sea wanted *to eat* our white man."

The people led me into a thicket of trees, where a bright fire was lighted, and whom should I see but King Ranpano seated on the ground, his little idol before him, his eyes shining with excitement, and his body trembling all over. I drew myself up, trying to look haughty and displeased.

"Ranpano," I said, "if any one had told me that you did not care for me, I would not have believed them. What!" said I, "every one was on the shore to see what they could do to save us from drowning; even your wife, the queen, was there, and went into the sea to catch me as we landed, and I might have died and been drowned for all that you cared. You were cold, and you sat by the fire."

"Oh," said Ranpano, "my white man die in the water? Never, while I am alive! How could it be? how could it be? Oh no, Chally, you could not be drowned – you could not, my white man; my Chally will never die in our country. I have a fetich, and as long as I wear it you can not be drowned. I was talking to my idol; I was invoking before her the spirit of my father to protect you in the sea. When the waves were around you, I begged the idol to send the sharks away from you. Oh, Chally, I would not leave the idol for fear you might perish. Oh!" exclaimed Ranpano, with a stentorian voice, "there are people already jealous of me and of my village. Some village has sent an aniemba to upset the canoe."

The wildest excitement prevailed around me. I was partly stunned, and I had drunk a great deal of salt water. Poor Captain Vardon had a narrow escape, and, as he said, he was sinking when

my boys – my good boys – clinched him. And once more I thanked silently the great God that had watched so mercifully over me.

After a while I realized the severe blow I had received when the great loss I had sustained presented itself to my mind. Scientific instruments, watch chronometers, medicines, guns, musical instruments, etc., etc., had gone to the bottom of the sea.

"Oh dear," said I to myself, "I must remain here on this barren and lonely coast, and wait for a vessel to come back and bring me new scientific instruments, for without them I can not go across the continent toward the Nile. I wish to make a good map of the country, to take accurate astronomical observations, to determine the height of the mountains, and to be able to ascertain at any time the day and the month if I should forget their regular succession in the calendar, and, without my instruments, all this will be impossible."

I can not tell you how sorry I felt. That evening I felt utterly heart-broken, and I could have cried. "But," said I to myself, "to bear my misfortune with fortitude is true manhood;" and, though it was hard to believe it, I knew that all that had happened was for the best.

Captain Vardon felt a sincere sympathy with me. The poor man was himself an object of commiseration, for he was so exhausted and had drunk so much water that he was quite ill.

My mind was made up, however, that very day as to what I should do. I must manage to have a letter reach the island of Fernando Po, and then that letter would be forwarded to London. That letter will be for Messrs. Baring Brothers, and I will ask them to send me a vessel with all I need.

The next night, as I lay on my hard bed pondering my wondrous escape from the deep sea, I could not help thinking bitterly of the heavy loss I had sustained. It was not so much for the large sum of money that had been sacrificed, but for the great waste of time this catastrophe had entailed upon me.

I could not sleep; these thoughts kept me awake. I turned from side to side in the hope that an easier position would put me to sleep, but it was of no avail, when suddenly I heard the sound of the natives' bugles on the river. The people were blowing their bugles made of antelopes' horns, and then I heard the songs of a multitude of paddlers. The sound became more and more distinct as the canoes neared my cabin. Then I could hear distinctly, "Quengueza, our king, comes to see his great friend Chally – Chally, who has returned from the white man's country."

Soon after the singing stopped, and I knew that they had landed.

All my gloomy fancies were soon forgotten, and I got up and dressed myself as quickly as possible. As I opened my door, whom should I see, as quiet as a statue in front of my hut, but King Quengueza, the venerable chief. He opened his arms to receive me, and we hugged each other without saying a word. The great and powerful African chief, the dread of the surrounding tribes and clans, the great warrior, held me in his arms, and after a while he said, "Chally, I would have staid before your door all night if I had not seen you. I could not go to sleep without embracing you, for you do not know how much I love you. You do not know how many times I have thought of you, and many, many times I have said to my people, 'We shall not see Chally again.' And first, when Sholomba told me you had come, and had sent for me, I said, 'Sholomba, this is a lie; Chally has not come. Four rainy seasons and four dry seasons have passed away, and if he had intended coming he would have been here long ago. No, Sholomba, why do you come and make fun of me? It is a lie; Chally has not come – Chally has not come, and he will not come any more to the country of the black man.'"

"Here I am," I said, "friend Quengueza; your friend Chally is before you. He has thought of you many and many a time in the white man's country; he has not forgotten you;" and I whispered in his ears, "He has brought you a great many fine things which no black man has seen before, and which no black man will have but yourself."

Then the old chief ordered his attendants to retire, and when he had entered my little hut I lighted a torch, and he looked at me and I looked at him without our saying a word. Then I seated

myself on the edge of my bed, and the king seated himself on the little stool close to me, and filled his pipe with native Ashira tobacco, and we had a long talk.

I said, "Quengueza, I have come. Since I saw you a great many things have happened. I have been in different countries of the white man. Many know you, many love you, for I have told the white man what great friends we were – how much we loved each other. I have told them how kind you were to your friend Chally; that every thing he wanted you gave to him, and that not one of your people ever took any thing from Chally – if he had he would have had his head cut off or been sold into slavery. Many white men and white women, boys and girls, know you, and I have presents from them for you, which you shall see in a few days. I have told them what we did together, how we went into the woods together, and how we cut that big ebony-tree" – here I stopped a while, and presently said, "how I hope to go farther inland than I have ever been, and will come back again by the sea."

Then I remained silent, and the old chief rose up, the shadow of his stately form falling behind him. For a few moments he did not utter a word, and then he said,

"Chally, my town is yours; my forests, my slaves are yours; all the girls and women of my village are yours; I will have no will of my own when you are with me. You shall be the chief, and whatever you say shall be obeyed. You shall never know hunger as long as there is a plantain-tree on our plantation, or a wild animal in the forests. And, Chally, when you shall say 'I must go – go far away, where nobody has been,' I will let you go; I will help you to go, though my heart will be sad when you depart."

I found Quengueza still in mourning for his brother, whom he had succeeded, and that he had taken his brother's name, "Oganda," which is the name taken by every chief of the Abouya clan. What a queer custom they have! The law of inheritance there is from brother to brother, and Quengueza's name had been Ratenou Kombé Quengueza, and now came the last, which he was to carry to his grave, Oganda.

I said, "Friend Quengueza, it will be hard for me to call you Oganda, for the name by which I have learned to love you is Quengueza."

"Never mind, Chally, call me Quengueza," said he; and, as he left my hut, he implored me once more in a whisper not to tell any one that I had brought him presents, "for," said he, "if the people knew that you had brought me many fine things, they would bewitch me, and I should die."

