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## LITERATURE.

*How I Crossed Africa.* By Major Serpa Pinto. Translated from the Author's MS. by Alfred Elwes. In 2 vols. (Sampson Low.)

(First Notice.)

A QUARTER of a century ago, when the lake regions of Central Africa were first opened, Portuguese exploration, which led the van of Europe in the days of Dom Manoel, had been almost entirely abandoned to mulatto slave-dealers and Negroes *pur sang*, the pombeiros (head-porters) who guided caravans. There was a decline even since the end of the last century, when, as told in *The Lands of the Cazembe*, Dr. de Lacerda made his famous journey, and died of it and during it. The men who, like "Prôto" (Silva Porto), preceded Livingstone on the Zambeze thought only of trading and travelling, and their immense experience was not committed to writing. Geographical science in Portugal was chiefly literary. Men of the type of Visconde de Sá de Bandeira revived the past by emptying official pigeon-holes of valuable documents buried under the dust of years, and printing them in the *Annaes Maritimos* and similar publications. It was old age trading on its youth.

The revival of regular exploration dates from 1876, when the Geographical Society of Lisbon established its "Central Permanent Commission." That learned body resolved to utilise the national advantages in South-African exploration. From the Portuguese colonies on either flank of the Dark Continent paths radiate into its very heart; the "Mueneputo" (Lord of Oporto) is a household word among the wildest tribes of the interior; and traces of Portuguese trade were everywhere found by Dr. Livingstone during his glorious first journey (1852-56). Indeed, the celebrated missionary, all whose sympathies lay with the converted and convertible Negro, and all whose antipathies with the Moslems and Christians not of his own sect, contributed not a little to the revival, by openly advocating the annexation of Portuguese territory.

Major Alexandre de Serpa Pinto's expedition, directly resulting from the new order of things, is described in *How I Crossed Africa*, a title somewhat banal, and echoing other books of travel. It is, however, correct, whereas Capt. (now Col.) Grant's *Walk Across Africa* does not cross Africa. The work is divided into two very unequal parts—"The King's Rifle" (vol. i., and vol. ii. to p. 128) and "The Coillard Family" (vol. ii., p. 129 to

end)—the names being taken from the supposed saviours of the explorer. Physically speaking, the two volumes of large octavo (pp. 377 and 388) are printed in the admirable style which the public expects from Messrs. Sampson Low. The illustrations (ninety-one in vol. i. and thirty-nine in vol. ii.) are excellent; the resemblance of the humans and their monstrous hair-dressing to the sketches of Commander Cameron (*Across Africa*) vouches for their truth; and there is no difficulty about recognising the cardamom (*Amomum grana paradisi*) in the "atundo" (i. 269) and a silurus in the "chinguêne" (i. 341). The maps and plans—eight sectional for greater detail, not including a specimen of MS. (i. 237), and one general—all by Mr. Weller—are remarkably good, and would be perfect had the letterpress been read more carefully. The conclusion, which takes the place of an appendix, contains a *facsimile* of the explorer's MS. (a small and delicate hand, remarkably like Cameron's), the formulæ used for calculation, and a vocabulary of Kambundo, Ganguela, and Tete-Kafir, the two latter taken from the well-known volume, *O Muata Cazembe*, by MM. Gamitto (not Gamito) and Monteiro. I should have relegated to the Appendix the two supplementary chapters (vol. i., pp. 216-25; and ii., 105-27): they break the continuity of the narrative, and they are better fitted for geographical and anthropological societies. My friend Guido Cora, of the *Cosmos*, has set an excellent example of drawing a firm line between the popular and the absolutely scientific, including all the ologies. The book ends with an Index of words, and wants a table of dates. Finally, the seventeen months' journey was made in 1877-79; the writing begun in September of the latter year; and the Preface is dated December 1880. The delay was caused by "obstinate illness;" and when we read of the fevers, the meningitis, the rheumatism, the liver attacks, the home-sickness, and the worries undermining life, we are not a little astonished that the book ever was written.

