

## LETTERS FROM THE MISSIONS.

### AFRICA.

DR. SNYDER.

At last we are at Leopoldville—Stanley Pool!—How often those two names have been in our minds and how often on our lips during the past eight months. Slowly but surely we have been drawing closer and closer to this place. Eight months ago we were in Florida, thinking of this part of God's world—to-day we are here. While I am writing it occurs to me that it was a year ago this month that we sent in our applications. How time does fly! We are so glad that the 260 miles, lying between this place and Matadi, have been traversed. We will never forget those days. We left Matadi with feelings hard to explain. Glad that we were at last entering Africa. Glad that every step was drawing us nearer to our field of labor, and yet when we looked back from a hill just ascended, and saw the masts of the good ship which had been our home for two months, we realized as never before, that we were leaving civilization. I suppose you will say we ought not to have looked back, and will quote that verse about "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." But you know we did not look back in the sense of wishing we had not started. And then it was not pleasant or agreeable to have two big black fellows run off with ones wife into the wilds of Africa! I tried hard to keep up with my wife's hammock, but not being used to walking and finding hills not easy to climb, naturally I fell behind and could only trust in God and pray that He would protect the wife. It was so restful, this feeling of perfect trust. I was not afraid, neither was

the wife, but it was because of our trust in him who said, "Lo I am with you alway;" and "alway" surely meant in the wilds of Africa. The first night we camped out was a night never to be forgotten. How much we owe to Mr. Sheppard. What would we have done without him? He could talk to the natives, we could not. Our first night in a tent! The natives lying all around us, the stream on whose bank we were encamped roaring and tumbling over the rocks. Alone in the heart of Africa! But we slept. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Of this we felt assured and so rested quietly. The next day we ascended the renowned Palabala hill. God was surely with me that day, as indeed he was every day; but that day I needed him more, it seemed. As we passed along the lonely path we saw nothing to remind us of civilization save here and there a peanut shell. The first one we saw rather startled us. Our mind went back to the days of youth when the cracking of the shell and the cranching of the nut was an unprecedented joy, and then when older and permitted at the Fair, was not the peanut our companion? At "singing school" did we not sit on the last bench or in a corner and enjoy this same ground nut, and so all through our life the peanut has in some way been a prominent character. And when we saw the little empty shell at our feet involuntarily we thought, here is a little civilization to be sure. One day's marching goes well enough, but the second, and third, and fourth are not so easy. It pulls on one as much as eating twenty-four consecutive quails in twenty-four consecutive days. For the first week they go well; and then the stomach rebels. And so there were some mornings when every part of my nature rebelled against the walk. And yet



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we went on. And then there were days when with the temperature of the body at 103, the hot tropical sun pouring almost vertically down on one's head aching with the fever, one hill following another, one could not help but wish that there were no heathen, or that they were all converted! But then when at last the tenting ground was reached, and lying on the cot, the dear wife holds one hand in hers, while with the other she keeps a cool wet cloth on the fevered brow, one can almost imagine he hears the purling of the stream as it runs through the yard at the old homestead and hears the rustle of the cooling breeze through the maple trees around the old home. And one is glad that God can use him as a means to bring light into this darkness. Our pillows went astray some where, and so Mrs. Snyder and I had to do the best we could by filling pillow cases with folded shawls, piles of clothing, etc. And one night my pillow seemed especially hard. I was tired and had some fever, and the pillow was hard and hot, and *inwardly* I was inclined to grumble just a little. When of a sudden there came to my mind that verse in Matthew, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" and I said, "Yes Lord this is better, much better than thou didst have it." And the pillow grew softer and cooler and I slept. But that is past and we are safely through with the walk. I walked all the 260 miles, with the exception of ten miles, when I had just recovered from a severe attack of fever. Dr. Sims sent a courier with our mail, so your letter was read at the close of a weary day, and I can assure you it did me good like medicine. Yes, we stood at Bro. Lapsley's grave and had a prayer there, and then we placed a bouquet of dried flowers sent out by Mrs. Phillips, of Tampa. We are glad that Mr. Ockels is to come out here. We need all the help we can get, and we certainly do need a boat or some means of transporting our own goods. We do not know but that we may have to remain here until next October. There are no boats here now and when one comes it may be too late to return. There are falls in the Kassai river which can be crossed only when the river is high. Six months in the year the water is too low to permit boats to go up, so if we do not get off this month we will have to wait the six.

*Leopoldville, Stanley Pool, Congo Ind. State, Africa,*  
March 7, 1893.

DR. SNYDER—NO. 2.

