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UNCLE SAM. "ENOUGH HEAD-LINES—PRODUCE THE EVIDENCE!"

The Adventures of an Explorer in Africa

How the Batwa Pygmies were brought to the St. Louis Fair

By Samuel P. Verner

Special Commissioner to Central Africa from the Louisiana Purchase Exposition

IT was while Livingstone's son was dying at Gettysburg that Paul Du Chaillu first saw the African Pygmies, and became the first modern scientific traveller to visit them in their forest homes. This was on the third of July, 1863, at the headwaters of the Ogowe River, West Central Africa. The accounts given by different travellers concerning the character and habits of these little folk are practically the same, and have been received by the world at large with varying degrees of doubt or credulity. The African Pygmies are both unique and interesting, and never before has any group of them left its native wilds for civilized lands. They are the wildest of the human race.

It is interesting to note that when Darwin was propounding his theory of the Origin of Species in 1869, the primitive aborigines of Africa were unknown, save from the ancient Grecian traditions, and even when he wrote *The Descent of Man* in 1874, so little of them was known that he made no mention of the Pygmies, although he stated that the first home of the human race was probably in Central Africa, and that the two most anthropomorphous apes, the gorilla and the chimpanzee, were denizens of the African forests. How gladly would Darwin have enjoyed the opportunity any schoolboy may have now at St. Louis! For the next of kin among men to the pithecanthropus of the evolutionist is now at the Fair.

I was asked to invite him because I had found a village of the Batwa Pygmies in 1897, and had lived near them nearly two years. The necessary diplomatic requirements were met by the granting of a letter from the Secretary of State in Washington to the Government of the King of the Belgians, at the instance of President Francis. With other desirable introductions, we left New York the latter part of November, arriving at Liverpool December 3, and spending a month in London and Brussels, arranging official affairs with the Congo Government, selecting and purchasing supplies, and preparing for our departure from Antwerp for the Congo River on January 7. We were fellow passengers with three eminent officials of the Congo State, the new Governor-General, Major Paul Costermans, the "Inspecteur d'Etat," M. Mahieu, and the chief-engineer of the new railways in the interior, M. Augustus Adam.

While our five-thousand-ton ship was moving up the Congo, she ran aground on one of the treacherous shifting sand-banks, and was obliged to transfer cargo to a lighter vessel, being delayed three days, and causing us finally and unavoidably to miss a connection with a steamboat, for the upper river, resulting in a month's loss of time.

M. Felix Fuchs, the Governor-General at Boma, the Congo's capital,—Stanley's resting-place after his memorable descent of the great river in 1877,—issued the necessary introductions to the officials in the interior, and we proceeded to the port of the Congo, Matadi, at the foot of Livingstone Cataracts. These official introductions merely permitted the operations of the expedition, and did not require the use of military force in any way, as the natives were to come voluntarily or not at all. From Matadi, we had a journey of two hundred miles to Stanley Pool, across the Chrystal Mountains, the great rampart along the west coast of the continent.

There was not a single steamer available for our purpose, on our arrival at the free navigation of the upper river, until February 17, when we were able to embark on the *Ville d'Anvers*, a boat of thirty-five tons capacity, eighty feet long by twenty wide, with a lower and upper deck. On this we spent twelve days ploughing the waters of the Congo, and its greatest southern tributary, the Kasai, stirring up occasional herds of hippopotami, shooting some crocodiles, and once, when on shore while the crew were cutting wood, having a lively encounter with elephants, as well as another with buffalo, until we reached the confluence of the Sankuru River with the Kasai, opposite a post of the state called Bassongo. From this place the *Ville d'Anvers* returned down the river, and we were obliged to wait more than two weeks for another boat to take us up the Sankuru, to the capital of the Kasai District, Lusambo.

This waiting time was well spent, for we found one of the Pygmies in the interior behind Bassongo, a captive in the hands of the fierce Baschilele, and redeemed him. He was delighted to come with us, for he was many miles from his people, and the Baschilele were not easy masters.