The journey may be divided into three sections of very unequal value. The first, occupying twenty days from the coast to the granite platform of Bihé, has no value, except that it corroborates and supplements Cameron's careful and conscientious work. The ethnological notices are not by an expert; they cannot compare with those of the late Ladislaus Magyar, here one man split in two, and called "Ladislaus, Magyar" (ii. 161). Some time ago I translated the *Reisen* of the energetic Hungarian who, between 1849 and 1857, settled and married in Bihé. Thinking very highly of it, as the work of a resident not a traveller, and the pioneer of the Bihé mission lately established by the English, I sent my version to the Royal Geographical Society of London. Unhappily for future travellers, the reply was that German is too commonly read to justify publishing a translation.

Major Serpa Pinto's second section is the pith of the book. It extends from the Bihé highlands some 360 direct geographical miles to the Liambai River, which, with the Cuando, forms the true Zambeze (not Zambesi). Here the formation becomes schistose, like

the Pampas of South America; the surface does not show a stone. The traveller, in fact, is unwittingly crossing the great lacustrine basin suggested by the late Sir Roderick I. Murchison, and verified by Dr. Livingstone. How important will become this water-way may be judged by our explorer's views. Travelling *via* the Zambeze, the Liambai, and the Lungo-i-ungo, the latter heading close to the Coanza-Congo, he would cross the 1,250 miles of Southern Intertropical Africa with only 250 miles (eighteen days) on foot. In this newly opened section we find, traced with a firm hand, and carefully laid down by astronomical and hypsometrical observation, the network of dots which lies to the west and southwest of Dr. Livingstone's line from Linyanti to S. Paulo de Loanda.

The last and third part, down the Liambai and *via* the Transvaal to Durban, derives its scanty interest from our actual relations with the gallant Boers. Geographically speaking, it has no novelty. I am glad, however, to see the author agreeing with me that the civilisation of Africa must come from the merchant rather than the missionary; and that the centres of instruction should be among the smaller tribes, not in the powerful kingdoms, as advocated by others. Finally, the notes on the condition of missionaries (ii. 324) will be highly interesting to those few who would learn the truth. Had an Englishman ventured such opinions the only remark would have been, "Oh! but you're prejudiced." Here, however, an intelligent foreigner and outsider tells all he has seen with fresh eyes. How much the last Boer War was owing to Dr. Livingstone and to men of his cloth is only too evident to those who can read between his lines (*First Journey*, chap. ii.); and this statement we shall presently see distinctly confirmed by Major Serpa Pinto.

And now for the details.

After a prologue, which is long, but not too long, Major Pinto, in company with Lieut. Hermenigildo Capello (R.N.), lands at Loanda in early August 1877; and there he is joined by his third companion, Lieut. Roberto Ivens (R.N.). Had he read the books he names, we should hardly have found him complaining that "all the narratives are singularly wanting in information" concerning outfit, tools, and personal luggage; arms and ammunition; presents, merchandise, and instruments. We have all contributed our shares; and M. Paul du Chaillu was almost rediously diffuse on the subject. A sum of £1,760 covered the preliminary expenses, out of a total of £6,600 liberally assigned to the expedition.

The inevitable troubles about carriage at once began, and lasted, as usual, to the very finish. The useless trip to the Congo brought Major Pinto into contact with Mr. Henry M. Stanley, who was fresh from his memorable journey down the Congo-Zaire, and who was carried, with all his party, by the gunboat to Loanda. The older gave the younger traveller the excellent advice "never to pass the night under a native roof." Our explorer then set out for picturesque and pestiferous Benguela, whose climate, he says, has changed for the better; I am certain that nothing could be

worse in 1865. There he met "the old settler, Silva Porto," the best-known European name in the South-African interior. The veteran, who was preparing his notes for publication, lent him generous assistance, with letters and advice, especially the following:—"In the heart of Africa distrust everybody and everything until repeated and irrefutable proofs will allow you to bestow your confidence" (i. 79). Put with a little more neatness, the "principle" is equally applicable to the other three quarters of the globe—at least, such is the experience of most men after the sad tenth lustre. The three companions distributed the work:—Ivens took charge of geography, Capello of meteorology, and Serpa Pinto of general management.

