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SOME PAGES FROM MY AFRICAN DIARY

My African diary really opens long before I first set foot on African soil in April 1936. A series of fortuitous happenings has furnished some fascinating links between the earliest days of Congo exploration and events in which I had the privilege of participating.

A fortnight after my arrival in Léopoldville (Kinshasa), I flew to Stanleyville (Kisangani). Waiting for me at the airport was an elderly gentleman, with a King George beard and a benign facial expression. He piled my luggage into the back of an old Model T Ford van, manipulated some weird home-made gadgets of wire and string, and off we set for the Mission House in the town a mile or so away. George J. Wilkerson—for it was he—had joined the Baptist Mission in 1921. He had formerly served as a builder in Rhodesia for the London Missionary Society, and was there during the Matebele rebellion. He described to me how one day he and a young British lieutenant took refuge from the Matebele arrows behind a single corrugated iron sheet. The name of the lieutenant was Roberts: he afterwards became Field Marshal and Earl.

When, a few hours later, after a hair-raising trip in a dugout canoe, I actually arrived at the Baptist Mission Station in Yakusu, I was greeted among other historic figures by two men who together more than any others had been responsible for the transformation of those warlike savages of the Upper Congo to peaceful citizens. One

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was the senior pastor, Lititiyo: the other was the senior missionary, William Millman. When the latter first reached Kinshasa in 1897, there were only two other Europeans there, an army officer and the manager of the Dutch House. His wife had arrived in the Congo in 1893, and was one of the select band of brave women who survived the gruelling march overland to Kinshasa before the Matadi-Thysville-Kinshasa railway was built. William Millman first met Lititiyo just as the latter—a young brave in direct line of the Yaokanja chieftainship—was running from a village raid carrying a human leg he had just hacked off and which he was about to roast and eat.

Now, to glance at some of the very early pages. At the end of January 1877, H. M. Stanley left the Falls that now bear his name. For the next few days, he and his companions in their whaleboats and canoes had to face a succession of hostile tribes intent on killing and eating the white men and their African crews. 'Everything in the shape of man raised his spear and screamed his rage at us as soon as we were observed', he wrote in *Through the Dark Continent*. Again, 'man was such an obnoxious animal in these regions that we dared not seek his acquaintance', he writes in another place, referring to those who 'had offended our ears with bold demands for our flesh'.

The angry hordes that determined to bar his westward way near Basoko on 1 February 1877, outnumbered considerably the smaller groups of warriors they had up to then encountered. From eight in the morning till five in the afternoon, the expedition was continuously harried by canoes 'which pertinaciously followed' them. A flotilla of 'waspy little canoes' stirred up the riverside villages to prepare for battle. 'We heard shouts of defiance or threats, we knew not which. We had become indifferent to the incessant noise and continual fury'. Eventually, no fewer than fifty-four canoes manned by blood-thirsty cannibals made for Stanley's flotilla.

'A monster canoe leads the way, with two rows of upstanding paddlers, forty men on a side, their bodies bending and swaying in unison as with a swelling barbarous chorus they drive her towards us. In the bow, standing on what appears to be a platform, are the prime young warriors, their heads gay with feathers of the parrot, crimson and grey: at the stern, eight men, with long paddles, whose tops are decorated with ivory balls, guide the monster vessel: and dancing up and down from stern to stern are ten men, who appear to be chiefs'. At last the war canoes were forced to retire by the withering fire from the Zanzibaris' rifles, and the savages were pursued to their villages. Before proceeding down river, Stanley visited a typical village, and noted with disgust the 'evidence of cannibalism . . . in the human . . . skulls that grinned on many poles, and the bones that were freely scattered in the neighbourhood'. This 'is a murderous world' he confessed, 'and we feel for the first time that we hate the filthy, vulturous ghouls who inhabit it'.

It was part of my job from 1936 onwards to visit some of those villages, in an attempt to control an outbreak of sleeping sickness. I experienced the greatest possible co-operation from the chiefs and headmen, many of whom had become Christians. Quite a number of the older villagers were boys at the time of Stanley's first journey down that stretch of the Congo, and remember watching the battle from the bank and seeing the 'fire-spurting sticks' of the Zanzibaris. I photographed such a group, which included a few wizened old men who had actually been in some of the war canoes that attempted to intercept Stanley's flotilla. It was a kind of poetic justice for a white

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missionary doctor to cure them of sleeping sickness and to share with them his Christian faith.

