

# REPORT FROM DARKEST AFRICA (1887–1889)

by

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IN the prefatory letter to his great book *In Darkest Africa*, Henry Morton Stanley wrote ‘. . . it is with unqualified delight that I acknowledge the priceless services of my friends Stairs, Jephson, Nelson and Parke, four men whose devotion to their several duties were as perfect as human nature is capable of.’ These four men alone of his eleven European officers on the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, apart from hypochondriacal William Bonney the assistant surgeon, finally reached the east coast of Africa with him after an epic crossing of the continent. Bonney somehow did not measure up to Stanley’s exacting standards, and although undergoing hardships equal to any of the others, failed to receive honourable mention. As for the other four, who include Thomas Heazle Parke, surgeon to the expedition, although Stanley’s grammar may not be perfect, his sentiments were unmistakable.

Emin, who among his several aliases included that of Eduard Schnitzer, M.D., had been appointed Governor of the Equatorial Province of the Sudan by Gordon in 1878. He filled this post with great resource, but after the revolt of the Mahdi against Egypt in 1883, he was completely cut off from the outside world. His position had certain strategic advantages. His three thousand troops were mostly local levies, who disliked the Arabs even more than their own Egyptian officers, and he was protected by the great swamps from the horsemen of the Emirs. He gradually withdrew his troops to the south towards Lake Albert and what is now Uganda. With typical German genius, Emin became wholly self-sufficient, he planted fields of maize, vegetables, cotton and medicinal herbs; the cotton was woven into cloth, honey was substituted for sugar, and beeswax made into candles.

News of his continued resistance gradually reached the outside world. Pride in colonial achievement burned strongly in Britain and was fanned by public resentment at Gladstone’s failure to move with sufficient resolution to the rescue of Gordon at Khartoum. A vast public subscription was raised for ‘The Emin Pasha Relief Expedition’ and Henry Morton Stanley was given its command.

Stanley was very fortunate in his surgeon. Parke was a young Irishman in the Army Medical Department, and the holder of an Irish Conjoint Diploma. He had seen active service in the Tel-el-Kebir campaign of 1882, for which he was twice decorated. He had been in charge of the Army Cholera Hospital at Helouan near Cairo in 1883, where he experimented with the intravenous infusion of saline solution in the treatment of the disease. In 1885 he was in medical charge of the Naval Brigade at Abu Klea, where of five officers he alone was unhurt. For his services on the Nile expedition he received two clasps.

In January 1887, Parke was living a very pleasant service life in Alexandria, where

most of his energies were given up to his duties as M.F.H. The Alexandrian Hunt, when he heard from his friend, Major Edmund Musgrave Barttelot of the 7th Fusiliers, of the expedition in which Barttelot had just engaged. Parke called on Stanley to offer his services, but was coolly received and told that there was no vacancy; next day however a telegram arrived from Cairo, 'If allowed accompany expedition what terms required? are you free to go with me? send particulars to "Shepherds' Hotel" signed Stanley.' And so Parke's great adventure was launched.

It is interesting to note Stanley's initial reaction to Parke, 'an extremely handsome young gentleman, diffident somewhat, but very prepossessing.' Parke with some difficulty obtained indefinite leave without pay from the Army. Stanley also drove a very hard bargain. Parke was to receive £40 outfit allowance, £15 for the purchase of surgical equipment, and no other pay for the expedition destined to last nearly three years. In addition, Parke had to sign a contract stating that he would not publish anything connected with the expedition, or send any account to the newspapers for six months after the issue of the official report of the expedition. Although Parke never complained, this stipulation was to cost him and his friend Mounteney-Jephson the honour of being recognised as the first white men to sight the Ruwenzori Mountain Range.

The expedition sailed on 25th February 1887 from Zanzibar in the *S.S. Madura* and disembarked at Banana Point at the mouth of the Congo River on 21st March. The expedition consisted of a mixed force of eight hundred and four – Nubians supplied by the Egyptian Government, Somalis recruited in Aden, and Zanzibaris who included a remarkable Arab slaver and freebooter called Tippu-Tib, who was uncrowned king of the Congo basin from Stanley Falls (Stanleyville) down to Lake Tanganyika. Tippu-Tib also contracted with Stanley to supply six hundred bearers at the head of navigable waters on the Congo river system to carry the loads of ammunition and other supplies over the last five hundred miles to Lake Albert. Why Stanley should choose the almost impossible Congo route, instead of the much shorter and more direct journey from the east coast through what is now Tanganyika and Uganda will never be known, certainly a secret agreement between himself and King Leopold of the Belgians entered into it.