The expedition-caravan left Benguella town with colours flying on November 12, 1877. This was summer and the rainy season. It was to be followed by four hundred porters; and it had some fifty, including fourteen drunken ne'er-do-weels called soldiers, and not including six riding asses, headstrong brutes, like all African animals. There were, however, the ten "Benguella braves" who formed the backbone of the expedition; two of them fell in fight, four followed Capello and Ivens, one lost his senses at the Coanza, and three endured to the end.

The fertile valley of Dombe Grande and the Quillengues (Kwilenges) station were passed without adventure. At the Caconda Fort the explorers met the naturalist, José d'Anchieta. From this point Major Pinto made an excursion to the Cunene River flowing to the south-east. He had originally intended to explore this great stream, which mouths as the "Nourse River." The line still awaits inspection; and good work would be done by ascending it to the upper lakes, returning *via* the Swakop River to Walfisch Bay. At Caconda the party separated, and Major Pinto marched on alone. Here, too, his compatriots, settled in the interior, made all arrangements for his utter and complete failure. These obstacles will last as long as Africa is bounded by mountains and by middlemen, who buy cheap from the blacks and sell dear to the whites. I had personal experience of the prejudice against *quieta movere* among the traders of Zanzibar; and I know that all the troubles on the Nun, or Lower Niger, were originally brought about by the English agents in the Brass River.

The most notable point was the passage of the upper waters of the Cubango, the great artery which heads, like the Cunene, in the highlands of Bihé, receives the Cuito (Kwito) and a host of affluents, and dies of drought in the Ngami Lake. The section ended at Silva Porto's thatched cottage, Belmonte, in Bihé, mentioned by Cameron. The march up the glorious plateau, which rises to a height of 5,500 and even 8,200 feet, records little beyond fever and rheumatism; the Mucanos (*avannies*) of all; the insolence of chiefs; perpetual troubles with the "insubordinate rascals" who carried, robbed, and abandoned the packs; and, last but not least, African thunder-storms and tropical rain-drenchings. The only risks were from the charge of a "buffalo" (*Bos caffir*), from the attack on a village to recover stolen goods, and from a squabble with a bullying headman. The

Bihénos are described as "profoundly vicious:" they are, however, like the Wanyamwezi, born travellers and explorers, who have covered every practicable line in the interior. Their cannibalism is sporadic, as is that of the Gaboon Mpangwe (Fans); and, like these people, they are outliers of the great anthropophagous race which occupies the vast white blot in Central Africa. If they have distributed the general "medicine-man" into three, the medico proper, the rain-maker, and the sorcerer, or rather poisoner, they are progressing—the wrong way. And here the reader will regret that Ladislaus Magyar's admirable account of the religion, manners, and customs of the Bihé people has not been consulted. Had the author done so, we should have read more about the "ghost" and less about the "soul."

The three companions met once more among the roses and oranges of Belmonte. After this Capello and Ivens fade out of the story, and set out to visit the Coanza. There had evidently been some unpleasantness about forwarding the luggage; but the author is reserved upon the subject, and we cannot do better than imitate him.

Despite the perpetual struggle between latitude and altitude, and the alternate victories of burning suns by day and chilling winds by night, Serpa Pinto found his health and strength improve. He had a long rest, for the porters who left Benguella in November did not reach him till early May. He now formed the plucky resolution of marching upon the Upper Zambeze. His men seem to have deserted as fast as they came in; but he was aided by that José Alves who figures so unpleasantly in Cameron's book; and he won respect by flogging a white slave. Still he had to destroy sixty-one loads: had he distributed them among the carriers these men would have wanted more; and had he left his goods among the natives other carriers would have been persuaded to desert. Thus he was reduced to a party of seventy-two.

On June 6 the camp at Bihé was broken up; and on the 9th our explorer made the beautiful Coanza affluent of the Congo-Zaire, "winding through a plain from a mile and a half to two miles broad, enclosed on either side by gentle green slopes clothed with trees." The description of its transparent waters, flowing over unswelled white sand, reminds us of Southern Abyssinia.

