

Matadi Africa - Feb - 2 - '93

We are at last at our journey's end - ~~As~~ that is <sup>as</sup> far as our sea voyage concerned - We have still some where <sup>about</sup> a thousand miles to travel in-land - Our sail up the famed Congo river, will never be forgotten - We had heard; we had read, of this river, but it was far different than any thing we had thought of. Instead of a broad river, as one would anticipate from the accounts of its terrible current, and its fresh water far out at sea - we found, what appeared to be, an exceedingly narrow river as well, as crooked - The Captain informed us, however, that we were sailing between islands and what seemed the banks of the river were the banks of these islands and this also accounted for the crookedness of the river - Pointing away first to one side and then the other, above the islands, we followed with our eyes his finger and saw away in the distance, seemingly two miles away, a higher ground than he said were the true banks of the river - We were sailing among a ~~thousand~~ <sup>hundred or more</sup> islands. - ~~and~~ Besides these, we saw several "Grass", or floating islands. Our first stop, after leaving San Antonio, was opposite Banana where we took on a Pilot. The current ~~or water~~ of the river is rather the channel of the river is constantly shifting.

And this makes it necessary to have Pilots who  
 are constantly at work finding the <sup>Channel</sup> ~~the way~~ among  
 the islands. You will remember that I wrote you in  
 one of my letters of a "bar" having formed in the Congo  
 river and that there was some doubt of our ship being  
 able to pass up the river - A new way was found, by  
 the Pilots, around another island and we had  
 the pleasure of going a new way, and it was ad-  
 judged, by the Ship's Doctor, to be a <sup>finer</sup> ~~new~~ way, in every  
 particular, than the old way; and certainly to us  
 it was very fine - The bank of the island to the  
 right of us was some <sup>ten</sup> ~~twenty~~ to <sup>20</sup> fifty feet high,  
 showing a fine clay subsoil, and the meadow land,  
 extending for some a mile or two back from the river,  
 is covered with a rank growth of grass; back of the  
 meadow land the ground rises rather abruptly  
 forming for miles a range of hills from one to two  
 hundred feet high - It lacks only a few houses  
 and some cattle to make it a facsimile of nearly  
 a scene along the Midland R.R. of England -  
 Ships cannot navigate the Congo at night, so  
 we anchored opposite the small town of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Early the following morning we were on our  
 way to Boma - ("M Boma" as the natives called  
 it) the general character of the land changes,  
 as we near this, the Capital of the Congo Free  
 State, and in stead of the low meadow lands,  
 high hills rise abruptly from the banks of the

river. About 9 O'clock Sunday morning we  
 reach Boma - the rain comes down like a gentle  
 summer shower and this, in connection with  
 it's being Sunday, puts a veto on the unloading  
 of the vessel, so the Captain says "Flaunted by  
 the Sijines" and soon we are steaming away  
 to a Portuguese town where the Captain feels  
 sure of finding those who will work on Sunday.  
 The Captain told us that he was against doing  
 any work on Sunday just as much as we  
 were, but that the owners of the ship made him  
 out "against time" and therefore he had to  
 do Sunday work - of course we could do nothing  
 but preach against it - As it turned out <sup>the</sup> un-  
 loading was accomplished although much work was  
 done. It is necessary to moor vessels in the Congo  
 as well as anchor them, and the first time the  
 cable was fastened to a post on shore the ship in  
 arriving ~~drove~~ <sup>drove</sup> the post out and the cable  
 became entangled with the propeller and  
 there there was a time - this being straightened  
 out one of the <sup>ships</sup> boats got under the cable near  
 the shore and the cable had to be loosened to  
 keep from swamping the small boat and so the  
 crew were kept busy until night fall. Early  
 Tuesday morning we were again under  
 way steaming for Matadi - the scenery all along  
 the river from Boma to Matadi is grand -  
 mountains, or perhaps more correctly speaking



We saw all we wanted to see. The river  
 sweeping by, the engines pumping at full  
 speed and we making <sup>at the rate of</sup> about four miles an  
 hour - suddenly at the side of the ship only  
<sup>short</sup> a few <sup>was seen</sup> a deep hole in the water was of  
 and a whirling mass of water all around it  
 and such a noise - but this was only one  
 of the whirlpools we saw, and any one of them  
 was seemingly large enough to take into its  
 depths a row boat - We passed through all  
 right for which we thanked our Father. Our  
 Pilot told us that "Some day some ship would  
 go to pieces at this point and not a soul will  
 be saved". Once out of the whirlpools and it  
 is only a few moments steaming and then we  
 are at Maladi. We are met here by the Rev.  
 W. H. Sheppard write our name. (You will recall  
 Mr. Sheppard as the one who went out with Rev.  
 Mr. Lapsley some three years ago) how pleased we  
 were to meet Mr. S. So much better than landing  
 totally among strangers. Still we had never  
 personally met Mr. Sheppard before, but having  
 heard so much of him we felt that we had  
 known him for a long time - And the mail!  
 Although old as to date - it was like shaking  
 hands with old friends. If home people only  
 knew the value of a letter to the far away ones,  
 no letters would be written than are written  
 (more)