I saw that poor Quengueza was as superstitious as ever.

The old chief then went to the hut that had been prepared for him during his visit to me. By this time it was four o'clock in the morning, and the cock in the village had already begun to crow when I lay down to sleep.

CHAPTER IV

HONEST AFRICANS. – DISTRIBUTING PRESENTS. – QUENGUEZA'S DIPLOMACY. – ANOTHER PALAVER. – A NEW SETTLEMENT. – RABOLO'S MONDA. – RANPANO'S SUPERSTITION

The day after the arrival of Quengueza, word was sent to me by the canoe-men on the shore that the surf was quiet, and that canoes could go to sea and return in perfect safety.

During the day seven large canoes were carried over the narrow tongue of land to the beach, and twenty-one remained on the river-side to take to my new settlement the goods that would be landed.

It was important to expedite as much as possible the landing of the goods, for this would only be safe for a few days, till the change of the moon.

The next morning, at daylight, seven canoes left for the vessel, and each canoe made that day three trips, so that twenty-one canoe-loads of goods were landed and carried across to the canoes on the river. Then we got ready to go home, but not before hauling high up on the beach our seven sea-canoes.

After four days' hard work, seventy canoe-loads had been landed, and the cargo was all ashore. I breathed freely once more; not a load had been swamped. We had just finished when the breakers became dangerous again, and in a day or two more it would have been impossible to go through them.

Not an article was missing. Captain Vardon was amazed. I said to him, "Did I not tell you that my Commi men would not steal?"

You would have laughed to see the miscellaneous articles which formed part of the cargo. Many of them were specially manufactured for the African market, and the heavy goods were to be given to Quengueza, Ranpano, Olenga-Yombi, Obindji, and the chiefs living on the banks of the Rembo and Ovenga rivers.

The great trouble was to put all the goods under shelter. They had to be stored in several huts. There were no locks on the doors, but I was not afraid of the people, and my confidence was justified, for not an article was stolen. Captain Vardon wondered at it; he had been a trader for a good many years on the Coast, and said it was marvelous. So it was; there is no city in any Christian country where these thousands of dollars' worth of goods could be as safe. I loved the Commi, and the Commi loved me.

After every thing had been housed, I thought it was time to make a distribution of the presents I intended for my friends. Quengueza's presents will give you a fair idea of the articles I had brought into the country.

So one afternoon I went for friend Quengueza when every body was taking their afternoon nap. He followed me, accompanied by several of his great men, nephews, and wives; for a great king like Quengueza could not walk alone; he must have a retinue, or escort. Quengueza was very fond of this sort of thing, but that day he did not like it a bit; he did not want his people to see what I was going to give him, but he did not dare to send them away, so he whispered into my ear, "Chally, send them away when you come to your house, for I do not want any body inside."

So I dismissed Quengueza's people, and, after Quengueza and I had entered the hut, he closed the door himself, to make sure, and peeped through the crevices to see that nobody was trying to look in. Then he seated himself and awaited developments.

I opened a chest filled with presents for him. The first thing I displayed before his wide-open eyes was a huge long coat, similar to those worn by the London beadles. This coat had been made specially for his majesty, and to fit his tall figure, for Quengueza was over six feet high. It was of the

most glaring colors – blue, with yellow fringe, and lined with red. There was also a splendid plush waistcoat, with big brass buttons. His coat fell to his feet. I gave him no pantaloons, for Quengueza never liked to wear them.

After Quengueza's admiring eyes had looked with amazement on his splendid coat and bright yellow waistcoat, he must try them on; but, before doing so, he went again to see that no one was peeping in. I wondered why his majesty, who was a perfect despot, was so much afraid.

Having put on his robe or morning-gown, I gave him an enormous drum-major's cane, with a tremendous gilded head, to be used as a staff. He stiffened himself at the sight, and asked for a looking-glass, in which he regarded himself with an air of supreme satisfaction. Then I took out of my trunk my opera hat, which of course was flat when shut up, and gave it a slight punch, when the springs immediately threw it out into the shape of a splendid *stove-pipe hat*, to the utter astonishment and bewilderment of King Quengueza. Then I put the hat on his head, and his majesty walked to and fro, drawing himself to his full height. After some minutes he took off his imperial costume, putting the clothes back in the chest where they came from, and proceeded to inspect the other presents, among which were

- 6 pieces of silk, of different colors.
- 100 pieces of calico prints.
- 6 silver spoons, knives, and forks.
- 1 silver goblet.
- 1 magnificent red, blue, and yellow silk umbrella.
- Among the larger articles were
- 1 common brass kettle.
- 100 iron bars, 6 feet long, 1-3/4 wide.
- 50 large copper plates 24 inches in diameter.
- 50 small brass kettles.
- 50 iron pots.
- 50 guns.
- 50 kegs of powder.
- 25 wash-basins.
- 12 dozen plates.
- 6 dozen glasses.
- 300 pounds of beads, of different colors and sizes.
- 50 pine chests.
- 200 pairs of ear-rings for his wives.
- Several chests containing trinkets, mirrors, files, forks, knives, etc.
- A chest filled with nice presents sent to him by some of my friends.

The chests were his delight, for the wealth of a king here is composed chiefly of chests, which, of course, are supposed to be filled with goods.

King Quengueza never thought that his friend Chally would have remembered him so profitably.

After showing him all these things, I made him a speech, and said, in a low tone, "Quengueza, Chally has a heart (*ore'ma*); he has a heart that loves you. When he left you the last time he was poor, and had nothing to give you, but you loved him the same as if he had possessed a thousand chests filled with goods. Now he is rich, and has just come back from the white man's country, and he brings you all these fine presents, for Chally loves you;" and when I said "loves you" I looked at him steadily in the face. The sight of all this wealth had almost dumbfounded the old man, and for a while he could not speak. Finally he said,

"Do you love me, Chally? If you do, do not tell the people what you have given me, or they will bewitch me to have my property."

The fear of witchcraft was a great defect in the character of poor Quengueza. He was always in dread of being bewitched, and consequently of dying.

Then he knelt down and clasped my feet with his hands, and, with his face distorted by fear, begged me again not to tell any body in the country what I had given him. This taking hold of a man's feet is the most imploring way of asking a favor; it was the first time in his life that Quengueza, the great chief of the Abouya clan, had done such a thing. I promised him, of course, never to tell any thing to his people.