Immediately east of Bihé lies the previously unexplored land of the Quimbandé tribe, watered by the Cuime, Varca, Onda, and other head-streams of the Coanza. Here begins the new land of clayey schist and mica-slate contrasting with the plutonics of Bihé; and the traveller is now falling into the great lacustrine basin, whose rivers, flowing south, have no cataracts. The country is charming, suggesting the well-worn simile of the "English park." The "trees are perfectly splendid, and the summits of the lofty hills which border the Varca River are very richly wooded; beyond it the wealth of vegetation is, if possible, even greater." The illustration of Lake Liguri (fig. 44) certainly bears out the enthusiasm. The local productions are sugar-cane and castor (much used for hair-oil), beans and manioc, wax and cereals. Among the latter, the massango, or

pennisetum, curiously called "canary-seed" comes in for the author's hardest language: it is horrible, abominable, and almost cursed. Iron is everywhere plentiful; and among the growths we must not forget that "terrible hymenopter," the Quissonde ant (*P. atrox?*): coloured a light chestnut, and one-eighth of an inch long. It draws blood, and puts caravans to flight.

The Quimbandé is a clan of the great Ganguella family. Their features are sub-"Caucasian," and somewhat Jewish. Yet they are a lazy, useless race, very unlike the energetic Bihénos; and their "tendency in the direction of body-clothing" is not pronounced. The *coiffure* is in the usual elaborate style, which takes two days to build and lasts two months: I would suggest that it is simply an imitation of the European billycock and its congeners. The drink is *capata*, Quimbombo or Chimombo beer, the *pombe* of Unyamwezi, made into potent "bingunde" ale by adding honey and powdered hops. East of the Quimbandé lie the Lucháze; and to the south-east of the latter are the Ambuellas, who are described as the best specimens of the race.

Crossing the Bitovo rivulet, one year after taking leave of his father, the explorer remarks that the waters are flowing to the Zambeze, and sentimentalises upon the "snapping of the tie" that united him to the Western Coast. Presently (July 10) he ascends the Cassara Cairra Mountain, 5,298 feet high; sees a magnificent panorama, and discovers the "unpretending sources" of the mighty Cuando or river of Linyanti. They head near those of the Cuime-Coanza-Congo and the Cuito-Cubango of Ngami. The exact position is in E. long. 18° 58' and S. lat. 13' (round numbers), some 375 miles from the Western and 1,500 from the Eastern Coast. The altitude is 4,470 feet above sea-level, and the thermometer fell to 2° Cent. The marsh source, shown in the plan (i. 285), has its longer axis disposed from west-north-west to east-south-east; and the young river issues from the latter point to become "one of the largest influents of the Zambesi." The first to canoe down the Cuando was the veteran Silva Porto, who embarked his goods upon the head-water called Cuchibi, and descended safely to Linyanti, in 1849. Hence, probably, the "Chobe River"—a name, we are told, absolutely unknown to the people—applied to the Cuando by Dr. Livingstone.

The Cuando flows through a "sponge" rich in leeches, and speedily becomes navigable. Here the river-beds are of two varieties—either clean sand, or sand overspread with marsh-mud. The latter produces a luxuriant growth of aquatic plants, forming islands, floating meadows, and virgin forests of nenuphar and Victoria-regia. Here we have again Capt. Speke's bridges of water-lilies and the well-known Sadd (wall, or dam) on the Upper Nile. An instance of the clear bottom is the Cuchibi River, which flows through a dry valley, with long sweeps and without "water-gardens." The explorer reached it on July 25, after floating down the Cubangui River in his mackintosh boat, and crossing the water-shed, a virgin forest perfumed with the delicate papilionaceous *Oúco*. He had now passed from the Lucháze

to the Ambuellas country: Lions were heard, but no elephants had yet been seen. We are told of a feline (*Leopardus jubatus*), apparently purblind, which uses its ears in preference to its eyes. There are also interesting notes concerning the Quichóbi or Buzi, a ruminant apparently semi-amphibious. This antelope has some resemblance in manners to the hippopotamus; dives deep and sleeps under water. As might be expected, the meat is poor.

