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NOTE.—There are many subjects in Africa, such as Racial Characteristics, Political and Industrial Conditions, Labour, Disease, Currency, Banking, Education, and so on, about which information is imperfect and opinion divided. On none of these complicated and difficult questions has Science said the last word. Under these circumstances it has been considered best to allow those competent to form an opinion to express freely in this Journal the conclusions at which they themselves have arrived. *It must be clearly understood that the object of the Journal is to gather information, and that each writer must be held responsible for his own views.*

NOTES ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GREAT ITURI FOREST

At the conclusion of my expedition through Northern Uganda, in 1902 and 1903, I spent a short time on the eastern fringe of the Congo Free State, but finding that the Ituri Forest was closed to sportsmen, I determined to postpone my intended search for the Okapi till some future date.

It took me a little over a year to complete the account of my expedition and prepare for the Ituri trip. Eventually, on November 2nd, 1904, I left England for the Lado Enclave. Here my chief quests were the Northern White Rhinoceros and two elephants as near 12 feet in height as possible. The skin of one of the latter was intended for the Natural History Museum, a trophy which they had been vainly endeavouring to procure for the last three years. The Northern White

¹ Read at meeting of AFRICAN SOCIETY, June 28, 1907.

Rhinoceros was discovered by Major Gibbons in his Cape to Cairo Expedition, during which he obtained only a single specimen, afterwards sent to America. Since then, merely a few horns had reached Europe to remind us of its existence, and no further details of its distribution were forthcoming.

Five months spent in the Lado Enclave led me to the conclusion that the White Rhinoceros is only found on the left bank of the Nile, its most southerly point being the neighbourhood of Wadelai, and its western boundary probably the water-shed between the Congo and Nile systems, while it appears to extend some distance into the Soudan, north of Kero.

In the end, I succeeded in shooting and preserving several good specimens, but these have not yet been scientifically compared with the Southern White Rhinoceros. While in England all the white rhino are regarded as belonging to one and the same species, in America the Northern form has been considered as a sub-species, and judging from the great distance between Northern Zululand and the Lado Enclave (there being no known connecting link), I should fancy that the American scientists hold the more correct view.

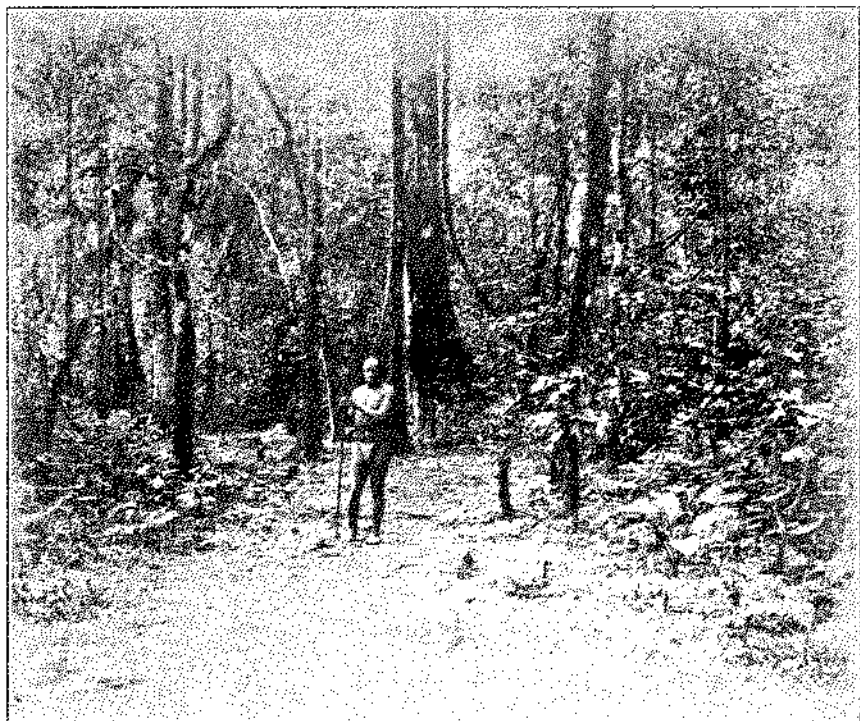
To procure the big elephant skins was a much more difficult task, and, unfortunately, even when I was at length successful, they were, for some unexplained reason, detained so long in Uganda as to be utterly spoilt.