After a while he went away, and his subjects crowded round him, expecting fully to hear what fine things his friend Chally had brought him, when I heard him shout, with the loudest voice he could summon,

"My friend Chally knows nothing but talk, and has brought me nothing." Coming toward me, he repeated the statement just as loudly, and looked at me at the same time with an imploring sort of a look, as if to say, "Do not say any thing." But Quengueza's people knew me better; they knew very well that Chally, the great friend of Quengueza, would not come back from the white man's country without bringing him something, and they were smiling all the while, for they were well acquainted with the ways of their beloved old chief, who was a miser, and never wanted his people to know what he possessed. I kept his presents till his departure.

I gave presents also to good old Ranpano, to the chiefs that had come to see me, to their wives, and to my old friends, and then the people returned to their different villages. Quengueza's people were busy every day collecting the long bamboo-like branches of palm-trees for my new settlement, which they were to build for me.

Before the departure of the chiefs, I assembled them, and we held a grand palaver, at which they agreed that the Mentor should not leave their country until they had laden her with their products – woods, India-rubber, ivory, wax, etc.

The night Quengueza took leave his confidential slaves were busy taking his presents from my hut to the large canoes they had with them, which having been safely accomplished, they departed before daylight. Quengueza threatened with death any one of his men who should say a word of what had passed.

Then, for the first time since my arrival, it looked as if I was going to have a quiet time. I was glad of it, for I had been ill with fever, and wanted rest and quiet in order to get well. Old Ranpano would stay for hours by my bedside, hardly ever uttering a word, but I could see by his face that the old man felt anxiety on my account. He would say sometimes, "Chally, Chally, you must not be ill; none of my people want to see you ill. I love you; we all love you;" and when he went away he muttered words which no doubt were invocations to spirits, for Ranpano, like the rest of his people, was very superstitious.

The superstition of the natives being so great about the site of my old settlement of Washington, I found it was impossible to build there again. Not far from it there was a nice spot, just on the bank of the river, which I liked very much; but at that spot there was a little Commi village, whose chief was called Rabolo. The only thing to be done was to buy Rabolo out, and I succeeded in purchasing the whole village for several guns, some kegs of powder, a brass kettle, a few brass rings and iron bars, and two or three pieces of cloth. I allowed the people to take the houses away with them, and I set to work immediately to build my new settlement.

Quengueza's people went at it vigorously, and, with the help of Ranpano's people, we began building in earnest, Captain Vardon, myself, and a negro being the carpenters. The doors and windows we made with the bottoms of large canoes.

The smaller buildings were soon finished, and the people were hard at work on my large dwelling-house; but when we came to the veranda, and the posts had to be put in the ground, my men were suddenly seized with fear.

There was in the ground a formidable *monda*, or fetich, which my friend Rabolo had buried in his village before I purchased it, and which happened to be exactly upon the site of my house, and almost in front of my door.

Poor Rabolo had never dreamed that I would build my house just on that very spot.

Rabolo was not in town, and the builders did not dare to remove the *monda*, declaring that there would be a great palaver if they touched Rabolo's *monda*; "for," said they, "Rabolo's *monda*, which he has put in the ground, is a very good one; for, since his village has been established, twelve dry and twelve rainy seasons ago, no one has died there." This was no great *monda* after all, for Rabolo's village was only composed of his family, and there were fifteen inhabitants in all, not including the dogs, goats, fowls, and parrots.

Rabolo was sent for. He was loth to agree to have the *monda* removed; "for," said he, "not one of us has died since I made it. You can not take it." "Then," said I, "Rabolo, give me back the goods I have given you; I must go somewhere else." But poor Rabolo had given away the goods – had bought two more wives – and could not give me back my money. I knew it, and was firm. I insisted that the whole place belonged to me; that I bought it, above the ground and under the ground, to the very water's edge. So at last Rabolo, with a sad face, consented to have the *monda* removed.

To enter Rabolo's settlement you had to go under a portal, which was made of two upright poles and a crossbar. Round the poles grew a talismanic creeper, which had been planted immediately after the queer gate had been erected; but at the erection of the gate there were great ceremonies, for Rabolo's powerful *monda* was to be buried in the ground, and that *monda* was to protect the village, and Rabolo and his family, from *aniemba* (witchcraft) and death; so I did not wonder that it was with a frightened face poor Rabolo allowed me to take away what he considered the protector of himself and family.

Rabolo was a quiet man – a good man; not a bloodthirsty savage. His little village lived at peace with all the Commi villages around him.

Rabolo asked to be allowed to take the *monda* away himself. This I granted. Then he began to cut the bushes and the creeper, which was of the same kind that grew on the gate, that in the course of time had grown over his talisman, and, digging a hole in the ground, soon came to the spot where the wonderful *monda* lay. The first thing he turned up was the skull of a chimpanzee; then came the skull of a man, probably of one of the ancestors of Rabolo. The people were looking in silence at the scene before them; they seemed to think that Rabolo was doing a wonderful thing, and some thought that he would have to pay with his life for his daring deed. Poor superstitious fellow! around the skulls were pieces of pottery and crockery of all sorts, which had been put there as an offering, or to keep company with the skulls.

Then we went to the entrance, and he removed the upright posts of the gate, and cut away the creeper that twined itself around it. This creeper was a long-lived species, and the superstition was that as long as it kept alive the *monda* would retain its power. Rabolo dug in the sandy soil of the prairie near where the creeper grew, and turned up more skulls of chimpanzees and broken pieces of pottery. The two idols on either side of the gate were removed also.

A few days after, I heard the people say that it was Rabolo's *monda* that had made me come to that spot; for they believe, in that far-away country which is the land of the chimpanzee, that the chimpanzee and the white man have something to do with each other, the pale yellow face of the chimpanzee seeming somewhat to resemble ours, while the dark face of the gorilla leads them to believe that the gorilla sprung from the black man. Skulls of chimpanzees were just now in great demand, as *mondas* were to be made with them in many villages, for they were fully persuaded that if they had them people from the land of the white man would come and settle among them.

Four weeks after my arrival in the Commi country my new settlement was built, and was exactly like my old settlement of Washington, a picture of which I gave you in my Apingi Kingdom, and I gave to it the name of Plateau, on account of the country being flat.

After the completion of my house there was great excitement in the settlement. Ranpano had declared that he could not enter my house; a doctor had told him that some person who was an aniemba, a wizard, had made a monda, a charm, and had put it under the threshold of the door of my house, so that if he entered my hut the witch or aniemba would go into him, and he would die.

I got furious at Ranpano's superstition, and said to him that, while he pretended to love me, he insulted me by not coming to see me. His answer was that he loved me. His people felt badly about it. Doctors were sent for; they drank the mboundou, and declared that it was true that some one wanted to bewitch him, and had put a monda under my door to kill him.