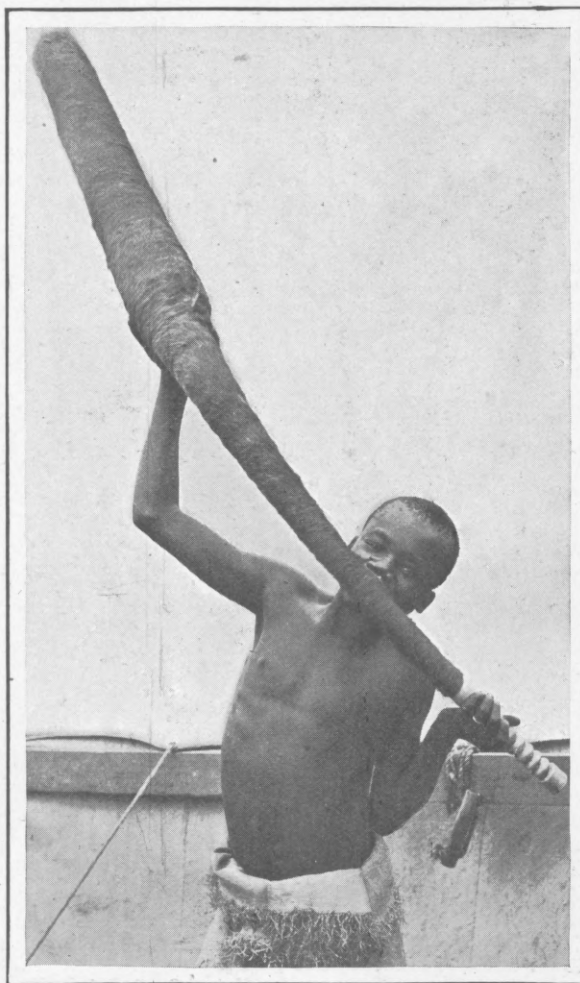
At Lusambo, the Commissaire of the District, Captain Chenat, received us courteously, and our steamer, the *Ville des Bruges*, Captain Johansen, first descended the Sankuru, then turned up the Kasai and made for its head of navigation at Wissmann Falls. As some state boats had been recently attacked in this part of the river, and the wild Baschilele had set upon and burned a rubber trading-post on the west bank, the four white men aboard took turns as sentinels at night when moored along the shore. It is not a pleasant feeling to tramp the deck at midnight, not knowing when a poisoned arrow may fly from the forest, and the wild yell of the black savages burst on the ear. I hailed the morning with peculiar pleasure, and when we steamed up between the forest-clad mountains to Wissmann Falls on the last day of March, I beheld my old camping-ground with decided relief.

The steamer captain said that the bit of raging water below Wissmann Falls, across which we went in a canoe seeking a landing beside the great forest, was the worst he had ever tried in all his Congo steaming. The river was higher than it had ever been seen before, the natives told me afterwards. It was regarded as a portent. I had to climb ashore on the limb of a tree. Leaving the captain to pilot the boat across, I began the twenty-mile walk along the narrow trail to the town of my old friend Ndombe, King of the Bikenge, and feudal lord of the Batwa Pygmies in their little settlement on the edge of the forest extending down the Lubi waters to the Kasai. About midday I came in sight of the waving plantain leaves and stately palm groves which adorn this African capital. In a few moments some of the natives saw me, and what a hullabaloo was set up as the news spread! My old friends came trooping up, Ndombe's eldest son, Mianye, now grown into a tall handsome young man, rushed up with "Fwela, Moiyu," the palm wine was brought out, the fatted goat was killed, and Ndombe himself left the war palaver he was holding and came and gave me a warm welcome.

Next day the whole town marched, or rather ran, down to the river, and Ndombe's warriors insisted on bearing me in a hammock. Captain Johansen had followed me up, and returned to the boat remarking that Ndombe was the finest specimen of the race he had seen in the Congo, and that a Pygmy woman with a child whom he saw as he passed by was the smallest mother he had ever seen. The Bikenge swarmed over the

steamer, and great was their wonder, for never before had *chukachuk* moored at Ndombe's landing at Wissmann Falls.

