

## A NEW FIELD FOR ENTERPRISE.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. H. M. STANLEY.—BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.



It is impossible to gaze upon the bronzed features of Mr. Henry M. Stanley, without a vivid recollection of the famous picture of his first meeting with Livingstone in the depths of the Dark Continent. "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" was the historic phrase in which the second greatest of African explorers greeted the greatest. One of the peculiarities of photography is that it adds stature; and I had pictured the founder of the Free State of the Congo as a tall, thin, wiry man, grizzled with hard work—with, in short, all the outward attributes of an old campaigner. But when there presently joined me in the cosy drawing-room in New Bond Street, a gentleman somewhat below the average height, with a thick-set frame indicative of great powers of endurance, the well-known short moustache, and a face deeply browned by tropical suns as they shone upon forests and plains where no other white man has ever set foot, there was no need for introduction. Mr. Stanley greeted me cordially, and settled himself down in an arm-chair as though, instead of having upon his shoulders the care of a State covering a million and a half square miles, he had nothing to do but to be interviewed. Upon the table lay a Belgian map of the Congo, showing the results of the explorations which have been made since Mr. Stanley's departure for Europe, and the new volume of the *Almanach de Gotha*, in which the Congo is for the first time included among sovereign States.

The world needs not to be told that Mr. Stanley is enthusiastic in his view of the rich capabilities and the splendid future of the Congo. But he has not the manner of an enthusiast. His speech is calm, thoughtful, based upon facts and figures. When he wishes to enforce a point, or to clinch an argument, he leans forward in his chair and speaks with the subdued earnestness and the quiet energy of conviction. One of the most salient impressions the interview left upon me was that of a man possessing a boundless store of reserved force; capable of taking great decisions in a moment of supreme crisis; a man of boundless energy, with whom danger and difficulty have been constantly present, and in whom natural coolness and fertility of resource have been developed into an instinct.

I began by asking Mr. Stanley what were his ideas regarding the Congo as a field for colonisation, and as an outlet for surplus European populations.

"It is too early to talk about that," was his reply; "the Congo is not ripe for settlement yet, and I have studiously avoided anything like an emigration propaganda. People do not clearly understand the difficulties of reaching the interior, difficulties which will of course largely disappear when the railway is made. The climate of the Lower Congo, say between Vivi and Leopoldville, the capital, is very trying to Europeans.

The Upper Congo, beyond Stanley Pool, on the contrary, is as healthy as any country in Southern Europe. But caution is of course necessary. Unfortunately,



Yours sincerely  
Henry M. Stanley

people will not give themselves the trouble to look at matters from a common-sense point of view, and take the precautions of which experience has shown the wisdom. On the Congo, in short, it is necessary to live like a philosopher."

"But," I asked, "when the Congo Railway is made, it will, I assume, ameliorate climatic conditions by shortening the journey from the coast to Leopoldville?"

"That is one of the chief blessings that will follow the construction of the line. Its influence will be enormous—greater, probably, than that of any railway which has been opened since the pioneer line was laid down in England. Like that which was the model line for the United Kingdom, ours will be the



model line for the entire continent of Africa. Railways alone can make Africa really useful and beneficial to civilisation. There is a wonderful continent with 15,000 miles of coast-line, and something over 13,000,000 square miles of superficies—nearly five times as large as Europe; and yet it remains torpid, inert, lifeless, simply because Europeans have a deadly horror of the climate. And unfortunately they will not use their common-sense to conquer the difficulty.”

“You think, then, that cases of fatal illness on the Congo are due at least as much to neglect of precautions as to the climate?”

“Undoubtedly. I speak from experience, which I have bought dearly in my own person. I have had over 200 fevers in Africa, three-fourths of which were caught because in my ignorance I invited and put a premium upon them. I had no one to teach me the peculiarities of the climate: I had to learn them from the fevers; but the Europeans who go out to the Congo now are forewarned, and with prudence and good food they can keep perfectly well.”