Immediately ceremonies for driving away the witch were begun. For three days they danced almost incessantly, making a terrible noise near my premises, which almost set me crazy; drums were beating day and night. At the end of the third day I heard suddenly a tremendous noise made with the drums, and a gun was fired at my door. Ranpano entered muttering invocations, and wild with excitement, and the people declared that the aniemba under my door that was to kill the king had been driven away.

CHAPTER V

DEPARTURE OF THE MENTOR. – MR. AND MRS. THOMAS CHIMPANZEE. – THOMAS IN LONDON. – LEFT ALONE IN AFRICA. – DEPARTURE FROM PLATEAU. – A TORNADO. – NENGUÉ SHIKA. – TRACES OF GORILLAS. – NENGUÉ NCOMA. – KING OLENGA-YOMBI. – THE IPI

The day of departure of the Mentor had come. My heart was heavy; my good friend and companion, Captain Vardon, was going to leave me. I was to be left all alone in that wild country, when but a few months before I had been in the big city of London. How lonely I should feel! My old life was to come again.

It was the 18th of January, 1864. I remember well the day, for I left the shore with Captain Vardon to go on board the Mentor, which was to sail that day for London.

Captain Vardon and I did not talk much – our hearts were too full; but the good captain kept repeating to me, "My dear good friend, I do not like to leave you in this wild part of the world all alone; who will take care of you when you are sick?"

"Captain," I said, "God will take care of me."

Soon after we reached the vessel the anchor was weighed, the sails were shaken out, the jibs were set, and the schooner began to make a little headway.

I was loth to part with the dear little schooner Mentor, for I knew I should never see it again, and perhaps I should never see good Captain Vardon again.

When the moment of parting arrived, my negroes stood ready to receive me in their canoe alongside. I took Captain Vardon by the hand for a little time; we looked each other in the face without saying a word; our eyes were big – a little more, and tears would have rolled from them. I went over the vessel's side, Captain Vardon still holding my hand, and began to descend the stairs into the canoe, when the captain was obliged to let my hand go. In a minute I was in the canoe; the canoe and the vessel parted company, and the distance between them began rapidly to widen. My men gave three cheers for the Mentor; the sailors responded, all standing by the bulwarks looking at me.

Captain Vardon had on board with him as passengers two chimpanzees, Thomas, and his wife Mrs. Thomas. Thomas was, I judge, about three years old, and Mrs. Thomas might have been a year old. Mr. Thomas was a tricky little rascal, and I had any amount of fun with him. He was very tame, like all the young chimpanzees.

Thomas's capture was attended with adventures. He was with his mother in the woods; the mother was killed, and Thomas was seized and brought to the village two days after. Before he was tamed he escaped into the forest. The dogs were sent after him, and he was speedily retaken, but not without his having bitten the dogs and been severely bitten by them in return. Several of his fingers were broken, and upon knitting together they left his hand in a distorted condition.

I was compelled to keep Master Tom tied, for after he was quite tame he became very troublesome, and would go into my hut and disturb every thing. He would upset the plates, break the glasses, and when he saw the mischief he had done he would run off, and that was the last seen of him for the day. So I tied him by a cord to a pole under the veranda of my hut, and at the foot of the pole I built a little house, into which he could retire when he pleased. Every day it was filled with fresh straw from the prairie, and he enjoyed it very much, and loved to sleep on it.

Every thing I ate Tom would eat; every thing I drank Tom would drink; tea, coffee, lemonade were drinks he liked very much. He would eat fish, crocodile, turtle, elephant, hippopotamus, chicken, bananas, plantains, biscuit, etc., etc.

Among the pets I had with me was a cat. One day the cat came near Tom's pole, when suddenly Master Tom, who had never seen a cat, flew in alarm to his pole, and clambered up it, the hair on his body becoming erect, and his eyes glaring with excitement. He really looked like a porcupine-chimpanzee, such as I had never seen before.

In a moment, recovering himself, he came down, and, rushing to the cat before pussy had time to run away, with one of his feet-like hands he seized the nap of the animal, and with the other pressed on its back, as if trying to break its neck or spine. He was jerking the poor cat as hard as he could when I came to the rescue – just in time, for I am sure, if the struggle had lasted two or three minutes more, the cat would have been killed. The poor cat could not turn its head and bite, nor use its paws for scratching, and was, indeed, utterly helpless.

The big chimpanzees and the gorillas are said to fight the formidable leopard in that manner. It must be a grand sight to see such an encounter.

One day, while hunting, my dogs captured another young chimpanzee, which I gave to Master Tom for a wife. He seemed exceedingly fond of her, and would spend the greater part of his time in embracing her. Their married life appeared one of unalloyed happiness. Unfortunately, Mrs. Thomas was never very strong, and she died of consumption on the passage, to the great sorrow of Mr. Thomas, who felt very sad for a good many days after her death.

I am happy to say that Mr. Thomas reached London in very good health, in the beginning of the year 1864, and was presented in my name to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, near London, by Captain Vardon.

There he received a complete education; a nice place was built for him in the conservatory, where the exotic plants grew well, and there, for the sum of sixpence, he would sell his photograph to any one who chose to buy it. His principle was, money first, *carte de visite* afterward; and if, perchance, any visitor took off his *carte de visite* without paying for it, he would rush forward, screaming, to the length of his tether, to prevent this irregular transaction, and would not cease his noisy expressions till the money was paid down. Then he would give a low grunt in sign of satisfaction.

Thomas thrived well there, and there was a prospect of his living many years; but he met with an untimely end when the Crystal Palace burnt. The poor fellow met his death in the flames, but not before giving the most fearful screams of despair, which were unavailing, since no one could reach him.

The breeze was stiff, and carried the Mentor swiftly away from the shore as we paddled toward the breakers. I turned my head back now and then to have a look at the dear little schooner.

We passed safely through the breakers, and after landing I seated myself to look for the last time at the vessel as she glided away; fainter and fainter became the sails, till finally I could see nothing but the horizon.

I tore myself from the shore. How sad I was that evening! "How long," thought I, "shall I have to wait for a vessel to come to me? Oh dear, I hope the Messrs. Baring will send me one, with scientific instruments; then I shall start on that long journey to the Nile, from which, perhaps, I shall never come back. Never mind," said I, "friend Paul, try your best. If you do not succeed, it is no disgrace."

I lay down to sleep sad and dejected indeed. That night I dreamed of my departed mother and father. I dreamed of dear friends – of girls and boys, the companions of my school-days, that were no more – of days when I was happy and without a care. That dream was so pleasurable that it awoke me. As my eyes opened, the walls of bamboo, the queer bed, told me that I was in a wild country. I got up feeling feverish and sick at heart in my loneliness, to which I was not yet accustomed.