My two principal quests in the Enclave thus accomplished, I moved south-westwards into the great Ituri Forest, where I spent in all some ten months, the last six accompanied by my wife, who came out from home to spend her honeymoon with me among the Pygmies.

Leaving Irumu, the Congo post on the edge of the Forest, I crossed the Ituri River at Kifuku. On arrival at this place, I found the women of the Mongwana tribe—as the descendants of the Arab slave-traders and their followers are called—executing a death-dance for one of the villagers who had been killed in a brush with the Pygmies. Their faces smeared with ashes, they were slowly moving round one of their number seated in the centre beating a drum. Nearly everyone carried a short stick with which he marked time. The



MRS. POWELL-COTTON AND HER MULE.



THE TRACK THROUGH THE FOREST.—A PYGMY CHIEF.

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most impressive movement of the dance occurred after a pause, when the drum began to beat softly, and the women threw themselves upon their knees, with their ears to the ground, "listening intently to the far-off voices of the slain." The dance was still in progress when I went to close my tent for the night, and pausing a while, I watched the curious scene before me. As fresh wood was cast on the fire, the flames leapt into the darkness to light up the sombre figures of the dancers, swaying slowly to and fro to the pathetic cadence of the drum. Every now and then melancholy gave place to defiance, the drum throbbed indignation at the Pygmy foe, and the thrill excited cries of the dangers echoed into the stillness of the night.

The Forest I found differed greatly from the dismal miasmatic place of my imagination. The lofty dome of interlaced branches above our heads only served as a screen from the pitiless heat of the African sun, without hindering the passage of myriads of little sunbeams that filtered through the leaves, danced on the russet pathway we were following, and lit up the wings of the many gay butterflies and birds that darted across our route. In the early mornings, it is true, the foliage was heavy with glittering dewdrops and gossamer, and as we rode along through the overgrown footway, the leaves would shake their burden of moisture in our faces. But before eight, the sun had lifted the mists from the dense undergrowth, the giant trees and the graceful creepers that threw their fantastic twists and festoons from branch to branch and from tree to tree. It was in the early morning, before the world with its animal life seemed well awake, that one felt the hush of the great forest, whose silence was broken only by the crackling of the sticks under the feet of our caravan.

Perhaps the most absorbing objects of general interest in the Ituri Forest are the Pygmies, a curious little folk with big broad heads and compact, well-proportioned bodies, set on short sturdy legs. Even the infants have wizened care-worn faces, but at the mention of a hunt, a Pygmy's wild dark eyes will glow with an energy and alertness quite unknown among any of the other natives seen on my journey.

Hunting, indeed is the Pygmy's sole dream of a happy existence, and of his own little section of the forest there is not a corner or cranny of which he does not know the secrets.

The Pygmies live in groups—numbering from 6 to 18 men, with their families. Each of these groups occupies a recognised part of the forest, which is their particular hunting-ground and into which any strange native trespasses at his peril. Every little community enters into a sort of compact with the head-man of some other forest tribe, whom they supply with fresh meat and honey, leaves to thatch his houses, pliant creepers for use as ropes, and other forest produce, in exchange for bananas, sweet potatoes, and maize. They themselves never cultivate the soil, an occupation which they look down upon as unworthy of a true Pygmy.

Their villages are of the most simple construction. Situated in some little clearing in the forest, they consist of a few primitive huts, each formed by thrusting pliant saplings into the ground, tying the ends together and thatching them with the broad, plantain-like leaf to be found everywhere in the forest.

In one of these villages our attention was attracted by a hut, lower and smaller than the rest, which, it was explained, had been built for the children, who always sleep together.

In another village, the chief was the proud possessor of a unique bed, open to the sky and made like a hammock, with a network of strips of skin stretched on a framework, fixed in the ground.

The villages, being so slightly constructed, are moved, not only for their customary bi-annual migration, or when hunting in that district is becoming difficult, but also on the death of any member of the group, or when they have killed some large animal. It is easier, in the latter case, to move the village to the animal than the animal to the village.

