

---

## AMONG AFRICAN CANNIBALS.

---

### Traveling by Canoe Among the Savages of the Congo Free State.

At last we reached the River Ituri, and following along the banks until it was navigable, we came to the great Bangwa district of the Aruwimi. Here were fresh sights and more excitement. Having procured canoes, I sent my porters back, retaining only my three faithful boys. Our boatmen were the notorious cannibals of the Aruwimi; very different from the Pygmies; these were fine, stalwart men, many of them considerably over six feet, carrying themselves with the most aristocratic bearing imaginable. As canoe men they could not be excelled. Each boat contained from ten to fifteen men, who, with their long, tapering paddles, made the heavy dug-out literally dance through the water. It was a most delightful sensation, after the toilsome pain of walking through the thicket, to be comfortably reclining while whizzed along at about eight miles an hour, for the current being strong in our favor, we often made quite that speed. One sat all day and gazed along the banks of this marvelous river. Sometimes elephants sporting themselves in the shallow water near the bank would, for a moment or two, be visible; forest antelope, too, were often seen having their evening drink, while all the while the monkeys chattered in the

trees and screamed at us as we passed. The villages of the Bangwa were most curious, the houses consisting of tall, cone shaped structures attaining a height of from fifteen to twenty feet. As we approached the drums announced us and crowds of natives, naked cannibals, came to the river bank to watch us. Every warrior carried his knife and spear, both most deadly looking weapons, and when I landed they almost surrounded me, walked round and round, looking me up and down, no doubt counting up the possibilities of a good meal. Their language was strange to me, or I might have heard some extraordinary remarks; as it was, their hungry looks were quite enough to make me feel a little uncomfortable at times. I was generally able to find an interpreter, who would inquire of the people for men for a suitable place to pitch my tent, and this was most courteously given by the chief himself, generally in the middle of the village. Sometimes they would bring me quantities of food, sweet potatoes, bananas, jams, etc., and in exchange I gave them little trinkets, such as beads, whistles, knives, etc. Fifteen days' paddle on the river brought us to Basoko, the chief station of the Belgians on the Congo. From hence the steamers run to the coast, and after waiting a few days we arrived, and I procured passage. — *Vingler's Magazine.*

---