That day I said to myself, "Paul, several weary months will pass away before a vessel can come for you, so take courage, go hunting, visit the country round, and do the best you can to while away the time. Keep up your spirits; faint heart has never yet succeeded;" and toward evening I felt more cheerful, and chatted with my Commi men, and afterward said to myself, "How grateful I ought to be that I can feel so safe in such a wild country; that I have so many friends among the natives; and

that there is not a man of them all who would dare to rob me! Surely," I reflected, "there is not a civilized country where I could be as safe; the robbers of civilization would break through these thin walls, and steal every thing I have." The next day I put into practice the resolution I had formed, and made preparations for a journey. I wanted to visit many Commi villages.

My premises were filled with goods under the care of the Commi. "Be without fear," said good old Ranpano; "every thing will be safe when you come back. Malonga, my brother, will take care of your premises as did Rikimongani." So I set out and advanced toward Cape St. Catharine, for I intended to make a visit first to my old friend King Olenga-Yombi, with whom you have become acquainted in one of my preceding volumes.

It was a fine evening when we left Plateau. We were now in the height of the rainy season, and it was so hot in the day that I thought we might sail more comfortably on the river at night. We were pretty sure to get a ducking, but I thought it was better to get wet than to have the rays of a tropical sun pouring down on our heads. Malonga (Ranpano's brother) and my men had been busy making mondas to keep the rain off, and as we left the shore old Malonga said we should have clear weather. In this country, unlike South Africa, the doctors are unmakers, and not makers of rain.

The evening, indeed, was fine, and I began to think that Malonga, after all, might be right; the moon shone in an almost cloudless sky; but after the setting of the moon at 10 o'clock, a thick black cloud rose in the northeast, and we began to feel not so sure about a dry night. I was watching all the time anxiously in that northeastern direction, for I was afraid a tornado was coming. We were in the season of the tornadoes, and a constant lookout had to be kept, for it would never have done to have been caught napping. The flashes of lightning became more and more vivid as we skirted the river bank, paddling as fast as we could, and looking for a quiet little nook; and we were getting near one, when suddenly a white patch shone under the black mass in the heavens. In an instant that black mass overspread the sky; the part which a little before was blue had become black and lurid; the clouds drove from the northeast with fearful rapidity, and all above seemed to be in a blaze with lightning; the thunder pealed incessantly, and the rain poured down, as it were, by bucketsful. Our canoes were driven ashore by the force of the terrific wind, and we immediately hauled them out of water, although it was pitch dark, and we could only see each other by the glare of the lightning. Near by was a little village composed of a few huts, and we made for it, but found only a few women, and not wood enough for a fire, in consequence of which I had to remain all night wet to the skin.

The next morning the sky was clear and the sun rose beautifully, and soon after sunrise you could have heard the paddlers sing merry songs of the Commi. We ascended the river till we came to the island of Nengué Shika. Nengué, as you know, means an island; you may perhaps remember Nengué Ngozo. Shika means white, silverlike. After paddling along the shore of Nengué Shika, which was covered with palm-trees, we made for the main land, toward the banks of a little creek over which swallows were flying. It was a sweet spot, of prairie and luxuriant wood. There a shed had been built for me by our old friend King Olenga-Yombi, and many of his slaves were waiting for me with a goat, a few fowls, several bunches of bananas and plantains. The king had sent these provisions and his best wishes for good luck in my hunts, and a message that I must come and see him when I was tired of the woods.

Not far from our camp there were several "ivolos" – wooded bogs; there the vegetation was very rank, and these bogs were known to be the haunts of the gorilla. That day we rested in camp, and the next morning we started with two native dogs for the ivolos. It was very hard work; we had to struggle through the thorny and swampy thickets for a long time, and now and then we would sink knee-deep in the mud. My followers were slaves of King Olenga-Yombi. Hark! hark! I hear a noise as if some one was breaking the branches of trees. I gave a cluck; I looked at the men behind. This noise was made by gorillas. Silence. My gun is ready; I advance, but it is all I can do to keep the dogs in check. The creatures of the woods were tearing down branches to pick off the berries. Unfortunately, one of the dogs broke from us. I heard a shriek – a sharp cry; the gorillas fled; they were females, but

the men assured me the males could not be far off. This was, beyond all doubt, the spot for gorillas. I could see many of their footmarks on the soft mud; their heels were well marked, but their toes were hardly seen. Where they had been on all-fours I could see the marks of their knuckles.

But that day I could not come in sight of gorillas. The following day I hunted near the seashore, from which I then concluded to go to Amembié to see Olenga-Yombi.

On our way we passed by an island of trees growing in the midst of the prairie. That island is called "Nengué Ncoma." The people are afraid of Nengué Ncoma, and at night nobody would dare to pass by it; and, though we were far away, my men looked at it with superstitious dread, and quickened their steps. "Oh," said one of my guides, "whoever enters this island is likely to die suddenly in it; if he does not die he becomes crazy, and roams about till he dies. There is a woman that we see now and then, crazy and wandering all over it. In this island of Nengué Ncoma lives a crocodile, whose scales are of brass, that never leaves the island; he lives in the centre of it; no gun can kill that crocodile."

"It is a lie!" I shouted; "how foolish you are, my boys, to believe such things! To show you that it is a lie, I will enter that island of Nengué Ncoma," and I rushed, gun in hand, toward the island. A wild shriek came from the men. They shouted, "Oh, Chally, do not go." They did not dare to follow me. A little while after I touched the branches of the trees of Nengué Ncoma, but before I entered I turned back and looked toward the men, and as I looked at them I saw them mute with astonishment; and as I turned my back and entered the wood, terrific cries rent the air. They thought it was the last they should see of me. Surely the crocodile with brass scales would kill me, who dared to go into that island of which he was the king and sole inhabitant.

I walked on and explored every part of this small island of trees. I need not say that I did not meet with the crocodile. When I came out a wild shout greeted me; it was from my men, who were still at the same place where I had left them. I came toward them smiling and saying, "Do you think I am crazy? I tell you I have not seen that crocodile with scales of brass. I looked every where, and I saw nothing but trees." They all shouted, "You are a mbuiti" – a spirit.

We continued our way till we came to Amembié. Poor King Olenga-Yombi was drunk as usual; he was so tipsy, indeed, that he could not stand on his legs. Nevertheless, he welcomed his friend Chally, and said all his country belonged to me, and in joy he ordered another calabash full of palm wine to be brought to him, and drank off about half a gallon of it at once. This finished him up for the day; he fell back in the arms of his wives, shouting many times over, "I am a big king! I am a big king! I am Olenga-Yombi!" and was soon asleep. Poor Olenga-Yombi, he is an inveterate drunkard; not a day passes by that he is not tipsy.