The Pygmy's weapons consist of a short, broad-bladed spear and a little bow, decorated with monkey-skin and hammered iron and strung with strips of cane. The arrows have small iron heads, neatly worked in an endless variety of patterns, or are tipped with hardened wood, coated with poison, but an interesting feature of them all is the fresh

green leaf inserted in place of feathers, to wing their flight.

All the metal-work used by the pygmies is purchased from neighbouring tribes. Their only manufactures appear to be their small loin-cloths made from bark, their wooden pots for carrying honey, the shafts of their arrows, their bows, softened skins for sleeping-mats or belts, and ornaments for their arms and hair, made from feathers, pig-bristles and fur.

In all my wanderings I have never met a native race so adept at tracking or so thoroughly acquainted with every habit and haunt of the animals of their country. By far the greater part of their game is captured by placing a series of large-gauge nets along a game-path and then driving through a section of forest towards them. Animals thus netted are taken alive, their feet are tied together and they are carried in on a pole to the patron chief or to the white man's post. If, however, the Pygmies intend eating the animals themselves, they are speared on the spot and, as often as not, skin, bones and all find their way into the cooking-pot.

At climbing, I have never seen the Pygmy's equal. If the vines hang conveniently round the tree he wishes to climb, he scales up them, using his big toes as thumbs. Should there be no creepers, and the tree be a thin one, he grasps it with his hands, puts the flat of his feet against it and walks up. If, again, the tree is too thick to be negotiated in this way, he grips it with his legs on either side and nimbly works his way to the top.

It has often been stated that the Pygmies have no belief in a Supreme Being, so that I was rather surprised to see my head tracker invoking the aid of a Higher Power during a terrific thunderstorm in the forest. First of all, he implored that the storm should be dispersed, but as it only grew in volume, he changed his entreaty, to beg protection from its violence.

On another occasion, my gunbearer, whom I had sent to prospect a new bit of country for game, told me when he came back, that he had come across a whole group of Pygmies seated in a wide semi-circle, the men wearing their okapi belts and the women their beads and all their finery. They were busily eating round a table in the centre. Each Pygmy

carefully placed a little packet of his particular provision on the table, which was soon laden with a supply of bananas, honey and sweet potatoes.¹ The Pygmy tracker's explanation was that they were changing camp and this ceremonial feast was an invocation to the Supreme Spirit to give them good luck on their new hunting ground.

Next to hunting and harvesting the honey, the pygmies' chief occupation is dancing, and even their dances are intimately connected with the chase. The search for and discovery of tracks, the sighting of the animal, the stealthy approach, the spearing and death of the beast, the summoning of the comrades, the joy of the hunter—all are portrayed.

The men and women all dance, but generally in separate groups. In spite of all the din and shaking, I have seen many a little baby, sound asleep, slung to the mother's hip or back, while she was joining in the dances. A certain amount of drum-beating and chanting is required to work up sufficient enthusiasm for the start. Then a slow shuffling measure commences, to the accompaniment of the drum, and a low chant, interspersed with shrill cries and blasts on the little horns which they always carry to signal the death of an animal, or the approach of an enemy.

For the dance, the Pygmies are very fond of daubing their faces and bodies with different coloured clay, as well as wearing skin and feather head dresses. Nearly every man will don a broad okapi-skin belt, one end of which is cut into fine strips, laced and tied into holes pierced in the other end. This belt is reversed for special occasions, and it is the only skin I have ever seen them wear. The Pygmy man's ordinary costume consists of a loin-cloth made from bark, dyed a terra-cotta red or a bluish grey and held up by a belt of finely-plaited grass. Their heads they shave in different patterns and ornament them with little tufts of pig's bristles or feathers. Their upper lips they are wont to pierce, inserting from two to five little brass rings, while wristlets of skin or metal complete their jewellery. The men do not practice tattooing, although I have seen a Pygmy with his body slashed to relieve pain.

¹ I afterwards visited the spot and saw the table with the remains of the food still on it. A photograph taken unfortunately proved a failure.

The women are even more scanty in their costumes, which they generally supplement by bunches of leaves stuck into their girdles, when they come to dance for the white man. They never seem to wear okapi-skin belts, which are apparently reserved for the sole use of the men. The women, however, use broad belts of other skins, slung from one shoulder, in which to carry their babies, who sit straddle-legged on the mother's hip.