Two Copies of the Journal were among our mail and we were glad to see it once more and to read of the doings of the Tampa is - Mr. Sheppard informed us that he had some Carriers ready and that we might go "up Country" just as soon as we could get ready - Mr. Graham from Underhill Mission came on board and insisted upon our staying with them that night. Mr. R. and I went ashore soon after breakfast to attend to our goods - We put in a good morning work in a hot Ware house - at noon we returned to the ship for Mrs R + Mrs S. and together went to the A. B. M. U. (American Baptist Mission Union) and took dinner under the American flag once again. Mr. Leger and wife are in charge here - In the afternoon we repaired to the ~~the~~ Ware house again and with Mr. Sheppard's help arranged our goods - One bed was found missing and some of our goods that we needed for the trip had gone on ahead. Seventy Carriers were engaged and Wednesday was settled on as the day for our departure. Early Tuesday morning we were again at the Ware house to repack our trunks or rather to pack the contents of our trunks in boxes of sixty pounds weight each so that they could be carried on the leads

of our men - I wish I could have taken a photograph of the natives as they stood around watching me unpacking my trunk. About thirty of them pressed as close to the trunk as they could and made comments on this <sup>and</sup> that article. I could not understand their words but their expressions were English enough.

I came across a lot of photographs and showed them one by one and it was worth coming to Africa to see their expressions. One picture photograph of my sister with eye glasses, was a source of wonder and amazement. We

loaded and sent off 20 carriers on Tuesday, hoping to follow them on Wednesday. Sunday night we slept again at Underhill and Wednesday morning early we bade good

by to all the Underhill mission and started for Matadi. On the way we visited the grave of Mr. Lapsley and laid there on a dried bouquet of flowers the loving tribute of a dear friend in America. On our way to Matadi we also stopped to say good by to the S.S.

Cameron and the Captain and Doctor and Purser and the Officers and crew each and every one had been kind to us and after the almost eight months living with them we

parted as good friends of long years - Good by good ship Cameron! it will be long time before we see you again. - Good by -

When we reached Matadi Mr Rowbottom  
 was again taken with the fever. And  
 had to go to bed - this upset our plans for  
 departure on Wednesday and a "Palaver"  
 had to be had with the Carriers, to get them  
 to remain over another day. The African  
 fever does not last long. (So we learned  
 at Matadi) and by the next day we had  
 Mr. R. on his feet again - I don't know what  
 we would have done with out Mr Sheppard -  
 he nursed Mr. R. and cared for him in  
 a way no other could have done. His coming  
 to us was certainly coincidental - Well, on  
 Thursday at 3 P.M. our Caravan started -  
 We could get Naminwe men for only  
 three hammocks - So Mrs. S. Mrs. R. and  
 of course Mr. R. had to be carried - You  
 can imagine how we looked if you  
 will close your eyes a moment and in  
 imagination see two black men with a  
 hammock slung on a long pole and the  
 ends of the pole resting on a shoulder of  
 each - And Mrs. S. lying in the hammock  
 then Mr. R. and his men and hammock  
 and then three or four black men with  
 each a box on his head then Mrs. R. and  
 her hammock then Mr Sheppard and  
 myself and then about 45 black men

with their boxes or bundles on their heads.  
 All starting up the hill on a narrow  
 path one at a time "Indian file" <sup>as Mr</sup> ~~call~~  
<sup>Report both are said like ants climbing over a sugar bowl</sup>  
 So we began our journey of 240 miles -  
 The first days travel was to be a short  
 one as we were not yet in walking trim  
 So from 3 to 5 o'clock we walked up and  
 down the hills of Africa. till we reached ~~the~~  
 a creek at the foot of the Palaballa hill. We  
 had heard of this little long before we came  
 to it. On the S.S. Cameroon they told us of  
 a German who came out here and who  
 tried three times to climb the hill and  
 then committed suicide. - At the A.B.M.  
 U. they discredited this story but assured  
 us of one man who started up with a  
 Caravan and got behind the posters and  
 at last became so weary that he sat down  
 and gave up. He was missed after a while  
 and some one sent back after him and found  
 him on the hill side unable to say any  
 thing but Water - Water - Water. - Well we  
 struck tents at the foot of this hill on  
 Thursday evening about half past five.  
 And our first meal was prepared in  
 the dark with the help of four <sup>candle</sup> lanterns -  
 What a time! What an experience!  
 Tired out with our walk - the "Hill" before