The next morning I started for a large plantation of the king's before he was awake. The name of that plantation was "Nkongon-Boumba." There I found a large number of the king's slaves, and among them were a great many good hunters. These slaves knew me; they knew that I was their master's great friend; they knew I was theirs also, and that I had a good stock of beads for them and their wives. The head slave of the king, an Ishogo man called Ayombo, welcomed me, and brought me food.

I said to them, "Friends, I have come to live with you." They shouted "Yo! yo! yo!" "I want to hunt, and kill an ipi." "Yo! yo! yo! You shall kill an ipi," they shouted. "I want to kill gorillas and chimpanzees." "Yo! yo! yo! You shall kill gorillas and chimpanzees." "But, above all, I want to kill an ipi. My heart will go away sad if I do not kill an ipi." "Yo! yo! yo! You shall kill an ipi. We know where some are. Yo! yo! yo! You shall see an ipi."

You ask yourself what an ipi is. The ipi was an unknown animal. How did I come to know that such an animal existed? One day I saw a monda to which was suspended a large and thick yellow scale, such as I had never seen before. The pangolin had scales, but they were much smaller. There was no doubt that this scale belonged to the pangolin family, only I learned that the animal from which it was taken was of a larger variety.

The ipi, I was told, was very rare. Years had passed away, and no ipi had been seen by me; but some time ago King Olenga-Yombi had sent me word that an ipi had been near his plantation of Nkongon-Boumba, and I had come specially to hunt the ipi.

Many of the king's slaves had come from far-away tribes, and queer and ugly fellows they were, with lean legs, prominent abdomens, retreating foreheads, and projecting mouths.

The day of my arrival we rested. The good slaves and their kind wives brought fowls, plantains, pea-nuts, sugar-cane, some pine-apples, little lemons, wild honey, dried fish – in fact, they brought to me the best things they had. I gave them nice beads, and to some of the leading slaves I gave red caps.

That night there was dancing. The idol or mbuiti was consulted as to the results of the chase, for these interior people are very superstitious. They sang songs welcoming me.

The next morning a few of the leading slaves and myself started for an ipi hunt.

CHAPTER VI

HUNTING FOR THE IPI. – CAMPING OUT IN THE WOODS. – CAPTURE OF AN IPI. – DESCRIPTION OF THE ANIMAL. – A NEW SPECIES OF ANT-EATER

We left the plantation at daybreak. Mayombo, the head slave, was the leader, and some of his children were with us. We all had guns; the boys carried, besides, two axes. In a little while we were in the forest. It was an awful day's hunt, and the first time since my return that I had to rough it in such a manner. We wandered over hills and dales, through the woods and the streams, now and then crossing a bog, leaving the hunting-paths, struggling for hours through the tangled maze and through patches of the wild pine-apple, which tore my clothes to rags and covered my poor body with scratches. The thorns and cutting edges of sword-like grass which grew in many places, and the sharp points of the pine-apple leaves, were not very pleasant things to get among. It was like the good old time, but I did not fancy the good old time. I was not yet inured to such tramps; I had forgotten all about them, but I knew that it was nothing but child's play when compared with the hardships I had suffered in my former explorations, or with what I expected to undergo in the future. I knew that I was hardening myself for what was coming by-and-by, and that it was necessary that I should go through such a schooling before starting for that long Nile journey from which I knew not if I should ever come back. I must get accustomed to sickness, to hunger, to privations of all kinds, to forced marches; I must be afraid of nothing, and trust in God for the result.

The end of the day was approaching; the birds gave forth their last songs, calling their mates, so that they might not be far apart for the night; the butterflies had ceased to fly, and were hiding themselves under the large leaves to keep away from the rains.

We had not been successful, but did not despair. We were to sleep in the woods, for the plantation was too far away. Oh, I was so tired. Mayombo immediately went off to cut some poles to support the large leaves which were to protect us from the rains, while his two sons collected as fast as they could the leaves, and I looked after firewood. I soon came to a spot where the dead branches lay thick on the ground, and I shouted, "Come here, boys!" A little after sunset our camp was built and our fires were lighted; then the boys pulled from their bags several plantains and a little parcel of dried fish packed in leaves. Not far from our camp a little rivulet ran meandering toward the sea; its water was clear and cool, so we had chosen a nice spot for the bivouac; but fires were to be kept burning brightly all night, "for," said Mayombo, "leopards are very plentiful here; we can not keep our goats; and two men have been missing within a month." After that exhortation, Mayombo, who was a great smoker, filled his pipe and lay down by the fire. In the mean time my supper had been cooked, but I was too tired to enjoy it, and I was too tired even to sleep.

The next evening we returned to the plantation, where all were glad to see us. After a day of rest we started again, for Mayombo swore that I should not rest till I had an ipi. We went in another direction, and Mayombo again took his two sons with him. Toward noon Mayombo gave a cluck, and pointed out to me a dead tree lying on the ground, and a strange-looking track leading up to it, and whispered into my ears the word "Ipi!"

That dead tree had been lying there, I suppose, for hundreds of years; nothing remained of it but the trunk, which was hollow throughout, and looked like a tube fifty or sixty feet long.

I examined the ground carefully at one end of the trunk, and saw no footprint there, so the animal had not gone out; at the other end the tracks were fresh, and it was evident that the animal had hidden inside the night before. I said to Mayombo, "Perhaps the ipi has gone away." "Oh no,"

said he; "don't you see there is only one track? Besides, it could not turn on itself, and, in order to get out, it has to go straight on to the other end."

Immediately he took the axe and cut down some branches of a tree, of which he made a trap to catch the animal if it should come out. The branch was put firmly in the ground, and the top was bent over with a creeper attached to it, at the end of which was a ring, through which the animal would have to pass before he could get out; a little forked stick held the ring, which the animal would shake as it passed through; the limb would fly up instantly, and high in the air would the ipi dangle.

When all this had been done, Mayombo, who had collected wood at the other end, set fire to it, to smoke the animal out. He was not mistaken; the ipi was inside, and it made for the opposite extremity and was caught. There was a short struggle, but we ran up and ended it by knocking the ipi with all our might on the head.

I saw at once that the ipi belonged to the pangolin genus (*Manis* of the zoologists), which is a very singular kind of animal. They are ant-eaters, like the *Myrmecophaga* of South America; but, while the South American ant-eater is covered with hair like other mammalia, the pangolins have an armor of large scales implanted in the skin of the upper surface of the body, from the head to the tip of the tail, each scale overlapping the other like the slates on the roof of a house.