In answer to my question as to whether it was not the fact that many Europeans died on the Congo from the effects of, comparatively speaking, moderate drinking, Mr. Stanley gave me some appalling instances of promising young men being suddenly cut off in this way. A young engineer, hot and tired from his day's work, drank at dinner a large quantity of Portuguese wine. A severe attack of dysentery followed, and when convalescent, though still weak, he was sent to the coast on his way home, with the most solemn warnings not to touch strong drinks. Yet, while waiting for the steamer he sold his coat for a bottle of gin, and twelve hours later he was in his grave. Another engineer somehow obtained possession of a bottle of brandy at lunch, and was shortly afterwards found dead with the bottle under his head. “Strong drink on the Congo,” added Mr. Stanley, “means death.”

Leaving this melancholy phase of the subject, I asked, “What do you expect will be the immediate effect of the Congo Railway?”

“It will alter the entire aspect of everything,” answered Mr. Stanley. “It will give new life to the State, and introduce civilisation into the heart of Africa very rapidly indeed. At present there are some thousands of native traders at Stanley Pool, and there are European traders at the head of the navigation of the Lower Congo, so close to the cataracts that they can hear their roar; yet the two cannot come together on account of these cataracts, which form a gap 235 miles long. This gap can only be bridged by the native carriers, who are all absorbed in the transport of some 1,200 tons of merchandise in a year. While this state of things lasts progress is impossible. These 1,200 tons now being transported on the heads and backs of the carriers would be a mere drop in the ocean, compared with the goodly trade that would be going up the Congo if the native traders could be supplied with a sufficient quantity of goods.”

“This, then, is probably one reason of the excessive dearness of ivory, which threatens soon to become worth nearly its weight in gold?”

“It is the only reason. Ivory has almost disappeared from all the accessible areas of Africa; but the areas at present inaccessible are so vast that there is abundance of ivory, and also of rubber. The native traders are willing and eager to search for these precious articles; but if they all rushed up the affluents of the Congo to fetch goods they might be years in getting rid of them. Thus you may see how great an impetus commerce will receive from the construction of the railway. As soon as the natives have gathered all the ivory from their own resorts, they will be urged by the demand for more to proceed still further into the interior, taking with them the worth of their goods in the produce of English industry.”

“Then you think, Mr. Stanley, that one of the earliest results to be expected from the railway would be the cheapening of ivory?”

“Yes; both ivory and rubber would be cheap and plentiful for at least fifty years to come; and in the meantime no doubt some other object of commerce will have been discovered on the Congo.”

“Minerals—copper, for instance, of which I think you have an abundance?”

“Yes, we have plenty of copper; but at present the cost of transporting it to the coast is £45 a ton. When the railway is made, copper will pay for working, but not until then. It is this terrible cost of transport which paralyses us upon the Congo. The State, for instance, is compelled by reason of this great expense to confine itself to five stations on the Upper Congo, where the only Europeans are the agents of the State and the missionaries. This is a proof that if the railway could be taken only as far as Stanley Pool, the State would be a valuable customer to it; while the missionaries, with the advantage of supplies of good food and constant accessions of recruits, could spread the Gospel rapidly, since they then could make most of their journeys by steamer. At Stanley Falls there are some 3,000 Arabs, and between Stanley Falls and Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika, there are about 15,000 more, all of whom have to be supplied once a year from Zanzibar—a journey of twelve months across Africa, in addition to the month's voyage from Europe. When the railway is made these Arabs could be supplied from England within a month. In addition to these important customers of the Congo Railway, there is the London Missionary Society established on Lake Tanganyika, where also there is a Government station, both of which would be customers. Then there are the Arabs of the Soudan scattered over the Niam-Niam, who would likewise be supplied by means of the railway; and, instead of the Soudan being, as now, blockaded, steamers, fed from the railway, could carry supplies right up to the frontier.”

“Then there is the private native trade of the Congo, as distinguished from the requirements of the State and of semi-public bodies, which is as important, if not more so than all the rest put together?”