The heading of this letter will convey to you the intelligence that we are still waiting at this place. One month ago to-day, or, to be more exact, four weeks ago this evening we reached this place. At that time we had hopes of being able to go on to

our destination within two weeks. Alas! Do you ask, "What are now the prospects?" Well, it is rumored, and almost affirmed by some, that the state (Belgium government) has pressed into service all the steamers on the Upper Congo, or will do so shortly, the "service" being war with the Arabs up country. If this is so, and the fact that some of the steamers are overdue two weeks, seems to lend color to it. If this is so, then it may be months before we can go. If the war becomes fierce it is within the possibilities that the male portion of this station may be pressed into service, so we are told, and are not well enough read in these matters to deny the statement, although we had always lived in the belief that foreigners could not be pressed into service of this kind. If only we had a Consul out here who could be found, or to whom one might go for information. We are informed that the Consul is away up country and no one representing him at his office at Boma, save an old colored woman, his old nurse from Mississippi. Apropos of the Arabs, you will recall the fact that they are the cause of most of the trouble in Africa. They are the ones who are carrying on the slave trade and fighting all who are opposed to them. Next to *rum*, and perhaps exceeding even that vile stuff in its consequences, the slave trade, as carried on by the Arabs, is the curse of Africa. The Soudan was, perhaps, the seat of this trade for a long time, but gradually it has been extended until the beauty of the Congo Free State is marred by the ravages of the Arab, and placing in peril mission property and missionaries as well. Perhaps you will ask, Why do Arabs make slaves of the natives? For what purpose are they enslaved? I will try and tell you. The center of Africa is rich in ivory tusks, which, by the hundred, can be bought for very little, and when brought to the market can be sold at prices that give immense returns. But how to get the tusks to the sea coast without eating up the profits. To hire laborers would take too much of the profit off to suit the grasping Arab. Now the Arab is a splendid trader, and gets his ivory very cheap, and his greed for gain forbids him to part with any of the profits unless it is absolutely necessary. The Arab has no heart, and as said of him in the Bible, "His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." And as he looks around on the thousands of natives living along the route he has travelled from the sea coast, he says, "Why not compel them to do this work for me? Why not enslave them and make them carry this ivory to the coast? I can feed them on just enough to keep them alive, and thus make all the more on my ivory." This thought is followed by immediate execution. Let me quote from authorities an instance or two of Arab work and Arab



cruelty. Sir Samuel Baker describes a slave raid by Arabs as follows:

"On arriving at the desired locality the party (slave hunters) disembark and proceed into the interior, until they arrive at the village of some negro chief, with whom they establish an intimacy. Charmed with his new friends, the power of whose weapons he acknowledges, the negro chief does not neglect the opportunity of seeking their alliance to attack a hostile neighbor. Marching throughout the night, guided by their negro hosts, they bivouac within an hour's march of the unsuspecting village doomed to an attack about half an hour before the break of day. The time arrives, and quietly surrounding the village while its occupants are still sleeping, they fire the grass huts in all directions, and pour volleys of musketry through the flaming thatches. Panic-stricken, the unfortunate victims rush from their burning dwellings, and the men are shot down like pheasants in a battue; while the women and children, bewildered in the danger and confusion, are kidnapped and secured. They are then fastened together, the former secured in an instrument called a "shiba," made of a forked pole, the neck of the prisoners fitting into the fork secured by a cross-piece lashed behind, while the wrists brought together in front of the body are tied to the pole. The children are then fastened by their necks with a rope attached to the women, and thus form a living chain, in which order they are marched to headquarters in company with the captured herds." The most of the men are killed in their attempt to defend their homes and families. The women and children are made slaves. You can readily imagine what a price in blood is paid for each slave."

Let me quote from one or two more authors, to open your eyes to what is going on in Africa. And which thing is spreading even to this part of the country, and threatens to be a serious drawback to missionary work, and a menace to the life and property of the missionaries, *unless* a stop is put to the nefarious trade in human beings, and the Arab taught to behave himself. Personally, we would like to see the United States the possessor of the Congo Free State.

But to resume, Cardinal Lavigerie is quoted as saying of the slaves captured: "They march all day; at night when they stop to rest, a few handfuls of raw sorgho are distributed among the captors. This is all their food. Next morning they must start again. But after a day or two the fatigue, the suffering and privations have weakened a great many. The women and the aged are the first to halt. Then, in order to strike terror into this miserable mass of human beings, their conductors, armed

with a wooden bar to economize powder, approach those who seem to be the most exhausted, and deal them a terrible blow on the nape of the neck. The unfortunate victims utter a cry, and fall to the ground in the convulsions of death. The terrified troop immediately resumes its march. Terror has imbued even the weakest with new strength. Each time some one breaks down the same horrible scene is repeated. . . . .