Our cargo having been discharged in the forest, most of it was seized upon by Ndombe's men, and carried by them to the town that day, and the rest of it was similarly borne through the woods and across the plains in the next few days. One of my comrades, Alonzo Edmiston, a colored man, went on to Ndombe, the capital town, named after the king. Kondola, my companion, was left at the river to notify me of the coming of a steamer which it was expected would follow us shortly for trading purposes. I then walked back to Ndombe, arriving there at sunset, and enjoyed a meal which Edmiston had prepared with characteristic skill. At ten o'clock that night Kondola arrived. He reported that the steamer had arrived about nightfall, and was to leave next morning. I wished to send mail on this boat down the river, so we started back after Kondola had eaten and rested. That midnight tramp through those vast, sombre forests, full of leopards, hyenas, elephants, and pitfalls was surely full enough of excitement for the most adventure-loving. Perhaps the mosquitoes were the most dangerous of all the foes we had to evade. Arriving at the river about dawn, we crossed in a canoe, and found the captain of the boat in a raging malarial fever.



One of the Pygmies with War-trumpet in the Exhibit at the World's Fair

The next day I doctored and nursed him until he could resume navigation. He said he was going to Luebo, on the Lulua River,—the seat of the local government, a mission, and a trading-station,—a hundred and fifty miles distant by the rivers. As the local officer at Luebo had jurisdiction over Ndombe's territory, I thought it wise to visit him, and exhibit my authority for our operations. On the occasion of this visit, I was courteously entertained by Lieutenant Hubin, and also met Captain de Cocke, of the Force Publique. I also paid for my familiarity with the mosquito tribe by having my first fever. I returned to Ndombe by land, reaching there April 20, and then began the final effective campaign on the minds of the aboriginal recipients of President Francis's invitation to visit the Fair.

Only those who have experienced or read of the tortuous mazes of African diplomacy can appreciate the extreme delicacy and difficulty of this work. To overcome the natural shyness of the little Batwa, so that the matter could be discussed at all; to give them any adequate idea of the great gathering to which they were invited; to overcome their fears of the journey; to convince them of the good faith of the dreaded white man; to placate their kinspeople and friends; to combat the ignorance and prejudice of thousands of years—this was surely a task not to be despised. Then, too, above all things, the African loves deliberation. The great haste needed in this expedition vastly increased its intrinsic difficulties. This was a matter, in the minds of the natives, for many months' consultation and consideration. Yet I had to ask them to leave in three weeks' time! The very proposition sounded absurd. Even Ndombe remonstrated that he did not have time to finish greeting me before I proposed to go. The old men shook their heads sagely. The medicine men were violently opposed to it. The women howled all night long over the matter. Some of them sent their boys off to the bushes, when the matter finally became bruited about.

Then the situation was complicated by the state of war existing between Ndombe and his cousin Belinge. Belinge was in rebellion. A warrior from his town had stolen into Ndombe's town at night, and eloped with one of the wives of one of the principal members of the Bikenge aristocracy. If she had been a slave, a good round payment would have sufficed. But being of the nobility, Ndombe's demand on Belinge was "The woman back, or fight!" So they fought. When I first arrived, there had been a number of men killed on each side, and both towns were in a state of "shoot on sight."

The Pygmies were valuable allies to Ndombe in this war. Naturally the men would not like to leave a fight behind them in which members of their families might be killed in their absence. So I had first to address myself to the task of securing a truce between the combatants. Ndombe consented to call off his men, provided Belinge would also restrain his warriors, and consent to my acting as arbitrator. I sent word to Belinge by a man from a neutral town, and Belinge consented to an armistice until he could visit me in state and lay his side of the case before me.