It was in the district round Mawambe that I came in contact with more Pygmies than in any other part of my journey, although I believe to the north-east they are even more numerous.

Unluckily we could glean no recent news of okapi in the neighbourhood, and were strongly advised to go to Makala, where a celebrated native hunter had already killed the two which Dr. David brought to Europe.

Makala, on the banks of the Lindi, we found to be a typical forest station, with an avenue, lined with pineapples and bananas, leading up to the post, that crowned a little hill. It consisted of a well-built brick house, another of wattle and daub, a mess-hut and a number of rubber and other stores, besides the usual village for the soldiers and personnel of the post.

On our arrival, Akuki, the native hunter of whom I had heard, was immediately sent out to search for tracks of okapi. A few days later, he came in with news that he had found and shot one. Besides the disappointment of his having thus spoilt a chance for me, there was the difficulty of recovering and dealing with the skin before it was too late. However, by spending nearly the whole of one night on it, I succeeded in preserving it so well that I am told it is one of the best that has so far reached Europe. I also sent home the complete skeleton, which together with the skin set up, is now to be seen at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

In the neighbourhood of this post, I now spent many weeks in a vain attempt to shoot an okapi, but in spite of hours of patient following on fresh tracks, I never so much as caught sight of one.

In fact, there appears to me to be only a remote chance of

a sportsman coming across these extremely timid denizens of the forest undergrowth.

Here and there in the forest one comes upon a natural clearing, called an *eddo*, where the trees recede, leaving short green grass along the sides of a stream of water. The ground is cut up by the tracks of elephant, buffalo and smaller game, while radiating from these glades, sombre tunnels run into the undergrowth in all directions. They are the time-worn paths of generations of beasts who have come down to drink at the waters.

At one of these *eddos*, I had an exciting time with the dwarf red buffalo of the forest. In the end, I found I had shot a little family party of three, but not before my coat had been brushed by the wounded bull angrily charging down on me from the gloom of one of the tunnels.

Makala is one of the great rubber centres of the Congo, and during my long stay at that post, I had excellent opportunities of studying the method of rubber-collection.

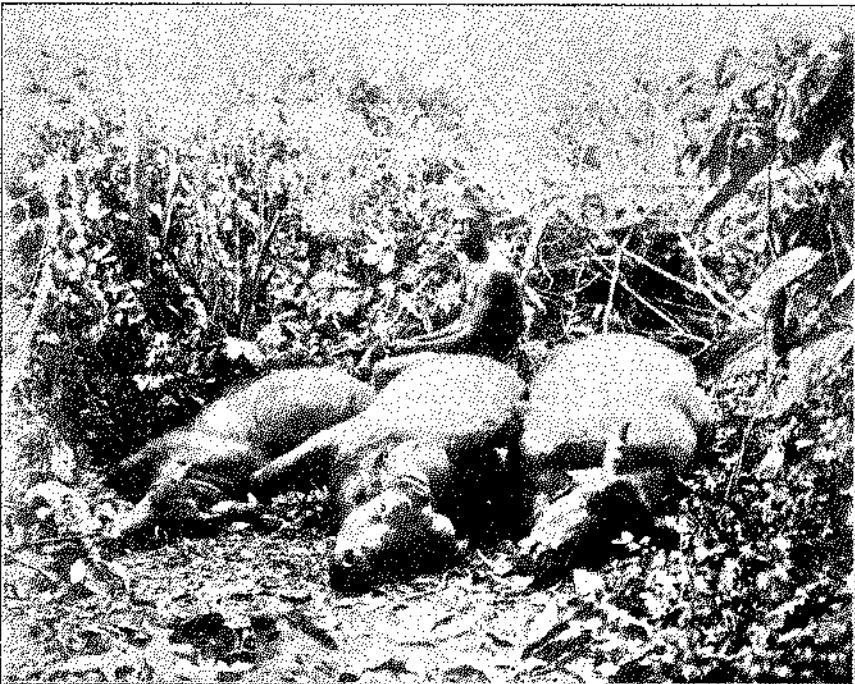
In different districts, this varies considerably. At Makala, each adult man has to bring in 5 kilos per month, and this he can collect in 40 working hours. Payment is at the rate of 30 centimes per kilo, of which about 10 per cent. is given to the chief and the balance to the actual gatherer.

