

Transcription of Fragment of 1870 Field Diary, 25 August-8 October 1870

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Bambarre, 25th August, 1870.

One of my waking dreams is that the legendary tales about Moses coming up into Inner Ethiopia with Merr his foster-mother, and founding a city which he called in her honour "Meroe," may have a substratum of fact. He was evidently a man of transcendent genius and we learn from the speech of St. Stephen that "

he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words & in deeds.

" The deeds must have been well known in Egypt for "

he supposed that his brethern would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not.

" His supposition could not be founded on his success in smiting a single Egyptian. He was too great a man to be elated by a single act of prowess but his success on a large scale in Ethiopia afforded reasonable grounds for believing that his brethern would be proud of their countryman, and disposed to follow his leadership, but they were slaves. The notice taken of the matter by Pharaoh shewed that he was eyed by the great as a dangerous

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if not powerful man. He "dwelt" in Midian for some time before his gallant bearing towards the shepherds by the well,

commended him to the Priest or Prince of the country. An uninteresting wife and the want of intercourse with kindred spirits during the long forty years' solitude of a herdsman's life, seems to have acted injuriously on his spirits, and it was not till he had with Aaron struck terror into the Egyptian mind, that the "man Moses" again became "

very great in the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants.

" - The Ethiopian woman whom he married could scarcely be the daughter of Reuel or Jethro for Midian was descended from Keturah, Abraham's concubine, and they were never considered Cushite or Ethiopian. If he left his wife in Egypt she would now be some 50 or 60 years old, and all the more likely to be despised by the proud prophetess Miriam as a daughter of Ham. I dream of discovering some monumental relics of Meroe and if anything of confirmatory of sacred history does remain I pray to be guided thereunto. If the sacred chronology would thereby be confirmed, I would not grudge the toil & hardships, hunger & pain, I have endured - the irritable ulcers would only be discipline. -

This Manyema country is unhealthy not so much from fever as from debility of the whole system, induced by damp, cold, and indigestion. This general weakness is ascribed by some to maize being the common food. It

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shows itself in weakness of bowels & choleraic purging. This may be owing to bad water, there is no scarcity, but it is so impregnated with dead vegetable matter, as to have the colour of tea. Irritable ulcers fasten on any part attached (?) by any accident, and it seems to be a spreading fungus for the matter settling on any part near becomes a fresh centre of propagation. The vicinity of the ulcer is very tender, and it eats in frightfully if not allowed rest. Many slaves die of it, and its periodical discharges of bloody ichor makes me suspect it to be a development of fever. Support seems to be essential, but the ichor forcing its way out is

so painful the supporting bandages have to be loosed. I have found lunar caustic useful. A plaister of wax, and a little finely ground sulphate of copper is used by the Arabs, and so is cocoa-nut oil and butter. These ulcers are excessively intractable. There is no healing of them before they eat into the bone, especially on the shins. The pain causes slaves to cry the whole night long.

Rheumatism is also common and it cuts the natives off. The traders fear these diseases and come to a stand if attacked, in order to use rest in the cure. "Taema," or Tape-worm is frequently met with - No remedy is known among the Arabs & natives for it. Syphilitic [---] skin diseases are common among Manyema - large scabs on face & body, even among children. The Arabs increase them by impure intercourse. Filthy takers all.

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White leprosy is also common. Malachite ground on a stone with water is good for irritable ulcers.

When Speke saw that his little river out of the Victoria Nyanza would not account for the Nile, the more philosophic course would have been instead of conjecturing a backwater, to strike [^] [west] across the great valley, and there not to mention Baker's water which he too might have called a Lake, he would have come to the central Lualaba, not 90 or 100 yards but from 2000 to 6000 yards and always deep - this near the bottom of the trough, and then further West another Lualaba, a worthy companion to that in the centre. The central Lualaba I would fain call the Lake River Webb, - the Western the Lake River Young. The Lufira and Lualaba West form a Lake the native name of which, "Chibungo" must give way to Lake Lincoln. I wish to name the fountain of the Liambai or Upper Zambesi, Palmerston fountain, using these two names by way of placing my poor little garland on their tombs, and adding that of Sir Bartle

Frere to the fountain of Lufira. Three names of men who have done more to abolish slavery & the slave-trade than any of their contemporaries.

4th October 1870. A trading party came from Ujiji, arrived on 23^d Sep^t, left for N.W. four days afterwards. Report an epidemic raging between coast & Ujiji & very fatal. Syde bin Habib and Dugumbe coming - they have letters

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and perhaps people for me, so I remain, though the irritable ulcers are well-nigh healed. I fear that my packet for the coast may have fared badly, for the Lewale has kept Musa Kamaal by him so that no evidence against himself or dishonest man Musa bin Saloom should be given. My box and guns with Despatches I fear will never be sent. Zahor, to whom I gave calico to pay carriers has been sent off to Lobemba. Muhamad sowed rice yesterday. Has to send his people who were unsuccessful among Balegga away to the Metambe, where they got ivory before. - I cannot understand very well what a "Theoretical Discoverer" is. If anyone got up and declared in a public meeting that he was the theoretical discoverer of the "philosopher's stone", of perpetual motion for watches, should we not mark him as a little wrong in the head? So of the Nile sources. The Portuguese crossed the Chambeze some seventy years before I did, but to them it was a branch of the Zambesi & nothing more. Cooley put it down as the New Zambesi and made it run backwards, uphill between 3000 & 4000 feet! I was misled by the similarity of names and a map to think it the Eastern branch of the Zambesi. I was told that it formed a large water in the South West. This I readily believed to be the Liambai, in the Barotse Valley, and it took me eighteen months of toil to work back again to the Chambeze in Lake Bangweolo, and work out the error into

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which I was led. Twenty-two months elapsed

ere I got back to the point whence I set out to explore Chambeze, Bangweolo, Luapula, Moero, and Lualaba. I spent two full years at this work, and the Chief Cazembe was the first to throw light on the subject. - "It is the same water here as in the Chambeze, the same in Moero & Lualaba and one piece of water is just like another. Will you draw out calico from it that you wish to see it? As your chief desired you to see Bangweolo, go to it, and if in going north you see a travelling party, join it - if not come back to me and I will send you safely by my path along Moero." [fox]

8th Oct^r 1870. - Mbarawa & party came yesterday from Katomba at Mamohela. Reports that Jangeonge (?) with Moeneokela's men had been killing people of Metamba or forest, and four of his people slain. He intended fighting, hence his desire to get rid of me when I went north. Got one and a half tusks, but little ivory, but Katomba's party got fifty tusks. Abdullah had got two tusks also been fighting, and Katomba had sent a fighting party down to Lolinde. Plunder & murder is Ujijian trading. Mbarawa got his ivory on the Lindi or as he says "Urindi" which has black water, and is very large - An arrow could not be shot across; its 400 or 500 yards had to be crossed by canoes, goes into Lualaba. - It is curious that all think it necessary to say to me, "The Manye

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Manyema are bad - very bad." The Balegga will be let alone, because they can fight, and we shall hear nothing of their badness. My slavelings join in the chorus of the Manyema being bad. The Babemba were good said Simon, and he killed two because he was safe. - -