us for the 'narrow's work' - The Novelty of it all!  
 The fifty Natives lying around us, <sup>chatting</sup>  
 all kept us from sleeping until the small  
 hours - Friday morning early we were up <sup>and</sup>  
 around and just as soon as I could get  
 a little food I told Mr Sheppard that  
 intended starting <sup>ahead of the rest, only waited until the tents were taken</sup>  
 on <sup>down and packed by the natives</sup> and I did.  
 Tell you it is a hill and no mistake -  
 like climbing up the side of a roof of a  
 house all covered over with small loose <sup>rocks</sup>  
 My early start however gave me an <sup>upper</sup>  
 limbity for rest <sup>while</sup> waiting for those <sup>rocks</sup> were  
 carried in the hammocks. When we  
 reached the top of the hill we were about  
 1700 - feet above the sea level and all  
 around us nothing but hills and valleys.  
 That days walk I will never forget. It  
 seemed to be a succession of going down  
 into valleys for no other reason than to  
 have the fun of climbing the next hill.  
 And then when standing at the foot of  
 a hill you look up at its top and take  
 a long breath and say well when we get  
 up there it will be a little easier, and  
 then when you reach the foot of the hill  
right before you rises another hill higher  
 if any thing than the one just climbed. It  
 is wearisome in the extreme. but God

gave us needed strength. I am sure of this  
 that without his help I could never have  
 stood it. The second days march was the most  
 of all so far - We are now <sup>Feb-8<sup>th</sup> 1893</sup> at <sup>the</sup> Senza Mateke  
 a mission station of the A. B. M. U.  
 Mrs. S. is down with the fever - We came in last  
 night after a hard days travel over the hills  
 for 5 1/2 hours the last part under a blazing  
 sun - And Mrs. S. with a temperature of  
 102 - No doctor at this mission - Got the  
 fever under control by eleven o'clock - Some-  
 what better to day and hope to march on  
 again to-morrow - So thank God that  
 we are among friends at this mission 3  
 ladies and <sup>2</sup> gentlemen and they  
 have all been so kind to Mrs. S. <sup>Mr. Dughan is in charge</sup> we hope  
 to have her well enough to travel to-morrow  
 We find it hard work to keep our carriers  
 they want to go - We are learning a few  
 words as we go along - "M Bote" means "Good"  
 and that is the first word I learned - Then  
 we meet a native he says, in stead of good  
 morning is "Lon do you do" or "howdy" - "M Bote"  
One morning we met a caravan I said "Mote" to one of them he answered and offered his hand.  
 for a while I had to shake hands with about 20 of them I got through.  
 The "M" is hardly sounded and the accent is on  
 the "Bo" of the Bote - "Veh" means No "Duga"  
 yes - "Sappe" stop - Dweze "Come here" "Dwendze"  
 I am going - "Dwendu" I go - "Coco" water  
 "Coco imbedidi" boiling water and ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~guts~~

means "Pea nut", (Ground nuts) and here is  
 where the name "Gubers", that you use in Florida,  
 came from - "Guta" means a Carrier and  
 no doubt the word "Tote" used in the Southern  
 States came from Africa - We have not seen  
 any wild beasts yet. nor Monkeys - nor  
 snakes - Some nice birds some pretty  
 singers - With the exception of Mr. R. and  
 Mrs. S. all have been well. Mrs. S. loved it  
 so well that I had hopes she would escape.  
 One can not tell however - One may  
 be well one day - Sick the next. We  
 heard of the Sessions family; you will  
 remember them they came here from Iowa  
 as missionaries - The young man is dead and  
 Mr. Sessions has just returned to Annie's  
 An exceedingly nice man. I must tell  
 you of an exceedingly touching incident which  
 occurred this morning. I was sitting alone with  
 my wife, she suffering with the fever - a knock at  
 the door and in comes a native woman. She  
 spoke to me in her language which I did not  
 understand but by her motions I knew she was  
 trying to ask me about Mrs. Snyder. So I motioned to my  
 head and held my hand on my forehead and she said  
 "Luga, Luga" "Yes" "Yes" and then got down on her  
 knees and offered up a prayer to God - I felt sure it was  
 for my wife's recovery but only two words of it I under-  
 stood. "Jesus" "Kahlee" - "only Jesus" - that alone was my  
 strengthening - I must close to catch a courier to Matadi.