

651.C.9D.4

# ACROSS WIDEST AFRICA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE  
OF EASTERN, CENTRAL AND WESTERN AFRICA  
AS SEEN DURING A TWELVE MONTHS' JOURNEY  
FROM DJIBUTI TO CAPE VERDE \* \* \*

BY

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*Illustrated by 160 Half-tone Reproductions of Photographs and a  
Map of the Route*

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Picturesque cannibals (Sango tribe).

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to despatch a message to Zemio in order to have a trap laid to capture me, as the natives had been spying me for several days. I had been suspected of being a slave merchant, the suspicion having arisen because I spoke politely to the natives I met! That is what comes of being polite to natives!

There is no more unsatisfactory work in Central Africa than surveying. Not only have villages a way of changing their name every time a chief dies (the village always going by the name of the chief), but also the villages are constantly changing their positions, being sometimes built on one river, sometimes on another, sometimes upon a hill, and at other times in a low valley, according to superstitions, agricultural necessities, the needs of war, or the fear of neighbouring tribes. Thus I found Djema in a different place altogether from where I expected it to be and where it was marked on Marchand's map. Marchand himself had never been to this place, his route being about one hundred and sixty kilometres further south. The distance between the Djema visited by me and the Djema on the maps was, if I remember right, some fourteen or sixteen kilometres. The latter position had been established by a member of the Marchand expedition, who had deviated in that direction for surveying and exploring purposes.

The place where I found it had been selected by the *Société des Sultanats* as a more suitable locality for the collection of rubber. It was discovered, nevertheless, that the difficulty of transport of the goods from and to the river was too great and the quarters were to be shifted back once more to the site of the old Djema.

A beautiful garden had been made at the quarters of the society, with good vegetables and a rich growth

of flowers. Experiments had been made on various kinds of rubber plants. The *manihot ceara glazioti*, imported from Brazil, had not yielded the satisfactory results expected, as it was brittle and delicate when young and not suited to the climate of Central Africa. The *ire*, which we shall find later spread all over French and Belgian Congo, was the quality most adapted for the locality and gave excellent results. A large nursery of these plants was kept at the *factorerie*. When I was there these plants were gradually being transported to the new quarters of the society at a spot where the Mabiso stream meets the Goangua, the latter being quite an important river navigable at all times even for large canoes.

On May 16th I went over to old and now-revived Djema, where Monsieur Brachiel was busy constructing new quarters.

I left Djema at 8.30 by an undulating trail, with bridges over the five *khors* met on the way. The undulating country was in some of the lower portions liable to inundation during the rainy season. Patches of the familiar volcanic rock showed through, particularly on heights or hill-tops.

We arrived at new Djema (the old Djema of the maps) at 2.30 p.m., having been caught in a heavy tornado which drenched us to the marrow of our bones and soaked the loads once more.

All kinds of antelopes were to be found in this country. Buffaloes, hippopotami, rhinoceri, the large red "antelope cheval" of the French, and elephants of great size were plentiful.

New Djema certainly seemed a better-situated place than the old *factorerie* as far as the transport of the