The traffickers in human flesh have acquired, by experience, a knowledge of how much their victims can endure. A glance shows them who will soon sink from weariness; then to economize the scanty food which they distribute, they pass behind the wretched beings and fell them with a single blow. Their corpses remain where they fall, when they are not suspended on the branches of the neighboring trees."

Another quotation; this time from Stanley's work: "We discovered that this horde of banditti—for in reality and without disguise they were nothing else—was under the leadership of several chiefs. . . .

. . . . . For eleven months the band had been raiding successfully between the Congo and the Lubianza on the left bank. They had then undertaken to perform the same cruel work between the Bierre and Wane Kirunda. On looking at my map I find that the area described would be equal to 34,570 square miles, just 2,000 square miles greater than the island of Ireland, and is inhabited by about one million people. . . . .

The slave traders admit that they have only 2,300 captives in this fold, yet they have raided through the length and breadth of a country larger than Ireland, bearing fire and spreading carnage with lead and iron. Both banks of the river show that one hundred and eighteen villages and forty-three districts have been devastated, out of which is only educed this scant profit of 2,300 females and children, and 2,000 tusks of ivory. . . . .

Given that the one hundred and eighteen villages were peopled only by 1,000 each, we have slain 11,800 and only a profit of two per cent. By the time all these captives have been subjected to the accidents of the river voyage to Kirunda and Myangwe, of camp life and its harsh miseries, to the havoc of smallpox, and the pests which miseries breed, there will only remain a scant one per cent. upon the bloody venture." "What," Stanley goes on to write, "was the cause of all this vast sacrifice of human life? of all this unspeakable misery? Nothing but the indulgence of an old Arab's wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous instinct. He wished to obtain slaves to barter profitably away to other Arabs, and having weapons, guns, and gunpowder enough, he placed them in the hands of 300



slaves and despatched them to commit murder wholesale, just as an English nobleman would put guns in the hands of his guests, and permit them to slaughter the game upon his estate."

Such is the Arab. Such is his work. The thought that comes to every Christian thinker is, What shall be done with the Arab? Has not he a soul to be saved as well as the heathen? How shall he be reached? The other curse in Africa is rum. Between the two the poor African stands a small chance. America, Europe, sending in rum and gin, the Arab carrying on his nefarious slave trade, who shall say that the Arab's mode of enslaving is worse than that of America or Europe? I could quote you stories, from reliable sources, about the liquor traffic with Africa that would almost, if not entirely, put in the background the stories I have quoted above of the slave traffic.

Before I close this letter I must give you a short history of this station. Leopoldville was founded by Stanley in 1881, being the fourth of a series of supply stations, the first of which was at the foot of a series of falls which reach from here to Vivi just above Matadi. The Congo River at this place is quite wide, perhaps five miles, not less, and then it suddenly narrows to a rushing, tumbling stream of a few hundred yards width, and descends about eleven hundred feet inside of 260 miles. Where we are just now is known as Dr. Sims' Station. It is situated on the river about half a mile above the "State Station." In 1883 Dr. Sims, of the Livingstone Inland Mission, reached the upper river, and having procured from Mr. Stanley this piece of land, founded the station now bearing his name. (Subsequently this property, as well as all other property and rights owned by the C. I. M., passed into the hands of the American Baptist Missionary Union.) There are at present at this station Dr. Sims and Mr. and Mrs. Glickman. There are thirteen houses, including his own. Some of these houses are store houses, some visitors houses, etc. One brick church, one pharmacy and hospital combined, and two cook houses. The grounds are laid out in broad avenues lined with pineapple and mango trees and fancy shrubs. My wife and I walked down one of these avenues this afternoon and came across numerous tracks freshly made, which, by their shape and deepness in the soil, showed they were made by hyppopotami. The foot prints were from eighteen to twenty-four inches in circumference, and, we made tracks, too, but not quite so large, and they pointed toward the mission station. We did not fear them very much, however, as it was early in the day. We have seen our first hippos sporting in the pool opposite here—certainly we are not prepossessed with them—what ungainly creatures to

be sure! The natives are very fond of them as food, and go almost wild with delight when one is killed. They are not at all particular as to whether it is fresh or not. Last week you could smell "hippo" meat all over the place. Our English cousins might call it "high." I wished it was higher.

At this writing the war fever has somewhat cooled down, and we are in hopes the Arabs will keep away.

March 29. Have learned to-day that a big fight took place with the Arabs up river, hundreds killed, one boat just returned. Can't learn what the next move will be. There seems to be something going on, but the State don't tell what it is. Have again heard that all the boats will be pressed into service.

*Leopoldville, Stanley Pool, S.W. Africa, March 27.*