At last, on 9 August 1877, Stanley arrived at the Atlantic, after an epic 999-day transcontinental trek. But his three white colleagues were no more, and half his Zanzibari companions failed to survive the journey. Some of the latter returned to the East Coast; others settled in various parts of the country that came to be known, after the Berlin Congress of 1885 as *L'Etat Indépendant du Congo*.

In September 1936, while on trek about a hundred miles from the Baptist Mission Hospital at Yakusu, I was asked to see a very old man, obviously ill and nearing the end. The cut of his face was so different from the forest Bantu in the village that I remarked upon it and enquired where he came from. In a weak voice he replied that he was from Zanzibar and that he had accompanied Stanley on his journey across Africa, acting as his cook. And, sixty years later, I was to see him in the little Isangi village of Malinda as he was about to breathe his last. (It is interesting to note in passing that Schweitzer found the cook of another Congo explorer, de Brazza, in the market at Libreville. Decrepit and blind, he was taken to the Lambarene Hospital, and there cared for till he died.)

The story does not end there, for in November 1971, I noticed in the press that the Scientific Exploration Society was organizing a dinner at the Grocers' Hall, London, to mark the centenary of the meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in Africa, and that a grandson of each of the two protagonists would be there. I wrote to the Secretary of the Society, and received a gracious invitation to the dinner. I accepted, and on 3 November 1971 had the privilege of meeting the grandson of the man whose cook I had seen in the Congo forest some thirty-five years previously.

Soon after Stanley was given official status in the International Association, he set about appointing District Commissioners. Many of their chief assistants were soldiers, and one who eventually became responsible for The Falls District, stretching from Kisangani to Basoko, was Bojoko. Many were the grim stories still current in the late 'thirties concerning the way he ruled his District. In 1937, while on a sleeping sickness survey in the Yawembe section of Isangi Territory, I climbed the steep bank of the Congo at Lileko, and came to a rambling house, half brick and half mud, with a roof of rusty corrugated iron sheets and leaf tiles. Rising awkwardly to greet me, helped by some of his ageing wives and numerous grandchildren, was an old man, hemiplegic and tottery, but still retaining something of his old military bearing—Bojoko himself. I was to see him several times before he joined his ancestors.

Another early page from my diary is likewise clipped to a later page. On 10 February 1881, after facing and overcoming incredible difficulties, two young Baptist missionaries actually completed a journey along the north bank of the river Congo, and found themselves overlooking the stretch of water now known as Stanley Pool—the first white men to have made the journey. Their names were Holman Bentley and Crudgington. I have connexions with them both. Crudgington was present in the Central Hall, Westminster, at a missionary exhibition in July 1927, and was an honoured figure in the Congo booth. I had the historic privilege of shaking his hand.

It was a bare three years after 1881 that the little steamship named *The Peace* was launched on Stanley Pool. The hull, the engines, and the superstructure had all been

transported overland on the heads of carriers for some 300 miles, since a series of rapids made transport by river quite out of the question. The loads had been re-assembled at Stanley Pool by an apprentice-engineer (George Grenfell), and as *The Peace* slid down the slipway, the astonished Africans burst into cheers, 'She lives! She lives!'

During the next three years, George Grenfell made five voyages of exploration in the vessel, incidentally being awarded in October 1886, the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for his discoveries. In December, 1884, as *The Peace* was slowly threading her way upstream through a maze of islands, Grenfell noticed towards the east columns of smoke that he took to come from the salt-burners' fires. The true cause, however, became evident the following morning: 'a long line of canoes came dropping down-stream close inshore, flying from a band of Arab raiders in pursuit of slaves and ivory'. Then Grenfell 'reached the smoking ruins of Yambuli town, which had possessed about four thousand inhabitants. In a neighbouring settlement, men who were lingering among the still smoking ruins called out to the steamer's crew, "We have nothing left, nothing! Our houses are burnt, our plantations are destroyed, and our women and children gone!" Thousands of fugitives were attempting flight in their canoes, and nearly all the villages were abandoned or the inhabitants were skulking in the plantations. The women and children were wailing and lamenting'.

In that same village, fifty years later, there were two school chapels, and I supervised the construction of a brick dispensary, to replace the wattle-and-daub temporary building that had served its purpose. Pale-skinned foreigners were attempting to atone for the cruelty and shame of those early days of slave-raiding and oppression.