Like the ant-eater of South America, the pangolins have no teeth, but they have a long extensile tongue, the extremity of which is covered with a glutinous secretion so sticky that their prey, after having been touched, adheres to the tongue and can not get away. The tongue of an ipi may be extended out several inches. The ipi feeds on ants.

During the day the ipi hides itself in its burrow in the earth, or sometimes in the large hollows of colossal trunks of trees which have fallen to the ground, like the tree just described to you; but they generally prefer to burrow in the soil, and these burrows are usually found in light soil on the slope of a hill. By the singular structure of the ipi, it can not turn to the right or to the left at once; in fact, it is quite incapable of bending its body sideways, so it can not "right about face" in its burrow. Accordingly, there are two holes in each burrow, one for entrance and one for exit.

But if the ipi and the pangolin can not bend their bodies sideways, they are very flexible vertically, their stomachs having no scales; so, if they are surprised or want to sleep, they roll themselves in a ball, the head being inside and forming the centre, and they coil and uncoil themselves in this manner very readily.

The only way you can find the ipi or the pangolin is by the trail they leave on the soil, and following them till you reach their burrows.

The great trouble in finding the ipi is not only that the animal is very scarce, but that it never comes out except at night, when the rattle it makes among the dead leaves is great. The strange creature must see well with its queer little eyes to be able to perceive the ants upon which it mostly feeds, and it must take time in satisfying its appetite, for a great many little ants must be required to fill its stomach. When the ipi has found a spot where the ants it wants to eat are plentiful, it stops by them, and with its long tongue, which protrudes several inches, catches them one by one. When an ant is caught the tongue goes in again. I wonder how many hundreds of times the tongue must come out and go in with an ant before the hunger of the ipi is satisfied!

I was not mistaken; this ipi was a new species, and the scientific name is *Pholidotus Africanus*. This large one was a female, and measured four feet six inches from the head to the tip of the tail. It was very stout and heavy, the tail very short in comparison with its body, and the scales very thick, and of a yellow or tawny color. The males are said to be much larger, and, according to what the negroes say, must reach the length of six feet. They are very ugly to look at. Their tail, being very thick, makes a large trail on the ground as they move about.

Though in some respects they may be thought to resemble the lizard, the pangolins have warm blood, and nourish their young like the rest of the mammalia.

I need not tell you that I was glad to discover this new species. After securing the ipi we returned at once to the plantation, and as soon as I arrived I went to work and took off its skin, and hard work it was, I assure you, the scales were so thick and big.

When we came into the village with the ipi there was great excitement, for the animal is so rare that but two or three persons there had ever seen a specimen.

I went to bed happy, feeling that I had had the good fortune of discovering a new and most remarkable animal, which God had long ago created, but which had never before been seen by the white man.

Of course I had a curiosity to see how the ipi tasted, and I had some for breakfast the next morning, and it was good, but not fat, though the natives said that at certain seasons they are very fat.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE AT NKONGON-BOUMBA. – GORILLAS AND PLANTAINS. – ODANGA SCARED BY A GORILLA. – A CAPTIVE GORILLA. – SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING THE LEOPARD

The dry season had now fairly begun. We were in the month of June, and the nights and evenings were quite pleasant. The days were generally cloudy, and it was a good time of the year for hunting, as most of the bog-land was drying fast.

Nkongon-Boumba was situated in a charming spot on the summit of a gentle hill, at the foot of which ran a little stream of clear water. The country which surrounded it was partly prairie and partly wooded; the soil on the prairie was sandy, but where the woods grew the soil was better. In many places the primitive growth had been cut down, and there the fine plantation of plantain-trees and bananas of King Olanga-Yombi were flourishing well.

How beautiful the country looked in the morning just before sunrise, when a veil of mist seemed to hang over it, and when the dew was still thick on the blades of grass, or was dropping fast from the plantain-leaves! I would get up just at daylight, and would start with my gun on my shoulder, in the hope that I might see a gazelle or an antelope feeding.

Gorillas were very plentiful near Nkongon-Boumba, and were committing great depredations among the plantain and banana trees; the patches of sugar-cane were also very much devastated. I heard one afternoon that the day before gorillas were in the forest not far from the village, and had already begun to play sad havoc with the plantain-trees.

The morning after the news, if you had been in the village, you would have seen me, just a little before daybreak, getting ready to go after the gorillas. I was painting my face and hands with a mixture of powdered charcoal and oil. After my toilet was done, I put on my old, soiled Panama hat, took one of my best guns, called Odanga, one of my boys, to accompany me, and started off. There was just daylight enough for us to see our way, and in a short time we came to a plantation, surrounded by virgin forest, covered with plantain and banana trees, most of which were bearing fruit in different stages of growth. This plantation had just been made on the skirt of the forest.

It was a lovely morning; the sky was almost cloudless; every thing was still, and one could only hear the slight rustling of the tree-tops moved by the gentle land breeze. Before reaching the grove of plantain-trees I had to pick my way through a maze of tree-stumps, half-burnt logs, and dead, broken, and half-burnt limbs of trees, where the land had been prepared for a new plantation. If gorillas are to be seen in a plantation near a village they most generally come in the early morning.

By the side of the plantain-trees was a field of cassada, and just as I was going by it I heard suddenly in the plantain-grove a great crashing noise like the breaking of limbs. What could this be? I immediately hid myself behind a bush, and then looked in the direction from which the sound proceeded. What do I see? A gorilla, then a second gorilla, and a third one, coming out of a thick bush; then another one made his appearance – there were four altogether. Then I discovered that one of the females had a baby gorilla following her.

So do not be astonished when I tell you that my eyes were wide open, and that I gazed on the scene before me with intense excitement. These gorillas looked so droll, walking in the most absurd way on all fours, and now and then walking erect. How impish the creatures seemed! how intensely black their faces were! how hideous their features! They looked like men, but like wild men with shaggy hides, and their big, protuberant abdomens did not make them less ridiculous or repulsive.

The gorillas went immediately at their work of destruction. I did not stop them, but merely looked on. Plantain-tree after plantain-tree came down; it seemed to me that they were trying to see which could bring down the greatest number of trees in the shortest space of time. They were amusing themselves, I suppose. In destroying a tree, they first grasped the base of the stem with one of their powerful hand-like feet, and then with their prodigious long arms pulled it down. This, of course, did not require much strength with so light a stem as that of the plantain. Then they would set their big mouths upon the juicy heart of the tree, and devour it with great avidity; at another time they would give one bite, or would simply demolish the tree without eating it.