The natives usually go out in couples—build a little shanty in the midst of the jungle and work in a circle round it. Climbing the rubber-bearing tree or vine, they slash the bark with two or three V-shaped cuts, one below the other, and then arrange a broad leaf underneath, so as to form a trough. This is to conduct the sap, which oozes out, about the consistency and colour of ideal milk, into a gourd, or preferably, a galley-pot, procured at the station. The rubber from trees and vines is mixed promiscuously, the natives preferring to tap the latter, as they say it flows more freely. In any case, they put some vine rubber into that from the trees, as it coagulates more rapidly.

Returned to their hut, the gatherers pour the sap into an earthenware pot containing water, place it on the fire and stir it with a stick which they call *bosanga*. In about ten minutes the rubber, owing to the acid in the *bosanga*, begins to collect



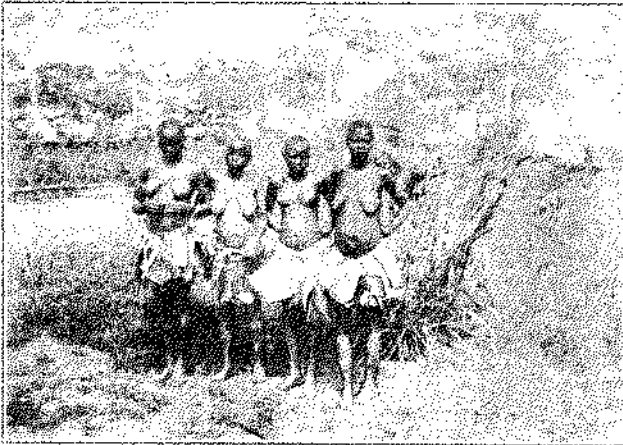
MAJOR POWELL COTTON AND HIS PYGMY TRACKERS.



FOREST BUFFALOES.



GATHERING RUBBER.



MOURNING COSTUME AT FORT BENI.

[To face p. 10.]

round the stick, and soon a mass is formed. This is lifted out, placed on a big leaf and rinsed with clean cold water. Then, enveloped in leaves, it is kneaded for a minute or two with hands or feet, to press out the remaining moisture. It is now ready to be cut up into rough cubes, which are spread to dry on a little platform built over the fire. Here it remains for an hour or two, before it is packed in the loosely-made baskets in which the native carries it to the station.

As the rubber-laden caravan of men, women and children, headed by the chief and the forest-guard, wind their way from their village into the post, discordant notes are blown on a trumpet made from an antelope-horn, and all chant a chorus. Long before the party reaches the post, this barbaric music, ever increasing in volume, heralds their approach to the official in charge, and he makes his preparations to receive the rubber.

He meets the laden caravan at the beam-scale of the station where the rough baskets are weighed and the price paid in cloth, salt, bells, soap, beads and suchlike coveted treasures. The payment over, off they all rush, like children out of school, yelling and shouting at the top of their voices.

The rubber is then spread on platforms under large sheds, until the women workers of the post have cut it into neat little cubes. This done, for three months it lies in layers on the platforms to dry and is turned once a fortnight, till all the moisture has evaporated. During this process it loses some 25 per cent. in weight.

Meanwhile very neatly plaited baskets are being prepared from rattan cane, into which the dry rubber is packed, till every basket weighs exactly 5 lbs. A tin label is attached to each, with the distinctive number and place of origin, and they are then laid out in long rows, ready for transport by porters, canoe, rail and steamer to Europe.

Leaving Makala, we turned to Mawambe and made our way slowly down to Beni, by the same route by which my wife and I had entered the forest. At the latter post, we were sorry to hear of the death of the chief Kilangoze, who had been most useful to us in collecting food for our journey through the forest. His burial had lately taken place with

much ceremonial, and the women were still in a curious mourning costume which consisted of a short, heavy kilt of banana-leaves.

From Beni, we continued our way to Kasindi at the northern end of Lake Albert Edward, in the neighbourhood of which we spent some time hunting, and I procured among other specimens a new red variety of the Cape Buffalo. We then passed round the northern end of the lake and worked our way southwards, till at Kissegnies, we were fortunate enough to meet Commandant Bastien, the chief of the Congo State Geographical Mission for the demarcation of the 30th meridian. It was on the banks of the Sassa, a few marches distant, that I had an encounter with a wounded lion, which nearly proved fatal.