Then I asked Joka's advice about methods of procedure. Joka was Ndombe's prime minister. He said that if peace was fully restored, he would go to America himself. I rejoiced at this. We called in Ndombe and Mianye. Mianye was enthusiastic about going too. Ndombe could not think of it; he said he might find no kingdom on his return. But he said he would gladly cooperate in securing the consent of some of his people and of some of the

Batwa to go. It was decided that Mianye was the best intermediary between the Pygmies and myself, and the night after he brought one of the Batwa, his own special friend, to talk over the matter. This was Malengu, who subsequently came with us. Malengu made numerous objections, but promised to consider the matter, and if he decided favorably, to try to induce others. Mianye remained behind after Malengu left, and suggested that next day I visit the Pygmy village with him, and take plenty of salt with me. Sodium chloride is more desired by the inhabitants of Central Africa than gold. Knowing this, I had gone well provided with salt.

I found the Pygmy village largely peopled with children. I gave each piceaninny a pinch of salt. Soon they swarmed, screaming, dancing, whooping with delight. Their mothers emerged from their tiny leaf-colored huts. They, too, were salted. Then came the old men. I became so popular that I scarcely had breathing room. I left word for any Pygmy that wanted salt to visit me next morning. Next day the yard before my grass hut was black with them. Word about that Salt had gone to the woods. The men were there. They were liberally treated. Then another idea struck me. These men were great hunters. I had a number of cheap guns for purposes of protection. I selected some of the brightest-looking of the men, showed them how to use the guns, and lent them the weapons. They beamed. That night the larder overflowed—they were certainly no mean sportsmen. These two devices broke the ice. Thenceforth the Pygmies came freely, and I held nightly conferences. But still I obtained the consent of individuals to come only one by one. This meant that the precious time was flying. After Malengu, the next was Lumu, then Shambu, then Bomushubba. Three more also promised, but subsequently gave way to their fears. The old men and the women continued their inveterate opposition, and many a stormy scene came up the morning after an interview with some promising man or youth the night before.

Here is a conversation, one of many:

Shaomba (one of the principal old Batwa men). "Fwela (my appellation), why do you not stop working your magic on our boys?"

Verner. "I am not working magic, I am only inviting them to come to my country, as I have visited yours."

Shaomba. "But the white men are wizards. They will surely bewitch our boys."

Verner. "When did Fwela deceive you? I tell you we mean to be good friends to you and your people."

Shaomba. "But our doctors say that the white men eat black people in their country. In the old days many went away from here to be eaten." (Referring to the ancient slave-trade.)

Verner. "That is all wind talk. The white men do not eat men."

Shaomba. "But they say that you have man-meat in those iron pots you bring with you." (Meaning canned meats.)

Verner. "That is all foolishness. Those meats are cow and hog meats."

Shaomba. "But then, white men live under water." (The tradition in the interior, since on the coast the ships seem to come up out of the sea.) "Black men cannot live under water."

Verner. "But here is Kondola who went home with me before."

Shaomba. "How do I know that you have not bewitched him?"

Verner. "If I were a wizard, why did the white men let me live?"

Shaomba. "They are wizards. But give me some salt. I do



Batwa Pygmies at the World's Fair (the Boy at the Left of the Group is a Fifteen-year-old African, not one of the Batwa Pygmies)

not care, any way—if the boys mean to go to the devil, they can go, but you shall not catch me.”

Then arose another complication. A rubber trader sent Ndombe word that he had been informed that if the chief did not pay the government tax at once there would be a military expedition sent against him. This was merely an ingenious device to make Ndombe send in rubber to secure the copper crosses which the trader had, and in which the taxes were payable. But the information let loose the flood-gates of native excitement. Soon the whole town and countryside was in an uproar.