Within a few weeks of his experiences at Yambuli and other villages along that stretch of the river Congo, Grenfell steered *The Peace* into the mouth of a considerable tributary that enters the Congo at Isangi. H. L. Hemmens writes in the following terms about this journey: '. . . violent opposition was encountered. The natives, naturally savage, had been stung through the ravages of the Arabs to reprisals against any men of light skin. Their opposition proved so menacing that the steamer's arrow-guards, made of finely-meshed wire netting, were placed in position around the sides and above the deck. Against these, dense showers of poisoned arrows clanged harmlessly, while the men who shot them were bewildered at the lack of response from those against whom they were directed'.

I met one of those who had shot his arrows against Grenfell and his party. It happened like this. I was steaming slowly up the river Lomami in the good ship *Grenfell* (called, of course, after George Grenfell) when we stopped at a village to buy firewood for the ship's boilers. We had scarcely made the boat fast before an old man came on board, leading by the hand his sick wife, equally aged and obviously in great pain. I examined her, and suggested that I could relieve her pain by means of a small operation. To my surprise, they consented. As I was preparing instruments and anaesthetic, on the deck of the *Grenfell*, I spoke to the husband about the early days and the great changes that had come about since the first white man had appeared in those parts. He could not but agree, for, as it transpired, he as a youth had shot poisoned arrows at Grenfell, and had seen them ping harmlessly against the arrow-guards of *The Peace*. Shortly afterwards, he had been captured by the Arabs, and had become a

slave to an Arab trader who lived at Yanonge. By the time he had told his story, the instruments were sterilized, and I anaesthetized the patient on the deck, while a crowd of villagers looked on. Half an hour later, the patient came to, expressing her gratitude. Shortly afterwards, she left the boat named after the missionary her husband had once tried to kill with poisoned arrows.

In the spring of 1887, while Grenfell was on leave in England, Stanley arrived in the Lower Congo to organize the Emin Pasha relief expedition. 'In order to reach the mouth of the Aruwimi as quickly as possible,' writes Johnston, 'he decided in a somewhat masterful way to impress every steamer on the Upper Congo, amongst them *The Peace*.' When he realized that the regular trips of the vessel were necessary for the maintenance of the scattered string of mission stations along the river, Stanley's peremptory language became milder and conciliatory, and *The Peace* was shortly permitted to resume its eirenic mission. The boat's captain at the time was a fine Christian gentleman named Disasi. When I met him he was living in retirement in a village near Yalamba, the last Mission Station founded by Grenfell, some fifteen miles upriver from Basoko, to the east of the Aruwimi confluence. One of Disasi's sons was named George Grenfell; he was one of the first Congolese to become *Assistant Médical*. Another was Victor Maculo, who was a student of the *Ecole agréé d'Infirmiers* at Yakusu, of which I was principal.

I have mentioned my personal link with Crudgington. His companion in their historic trek to Stanley Pool in 1881 was Holman Bentley, linguist and lexicographer. On 24 February 1887, the first white baby to be born in Congo came to the home of the Bentleys—Henry K. In August that year, the family was travelling in *The Peace* up the Congo towards Lukolela, and stopped for wooding off the string of Moi villages now called Bolobo, and inhabited by Bobangi people renowned for their debauchery and cannibalism. The boat 'was roughly ordered away', writes Johnston in *George Grenfell and the Congo*. 'Before sheering off, however, an idea occurred to Bentley. Taking advantage of the steamer's halt, his wife and nurse were giving a bath to the Bentley baby. As if by accident, the little white child was held in view of the angry and excited people. Suddenly, a hush fell on the assembly of armed men, gradually giving way to a shout of delighted surprise'. The white baby was then passed from arm to arm before being returned to its parents.

Thirty years later, in a London Sunday School, I heard the story from the lips of the 'Bentley baby', and was so entranced that when he asked for boys and girls who wanted to follow Jesus even to Congo, to raise their hands, I was among those who did. Within twenty years, I followed Bentley up the Congo as a Baptist medical missionary.

The Peace was to continue to ply up and down the Congo for many years before it had to be scrapped. Small pieces of its hull were sold in England, the proceeds helping the funds of the Baptist Mission; the boiler still stands on the Mission concession in Kinshasa, within sight of the waters of the Congo.

In 1903, when *The Peace* reached the villages of Yanjali, fifteen miles west of Isangi at the mouth of the Lomami, its captain was greeted by loud wailings. A short while before, 'an officer of the Congo Government with a body of soldiers wantonly slew some natives', according to a report by the American traveller, W. E. Geil. The total number of men, women and children actually killed was 117. The distraught chief

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recounted the story to the captain of *The Peace*, placing on the ground a small stick for each victim as he named him or her. The captain took a photograph of those sticks, and in 1945 gave it to me. I have it still.