On the Cuchibi insubordination was abated by cracking a Pombeiro's pate. "Wounds in the head, if they do not kill at once, soon heal up." From this point the traveller made a most interesting visit to a camp of the Mucassequere people (S. lat. 13°). They are certainly the Kasekel or Mukánkala of Magyar and the "Kasekere or Bushmen" of Dr. Livingstone, who probably learned the name from Silva Porto. This forest tribe feed on honey, game (including white ants), and roots; they are abjectly miserable, ignoring huts, clothing, cultivation, and salt; and their only arms are bows and arrows. The explorer defines their relation to their Ambuella neighbours as that of savages to barbarians; and, judging from their peculiar intonation and their dirty-yellow skins, he concludes that they belong to the "Hottentot branch of the Ethiopic race." He omits, however, to notice the steatopyga, or the apron; and he is unable to offer even a sketch. The subject is most interesting. Many travellers have advanced the theory that the so-called aborigines once extended from Hottentot-land about the Cape deep into the northern country, and we shall hear more upon this subject.

Major Pinto was received well, and perhaps a little too well, by old Moene Cahu-héu-té, chief sova (headman) of the Ambuellas, a race of canoe-men who build upon aits and river-reaches. He at once sent his two fine daughters—Opudo, the haughty, and Capéu, the languishing—whose "frankness" of hospitality was much scandalised, we are told, by his "austere life." The temptation is described as considerable; but the two likenesses (i. figs. 72, 73) seem rather to suggest that it would be easy to resist such charms. Thereader is referred to the original (i. 329) for an account how the virtuous cavalry-man was saved by "little Mariana." Only fair to note that the *spretæ injuriæ forma* bred no bad blood in the fair black and sub-Caucasian breast, and that the explorer was not taught *furens quid jamina possit*. His offence was great: he had preferred to all sweeter offers "a pot of Lisbon marmalade left by some Biheno trader." Yet the gallant girls accompanied him for a considerable distance in command of his carriers, and bade him a friendly adieu.

The sova's Court proved to be a kind of Capua, like Unyamwezián Kazeh when I first visited it. To prevent his little party being utterly demoralised, Major Pinto took leave on August 4, and struck eastward with southing towards the place where the Libu and the Lungo-é-ungo influents have anastomosed to form the Liambai-Zambeze. The line lay through a "desert;" that is, a depopulated country; fertile and healthy, near the western hills where the Ninda River rises; and swampy and malarious about the River

Nhengo, which is the lower course of the Ninda. Here he was approaching the very source of fever; yet the river plain is 3,320 feet above sea-level. The place abounded in lions, which shows an abundance of game; the king of beasts develops his best only in countries like the Atlas, where he can pull down as much cattle as he wants, or in South Africa, where antelopes play the part of cattle. The "buffalos" were as much dreaded as the lions; clouds of flies added discomfort; and the morasses so took energy out of the party that the explorer, who has scant trust in his luck, began to despair. He had just determined that a man must be "angel or devil" to explore Africa, when "a stranger man, followed by a woman and two lads, came from the bush, and, paying no heed to the dogs, entered the encampment, and, giving a rapid glance round, advanced and seated himself" at the explorer's feet. He proved to be Caiumbuca, the boldest of the Bihé traders, the old Pombeiro of Silva Porto, known from the Nyangwe to Lake Ngami; and strongly recommended by his previous employer. This was dawn breaking at the darkest time, and changing as by magic the condition of the camp. But it was a "false dawn." Caiumbuca was the last card played by the Portuguese settlers of Bihé; and, worse still, Major Pinto forgot his principle of universal suspicion. The conjuncture was ominous.

Alter killing an enormous crocodile, the explorer crossed the mighty stream, of which the boatmen used to sing half-a-century ago—

"The Liambai! nobody knows  
Whence it comes and whither it goes."