How strange sounded the chuckle they gave as if to express their contentment! Now and then they would sit still and look around – and such a look! Two or three times they looked in the direction where I was; but I lay so quiet, and was so concealed, they could not see me, and, as the wind was blowing from them to me, they could not smell me. How fiendish their look was! A cold shiver ran through me several times, for, of all the malignant expressions I had ever seen, theirs were the most diabolical. Two or three times they seemed to be on the point of running away, and appeared alarmed, but recovered their composure, and began anew the work of destruction.

The little baby gorilla followed his mother wherever she went. Gradually, without my taking notice of it, they came to the edge of the dark forest, and all at once disappeared like a vision – like a dream. I went to look at the spot where they had made such havoc, and counted over one hundred plantain-trees down on the ground, which they had destroyed.

The next morning I went again with Odanga to the same spot, with no expectation of seeing gorillas again, for I did not think they would make another visit there with their roving propensities, but I thought I might see an antelope or two, attracted by the young leaves of the cassada-tree, of which they are very fond. I carried a light double-barreled shot-gun, while Odanga carried my heavy double-barreled rifle, to use in case we should see an elephant.

The part of the plantation upon which we had come extended over two hills, with a deep hollow between planted with sugar-cane. I was taking the lead in the narrow path, and just as I was going down the hill to get over to the other side of the hollow, my eyes suddenly fell upon a monstrous gray-haired male gorilla standing erect and looking directly toward me. I really did not know if he was looking at me or at something else, or if he thought of crossing to my side, in which case he would have come toward me. Without turning my head (for I did not dare to lose sight of the gorilla), I beckoned Odanga to come toward me, so that I might get hold of my rifle and shoot down the huge monster. I beckoned in vain. I made a quicker motion with my hand for Odanga to come, but no Odanga was coming. The huge beast stared at me, or at least seemed to stare at me, for two minutes, and then, without uttering any roar, moved off into the great forest on all fours. Then I looked round to see what was the matter with my boy Odanga, but no Odanga was to be seen; I was all alone. The fellow had bolted, gun and all; the gorilla had frightened him, and he had fled. I was furiously angry, and promised myself to give friend Odanga such a punishment as he would not soon forget, that he might not play me such a trick a second time.

Odanga had fled to the plantation, and a little after what I have just related I heard a good many voices. They were the plantation people, all armed to the teeth, coming to my rescue; but Odanga had taken good care to remain out of the way, though he had sent the gun. The little scamp knew very well what was coming, but when I went back he was not to be seen, and the fellow hid himself for two days. When at last I got hold of him he made me the most solemn promise never to do such a thing again, and said, "Chally, Abamboo (the devil) must have made me leave you."

On my return from Nkongon-Boumba a great surprise awaited me – a *live* gorilla. An old chief, a friend of mine, named Akondogo, had just returned from the Ngobi country, situated south of Cape St. Catharine, and there, with some slaves of Olenga-Yombi, he had killed the mother, and captured the rascal before me. He was bigger than any gorilla I had captured, or that had ever been taken alive. Bigger he was than Fighting Joe, which many of you no doubt remember.

Like Joe, this fellow showed the most ungovernable temper, and to bite somebody seemed to be the object he was always aiming at. We had no chain with which to confine him, so that a long forked stick round his neck was the only means we could employ of keeping him at a safe distance.

In the evening, as Akondogo and I were seated together, the good fellow, smoking his huge pipe, said to me, "Chally, I have had a great deal of trouble since I have seen you. A leopard has killed two of my people, and I have had a great many palavers with their families on account of their death."

I said, "Akondogo, you could not help it; you are not chief over the leopards. But, after the first man had been killed, why did you not make a trap to catch the leopard?"

"The leopard I mean," said he, "is not one that can be trapped; it was a man who had changed himself into a leopard, and then, after he had been a leopard for some time, he changed himself into a man again."

I said, "Akondogo, why do you talk to me in that way? You know I do not believe that men are turned into beasts, and afterward into men again. It is stupid for people to believe so, but I can not shake that belief in you *alombè*" (black men).

Poor Akondogo said, "Chally, I assure you that there are men who change into leopards, and from leopards into men again."

Not wishing to argue the question, I said, "Never mind; tell me the story of your trouble." Then Akondogo once more filled his pipe with tobacco, gave three or four big puffs of smoke, which rose high in the air, and thus begun:

"My people and myself had been in the woods several days collecting India-rubber. One day a man disappeared, and nothing could be found of him but a pool of blood. The next day another man disappeared, and in searching for him more blood was found. We all got alarmed, and I sent for a great doctor; he came and drank the *mboundou*, so that he might be able to say how these two deaths came about. After the *ouganga* (doctor) had drunk the *mboundou*, and as all the people stood round him asking him what had killed these two men, and just as we were waiting with breathless silence for what he was going to say, he spoke to me and said, 'Akondogo, your own child [his nephew and heir] Akosho killed the two men.' Immediately Akosho was sent for and seized, and he answered that it was true that he had killed the two men, but that he could not help it; he remembered well that that day, as he was walking in the woods, he suddenly became a leopard; that his heart longed for blood, and that he had killed the two men, and then, after each murder, he became a man again.

"There was a great uproar in the village; the people shouted, 'Death to the *aniemba* Akosho!'

"But," said Akondogo, "I loved my boy so much that I said to the people, 'Let us not believe Akosho; he must have become a *kendé*' (idiot, fool). But Akosho kept saying he had killed the men, and took us into the woods where lay the two bodies, one with the head cut off, and the other with the belly torn open.

"Upon this," said Akondogo, "I ordered Akosho to be bound with cords, and tied in a horizontal position to a post, and to have a fire lighted at his feet, and be burned slowly to death, all which was done, the people standing by until he expired."

The end of the story was so horrid that I shuddered. It was a case of monomania. Akosho believed that he had been turned into a leopard, and committed two murders, the penalty of which he paid with his life. Here, in our country, he would have been sent to the insane asylum.

CHAPTER VIII

WOUNDED GORILLA AND HER YOUNG ONES. – TAKING THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS. – TOM AND MINNIE. – ARRIVAL OF MY VESSEL. – HURRA FOR BARING BROTHERS. – A SMOKING SHIP. – KING QUENGUEZA GOES ON BOARD. – PREPARATIONS FOR JOURNEY

A few days after my return home, one evening a strange sight presented itself in front of my house – a sight which I firmly believe had never before been witnessed since the world began. There was great commotion and tremendous excitement among the Commi people.

There stood in front of my bamboo house a large female gorilla, bound hand and foot, and alive, but frightfully wounded. A large gash might have been seen on her scalp, and her body was covered with clotted blood. One of her arms had been broken, and she bore wounds upon the head and chest. Now and then the creature would give a sharp scream of pain, which lent horror to the darkness by which we were surrounded, the half dozen lighted torches making the scene still more wild.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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