This was a much more serious thing than the miniature Trojan war over the eloped woman. It is true that Ndombe had fulfilled the spirit and the letter of his original treaty with the Congo State, and my advice to him had been that he should always be a loyal and peaceable subject of the white man's government to which he had become allegiant. He had paid his taxes and signified his allegiance without the necessity of any military demonstration against him or his people, and so any word about such an expedition coming to his country was alarming, and was calculated to test his control over his warlike subjects to the utmost. There was arming, poison-making, spear-sharpening, drum-beating, and trumpet-blowing day and night. When Belinge heard the news, he came over himself to ask me about it. Ndombe was greatly agitated. Soon a messenger arrived, summoning Ndombe to come with the tax to the state post. This was the climax. Ndombe took my advice and prepared to go. It meant an absence of from a week to ten days. Ndombe had never before been absent from his capital. To him and his people it was a most momentous occasion. Nearly all his principal men were to go with him. Joka was to act as vice-regent in his absence. Many insisted upon what he considered the post of danger beside his father. Most of the Batwa ran away, but we succeeded in keeping some to their promise, and these remained in their settlement near by. On May 10, early in the morning, Ndombe and his escort bid me farewell and departed.

I had arranged with the captain of the trading steamer *St. Antoine* that on his next trip he would let some men that I had stationed at the river know how long he could await my arrival when he came up the river. My staunch henchman of former days, Wembo, having come over to Ndombe, I engaged him to watch for the steamer, and established a temporary camp in the forest beside the river, to which a few of our heaviest boxes were sent in advance. That night Wembo arrived with the momentous news that the steamer had come. As this was the beginning of the dry season, it was possible that we might not have another boat until September—and then farewell to our hopes for the Fair! It was a case of now or never. I asked Joka to sound the assembly, and to furnish me with sixty men before daybreak. This he arranged. I held a consultation with those who had been willing to go to America. It was a most anxious moment. Over twenty had consented to come, but these now dwindled to eleven. The women were too frightened for anything. I had to abandon all hopes of inducing any of them or of the old men to accompany me. But the eleven were within the limits of my instructions.

The fever came on me during the night, but we packed and worked until the dawn. The morning brought a heavy and steady rain, but Joka did not fail me. The caravan assembled; I mounted into the hammock; the voyagers, surrounded by a clamorous crowd

of friends and relatives, bade farewell to what was as much home to them as any in America to us, and we filed out along the narrow trail which was the commencement of our ten thousand miles journey.

We arrived at the river at ten o'clock, and found that it was so low that the steamer had been unable to cross over and up to our side. All the party and boxes had to be conveyed across in canoes. The confusion was terrific. When we finally counted heads, it was found that one dwarf and our largest man (six and a half feet high) had deserted at the last moment. I called the captain's attention to the fact that the remaining nine had come aboard voluntarily, the whistle blew, the anchors were hoisted, and we were off. But as I gazed upon the mighty tomblike forests about us, and upon my little band of comrades, a lump rose in my throat at the thought of this affecting exhibition of implicit faith. The natives were silent for once.

Our trip down the river was marked by rapid motion and terrific thunderstorms. The captain entered into the spirit of the occasion, and we raced down the Kasai to catch the May steamer for Europe. We made connection with the railway at the Pool, and with the ocean steamer at Matadi at the very last moment. At Boma we saw the new Governor Costermans, and the chief justice satisfied himself that the natives were going of their own free will. Then we made for the mouth of the river and the open sea. The utter amazement at the swift-moving train, the great steamer, and, above all, at the mighty ocean, in the minds of the Africans from the far interior, may be imagined. They agreed with their medicine-men that the white men were wizards.

Aboard the steamer was a distinguished colored American missionary, the Rev. W. H. Sheppard, F.R.G.S., who had known some of the Batwa. He said that those he had seen were the same as those on the ship.

At the island of Teneriffe we found a steamer, the *Glenarm Head*, Captain Ayres, going to New Orleans, and through the efficient help of the American consul we embarked on her.

On arriving at New Orleans my health was so impaired that I had to telegraph Dr. McGee, who sent Mr. J. A. Dorsey, of the United States Geological Survey, to accompany the group to St. Louis. I rejoined them there after my recovery, a month later, where I found them the observed of all observers.