The explorer was received at Lialui, the capital, by Lobossi, king of the Luinas, or Barotse, with a "programme" and a display of 1200 warriors. Everything was unpleasantly civilised in Lui or Ungunga (Barotse-land), the "vast empire of South Tropical Africa." And here, with an "undefined presentiment of evil," ends (August 24, 1878) the first volume, and with it end the geographical novelties of the journey.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

*Essays and Phantasies.* By James Thomson, Author of "The City of Dreadful Night, and other Poems," &c. (Reeves & Turner.)

It is impossible to criticise this volume without a feeling of what Carlyle used to call "sorrowful dubiety;" first, because the extremely heterogeneous character of its contents makes it hard to appreciate as a whole; secondly, because, when a veiled and sardonic humour appears heavy, ill-sustained, and dull to the critic, he cannot but remember that *Sartor Resartus* also seemed so on its first appearance; lastly, because a writer so warmly commended and encouraged by "George Eliot" as Mr. Thomson has been must have spiritual qualities and insight of no common kind. She, we may feel assured, did not lightly ascribe such qualities as "distinct vision and grand utterance."

The book may be divided into three parts—(1) Prose-poetry; (2) Theology; (3) Literary Criticism. Of these, the first—as exhibited in

the opening piece, called "A Lady of Sorrow"—seems to be a very able but, at the same time, a very laboured imitation of De Quincey: "A Lady of Sorrow" is a dream of bereaved solitude in London. And there is pathos and poetry, too, in the description of Sorrow, personified first as the Angel—the "image in beatitude of her who died so young"—then as the Siren, the blind and sorry impulse that drives her victim, a second Faust, through a weary round of gaudy but debasing pleasures, very happily compared to the tavern of Omar Khayyam, till the world is "laughed back into chaos;" finally, as the Shadow, the veiled goddess of Despair, the "dominant metamorphosis" of Sorrow. The style is that of De Quincey, but the voice is that of Heine or Leopardi. Whether pessimism has a sound philosophy may be a question; that it has a real poetry cannot be doubted. The only criticism I should venture to make on this part of Mr. Thomson's work is that it is dream-literature without the *persuasiveness* of dreams. The unforgettable charm of works like De Quincey's *Dream-Fugue*, or Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, is that they combine the fantasticality of dreams with their apparently effortless reality; surprising as they are in our waking hours, they never surprise the dreamer. This quality is not reached by Mr. Thomson. His work reminds one rather of such works as George Macdonald's *Phantastes*, or *Alton Locke*, where dream-land is reproduced rather by eloquence and literary force than by the indefinable touch of inspired personal experience.

The second, or theological, side of the volume is mainly represented by a long essay entitled "Proposals for the Speedy Extinction of Evil and Misery." This essay is introduced by a wearisome mystification, wherein the question of the author's sanity is raised, the verdict of the critics forestalled by parodying their manner, and counsel is darkened and comprehension obscured by a tiresome indirectness. The essay itself is a long pessimistic diatribe against Christianity and most other religions, against modern politics and social arrangements, without any tangible suggestion for their amendment—unless the absurd oracle that Nature can be coerced by a threat of universal suicide on the part of Man be considered such. The ruling influence is clearly that of Swift, for whom Mr. Thomson elsewhere (pp. 281-88) expresses his profound admiration. But of that great writer's bitter sincerity, his "saeva indignatio," his intense pity for the miseries and inequalities of the human lot, there is here no trace. One power of Swift's—that of producing nausea by a single phrase—Mr. Thomson has got indeed. With apologies to the readers of the ACADEMY, I present an instance of this. The eulogies of the dead, in a certain journal, are said (p. 97) to be so "rancidly unctuous that . . . the corpse of the victim thus lubricated has turned and vomited its heart up in the grave." If this is a specimen of the invective of the kingly pessimistic man of the future, one may be allowed a satisfaction, hitherto unfelt, that one lives in the days of the journal thus assailed.

So ugly a lapse in taste and feeling might be pardoned if it stood alone. I am con-