“There would constantly be an immense quantity of goods going up-country by rail. At present, on the Upper Congo, Europeans have to content themselves



with living in wattled huts or mud forts, roofed over with straw and grass, and there is of course great danger from fire. By means of the railway the State could at once transport about a dozen iron stations; and there would soon be erected houses, churches, and schools, all of iron. Then the native chiefs, seeing what the Europeans were doing, would build iron houses, and would likewise require iron warehouses for their goods. The Chief of Kintamo, for instance, already keeps all his goods in iron boxes; while the Chiefs of Old Calabar live in iron houses which have cost from £1,000 to £3,500 each. Then, again, there would be many steamers to be transported in sections, to be put together on the upper side of the cataracts. On the Upper Congo there are at present only seven steamers, mostly steam launches, but to carry on the enormous trade of the 7,000 miles of navigable water-way of the Upper Congo large and swift steamers will be required, capable of stowing cargo and carrying passengers in comfort. Again, there would be a large trade in timber, and saw-mills would be required to cut it up, which mills would have to be taken up-country by railway. Enormous quantities of powder, and large numbers of flint-lock guns, would also be in demand. All this is without counting the almost limitless trade to be done in cloth goods. I should say that within a reasonable number of years after the making of the railway, there would be a trade of about £10,000,000 annually with the natives of the Upper Congo—all in barter."

Pausing here, Mr. Stanley went on to say that there was a sentimental side to the whole question which was worthy of reflection. "We have been enabled," he continued, "with our own modest enterprise to secure something like 1,000 carriers a month to serve us in a country that, when I began work there, absolutely

refused to have anything to do with us. Already we have some 400 native soldiers—all of which proves that the natives are friendly and willing to lend their services to the white man for his purposes. When the State can better afford it—which will be not long after the railway is finished—it will be able to enlist 3,000 or 4,000 native soldiers for the protection of the country against the slave-traders. Those stations which are to-day so modest and unoffending, and dare not take arms in their hands against the organised slave-traders, will, in a few months only after the opening of the railway, be in a position to take the offensive and absolutely prevent them from ever setting foot in the Congo State."

"That indeed would be worth working for," I remarked.

"It will be the death-blow of the slave-trade in all western equatorial Africa," said Mr. Stanley with animation. "The slave-trade put an end to throughout a region over 2,000,000 square miles in extent, and all done on a commercial basis and without a drop of blood being shed! No need for launching out into armaments, for employing guerilla warfare, or for putting into force the offensive powers vested in the riveraine Governments by the Berlin Conference. Indeed, the desire and the temptation to commit these atrocious deeds upon these quiet and unoffending tribes will have been taken away from the slave-traders by the constant increase of white men among them, each of whom will be a deadly enemy to the slave traffic. In place of the terror and dismay that I witnessed in December, 1883, along 140 miles of the Congo banks, will be seen the effects of the nobler and milder influence of those Christian missionaries who are to-day so bravely pressing on in the almost hopeless warfare against barbarism."

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## WHAT TO WEAR: CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

**P**ARIS has been busy preparing a large variety of woollen fabrics, which, doubtless, will be brought out later at a much cheaper rate in England, losing, however, in their reproduction, some of their original perfection, both in the looms of Germany and of Great Britain.

The new stuffs are characterised by brightness of tone and a novel and happy combination of colouring. The *pentes*, which erewhile were few and far between, now flood the market, and nearly every woollen stuff has been arranged with them. There are a few horizontal stripes, and some checks, formed by interwoven or rope cords, but *pentes* carry the day by ten to one. *Pentes*, in connection with dress, consist of horizontal stripes of a distinct kind from the ground, and of varying widths, set round the hem of the skirt, to the depth of half a yard or more, some-

times placed in front, sometimes at the sides, and now, in this season's goods, occasionally all round the skirt.

Canvas is the dominant idea in all the new woollens, only the varieties are so diverse, it would puzzle all but the caterers of fashion to decide why some of the stuffs are considered canvas at all. They are thin and thick, sometimes in diagonal lines, and sometimes brocaded, but their chief originality this season is in the *pentes*. Some of them are open-work, like a particular sort of curtain muslin used to be; and this is divided by stripes of irregular widths, either of plush or velvet. Biscuit and tones of brown carry all before them. When I was looking over these stuffs the other day, there appeared to be six tones of brown at least to one of every other colour.

One great comfort is that skirts will be made up at the cost of but little trouble, and no expense for trimmings—a remark which applies to another class of materials with interwoven border-