Their impressions of America are amusing and interesting. They asked if our women were the chiefs here, seeing the men lift their hats and give up their seats to the ladies. They averred that their own women in Africa were their slaves—a statement in strict accord with the facts. They have had some lively encounters with the kodak fiends. They conceived a violent prejudice against being “snapped,” and several times had to be restrained from trying to kill their tormentors. The overpowering numbers of the white people did not seem in the least to awe them, as they are strongly fatalistic, and insist on their rights, real or imaginary, with utter fearlessness. The tremendous scale of our titanic civilization has been ascribed by them entirely to our being aided by the devil in our labors. They were once in a fierce debate as to what caused the motion of the electric cars—bets being wagered between the disputants as to whether it came from God or the devil. Their doubt on the subject of the devil's work in this particular instance came from the fact of the electric sparks, which, being like lightning, must, according to their theology, have come from the Deity.

Trout and Grayling in Bavaria

By Robert W. Chambers

IT is with great hesitation that I trespass on Dr. Van Dyck's frontier. The author of *Little Rivers* has doubtless forgotten more than I ever knew about angling in Germany. And concerning the tying of trout-flies, too, there is Theodore Gordon, Esq., to look askance on my theories and statements, born of little experience and less knowledge.

With this prudent display of modesty, calculated to forestall criticism, I begin by the dangerous statement that Germans are almost totally ignorant of fly-fishing. Their national dogma, that all Americans (and English) are demented, is always strengthened when they see us Anglo-Saxons casting artificial flies. When the German fishes he fishes for food; he trails minnows for pike; he dangles worms for perch, gudgeon, barbel; he stolidly bobs for eels; he arms himself, Neptune-like, with a trident, and spears the great leathery carp—those brutish, unclean fish, fit for nothing.

And yet the German is by nature a sportsman and a lover of sport.

It is curious, too, to find in France the Breton peasants scorning the worm and using their home-made artificial flies—curious, because the French are *not* by nature sportsmen, as we understand the term. However, Bretons are not French, which may explain their taking so naturally to fly-fishing, and that, too, in a country where trout are comparatively few and wary, and usually rather muddy in flesh.

The German trout, as we know him in America, is no valuable addition to our waters; he develops pickerel-like voracity at the expense of our lovely native trout; he grows with a rapidity which is uncanny; he is not over-gamy, nor is he pretty with his coarse markings and visible scales.

But in Germany he is a different fish, doubtless resembling other species of Germans, who behave very well at home and very badly abroad.

In Germany, too, he displays unexpected good taste, gastro-

nomically speaking, and also otherwise, for he certainly prefers American artificial flies to either English, French, or the rare and curious flies “made in Germany.”

The first time I noticed this strange preference was in 1887, when fishing on the Red Valepp in Bavaria—that exquisite and ideal stretch of trout water tumbling through the Bavarian Alps and across the Austrian frontier into the Aachen.

It happened in this manner: in changing my fishing-coat before starting I also changed fly-books, and, when ready to begin some five miles from the lodge, I found that I had put on an old American coat containing a fly-book full of Sullivan County flies.

Expecting to be properly snubbed by the German trout, I, however, looped on two flies—one a *royal coachman*, the other a fly tied for me by Dr. A. P. Van Giesen. The latter fly was a “fancy,” dark yellow, wool-body black hackle, lead-colored wings reversed, and a spot of tinsel at the base of the body.

This is what happened: at the first cast two fish rose; one jumped clean over the “fancy”; the other took the royal coachman, but the fly was old and the snell brittle, and as I struck the fish the gut broke.

I replaced the royal with an emerald coachman, and cast again, hooking and finally landing one trout on the “fancy.” The fish weighed three pounds and one ounce before being dressed.

This was the heaviest fish by far that I ever took in Bavaria. The Yankee flies did great damage that day; I raised trout from pools where hitherto I had drawn in nothing but a limp line. Doubles were frequent; I tried three flies, and landed triplets twice; then took off two flies, satisfied with one only. All trout uninjured I returned to the stream, keeping only those destined to die—eighteen or twenty, I believe. The average was one-quarter pound; a few went to one-half pound; two weighed respectively one pound one ounce and three-quarter pound.

These trout were full of fight and tricks, well-proportioned, well-colored brook trout, rising smartly to the fly, often over-eager, but