A little further south lies the village of Katanga, built out on the waters of the Lake. A huge floating platform, which rises and falls with the surface of the water, supports the huts. The villagers subsist by fishing and hippo-hunting, carrying on a lucrative trade by buying salt from the extinct volcano at Katwe, at the northern end of the lake, and ferrying it to the southern end, to exchange for sheep. They are a particularly robust-looking race, although they informed us that they invariably intermarry, for "a woman from the shore would be quite useless" in their floating home.

This was the most southerly point we touched. By the Toro-Entebbe route, we returned to Mombasa, thence by steamer to Naples, which we reached on February 3rd, 1907, after a 27 months' trip.

The chief scientific results of the journey are (1) several good specimens of the Northern White Rhino; (2) an Okapi skin and skeleton; (3) six new mammals, *viz.*, (a) a Water-Chevrotain, *Dorcatherium aquaticum cottoni*; (b) the Central African Ratel, *Mellivora cottoni*; (c) the dusky African Tiger Cat, *Felis chrysothrix cottoni*; (d) an Elephant-shrew, *Rhynchocyon stuhlmanni nudicaudata*; (e) a Black and White Monkey, *Colobus palliatus cottoni*; (f) the Semliki Red Buffalo, *Bos caffer cottoni*.

Over 8,000 Lepidoptera, among which several new species have been already described, a number of ethnographical

objects, some phonographic records and about 700 photographs complete the list.

In conclusion, I should like to add that my journey was only rendered possible, firstly through the goodwill of Sir Constantine Phipps, our Minister at Brussels at the time when I started; secondly by the kindness of the Egyptian and Sudanese officials, who took the greatest interest in my expedition and did all in their power to facilitate the passage of myself and my equipment through their country, as well as to ensure the prompt return of all the specimens sent back that way. Lastly, and most important of all, I am indebted to the courtesy of the Congo Government, who not only gave me permission to travel and shoot through the game reserves on their eastern border, but allowed me to take my own armed escort from Uganda. The result was that I had unusual opportunities for observing the administration of the country and the general attitude of the natives. Almost throughout, I received every attention and assistance from the Congo officials, many of whom put themselves to great personal inconvenience in order to give me greater comfort. Of the atrocities of which we have heard so much, I saw no evidence, probably because none had taken place in the parts of the country which I visited. Of the ill-treatment of the natives by individual white men I discovered nothing more than what I have seen in East Africa and Uganda. Of course, in the collection of any sort of tax there must be a certain amount of hardship. Some of us suffer from it here. No doubt the collection of rubber and the portorage is at times in the Congo a hardship and a severe one. So is the hut tax in Uganda. I myself found an old man lying on the Toro-Entebbe road, beside a mail-sack, utterly exhausted. He told me he had not been able to pay his hut tax and he had therefore been sent in to perform the usual amount of work in lieu thereof. He had not been able to keep up with the rest, and the head man of the party had gone on, carrying with him the money for the food of them all; so that he was starving, but dreaded the consequences if he abandoned the mail-sack. In this individual case, the hut tax seemed likely to prove the death of this old fellow. Yet it would be rather hard to argue that the

Uganda Government enacted it regardless of the lives of their unfortunate natives.

P. H. G. POWELL-COTTON.

At the close of Major Powell-Cotton's paper the Chairman (Mr. J. Cathcart Wason, M.P.), in proposing a vote of cordial thanks to Major Powell-Cotton, said how refreshing it was to hear of the excellent terms on which Major Cotton had been with the natives, and the Society was most grateful for his interesting paper. But he (the Chairman) felt bound, as a Member of the African Society, a Member of the Congo Reform Association, and also as a Member of Parliament, to protest most strongly against Major Powell-Cotton's comparison of the Uganda Hut Tax with the system of exploiting the natives for the benefit of concessionaires in Belgium or elsewhere. In the Congo natives were forced to leave home, go to the forest, and not return till they had gathered the rubber demanded. In Uganda the Hut Tax, four shillings per family per year, could be paid in money, work, or produce when and how the natives pleased, and no comparison between the two systems was just.