I also have a photograph I myself took of three Yanjali women whose babies were shot dead that day as they held them in their arms above their heads while they crouched in the waters of the Congo.

Part of the history of colonialism of which we have no need to be ashamed, however, is the magnificent and disinterested fight against the scourges that sap the health and life of the African territories. In the wake of the Arab slave trade, and the Congo atrocities, came the *Trypanosoma gambiense* and the terrible toll of sleeping sickness. In the Yakusu medical area, whole populous villages were completely wiped out, and in the mid-20s up to a quarter of the population was suffering from this fatal disease. The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine sent out Dutton, Todd and Christie to investigate. Todd visited Yakusu in 1904, keeping a detailed diary of his work and travels. When in Baltimore in 1965, I was shown this diary by Professor Michel F. Lechat, and eventually arranged for it and Todd's other papers to be transferred for safe keeping to the Wellcome Museum in London. As I read the account in Todd's own handwriting of his visit to Yakusu, mentioning people I had known, and sleeping sickness victims I had heard of, I was strangely moved. My mind sped over the years to the pioneering work of C. C. Chesterman and Raymond Holmes, to the clinical trials of tryparsamide, to the regular medical examination of the thousands at risk. I recalled that on one of my first journeys into the river villages to examine the people for evidence of sleeping sickness, I had been received by the chief and all his headmen, who most ceremoniously greeted me with the phrase, 'Welcome, white man of God, for you and your friends have helped to rid us of the dread sleeping sickness'. Some ten years or so later, in 1947, I discharged cured the last patient in our medical area, and subsequent regular annual examinations of the whole population failed to disclose any further cases.

There are other pages in my African diary that to me bring the thrill of recollection—the arrival of the first consignment of sulphones, the discovery of the larval and pupal stages of *Simulium neavei* on *Potomanautes* crabs, the opening of the Toddlers' Clinics, the graduation of the last batch of *Infirmiers diplômés*, and the rest. But the pages we have glanced at in this paper have enabled us to catch glimpses of an Africa that is rapidly passing into the history books—forgotten by all except for scholars. For me, at least, they still retain their nostalgic powers as I recall the people and the part they played in the opening up of the Dark Continent.

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OSTEO-ARCHAEOLOGY AS A MEDICO-HISTORICAL AUXILIARY SCIENCE*

INTRODUCTION

PALAEOPATHOLOGY HAS for many years been one of the fundamental disciplines of the history of medicine. The word 'palaeopathology' means literally: the science of very ancient diseases. Due to the fact that we have no contemporary literary reports about diseases in prehistoric men and animals, we only can find information about this important subject by studying skeletons. Prehistoric skeletons can be difficult to date, and often their state of preservation is so bad that the diagnoses of the diseases are dubious, and sometimes it is pure guesswork. This is—in short—the contents of the research with the limited possibilities and uncertain scientific results which are characterized as palaeopathology.

In 1930 the French army-surgeon, Dr. Léon Pales issued in Paris his big composite work: *Paléopathologie et Pathologie comparative*, the subject of which is fossil skeletons of men and animals.

In 1966 the medico-historian and pathologist Dr. Saul Jarcho published the book: *Human Palaeopathology*.² Dr. Jarcho states in the introduction the importance of the word palaeopathology, and he points out that, unlike the earlier definition of the conception 'human palaeopathology' as a 'science of diseases of pre-historic mankind', American scientists now by this name mainly refer to diseases of American Pre-columbian men, i.e. men on the American Continent living before 1492.

In this way the upper limit for palaeopathological subjects for research has been moved various thousand years further in time, to the year about A.D. 1500.

Many research workers of today use—without knowing the etymology of the word—the expression 'palaeopathologic examinations' for nearly everything concerning the study of bones found in earth, no matter whether they originate from the stone age or from a more recent period.

During the last few years a new word, osteo-archaeology, has become familiar in the history of medicine. Still, the word is often used in conjunction with the word palaeopathology. Since it was I who formed the new word, and as I feel a certain responsibility that it may be understood and used in the right way, I should like to give a short account of the problems involved.

Archaeology is one of the most fascinating sciences of our time, which, generally speaking, covers all that is connected with the excavation of historic finds. As a university subject it exists as prehistoric (Northern and European) archaeology, Egyptian, Oriental, as the subject of primitive Christianity, and as medieval archaeology. We

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