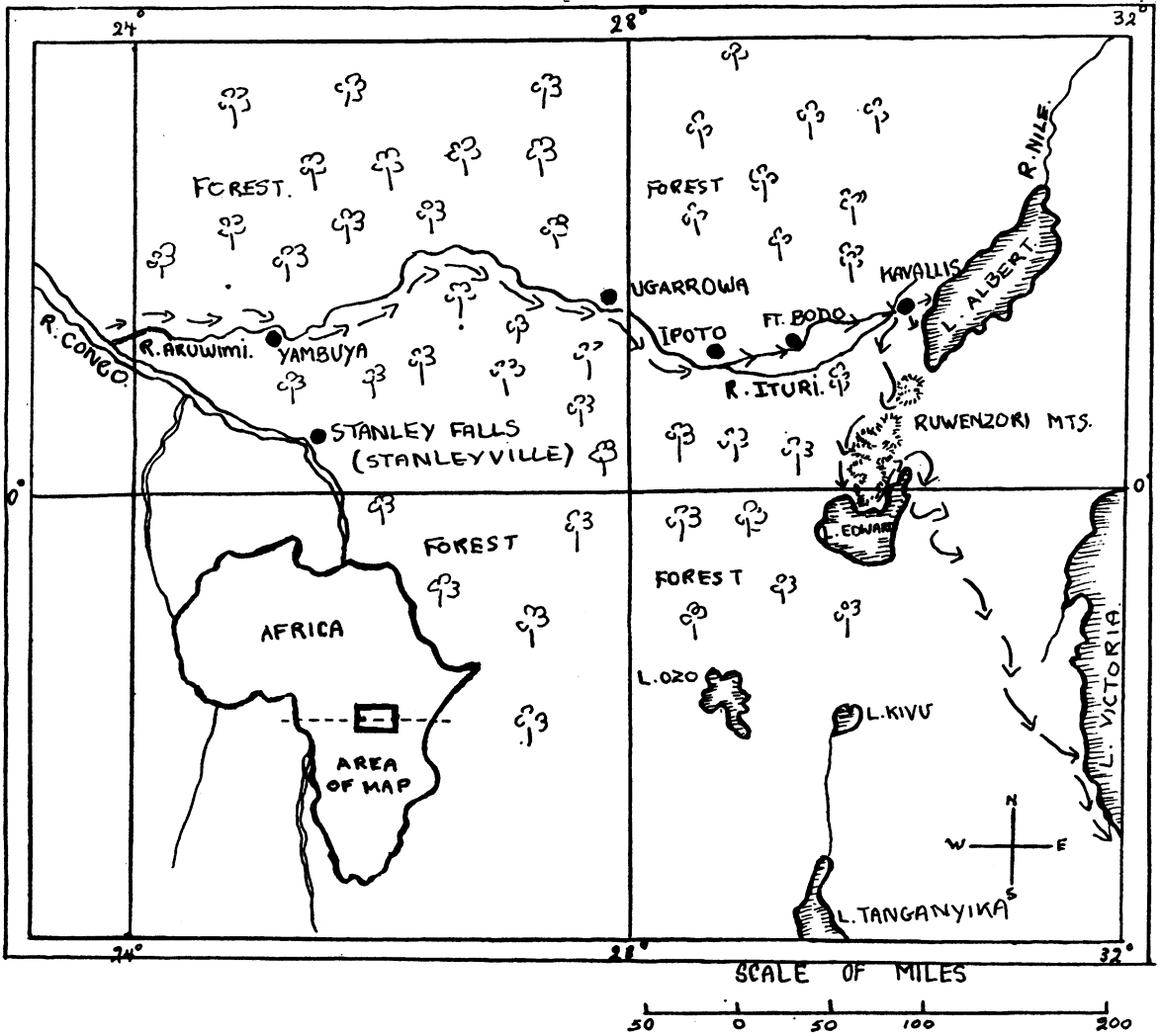
Parke's tribulations started on the voyage; there was an outbreak of smallpox which was contained by the vaccination of all those who did not have obvious smallpox scars, and by the isolation of the wretched patients in lifeboats swung outboards on davits. Tippu-Tib and his twelve wives suffered severely from seasickness which was efficiently treated with that tropical panacea 'Eno's'. There were also a number of broken heads resulting from that continuing bugbear of Africa, intertribal fighting; in this case between the Nubians and the Zanzibaris.

At Banana Point, Parke observed with respect Stanley's qualities of leadership in adversity. Expected river transport was not available, but next day most of the expedition was embarked somehow for Mataddi, one hundred and eight miles up the river, and thence they set out overland for Stanley Pool (Leopoldville) where they arrived on 21st April 1887. At this point only three hundred and forty-five miles from the sea, the column was already weakening.

It would be impossible in a brief sketch to recount all the mishaps of this most

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ill-fated of all expeditions, bonded only by Stanley's iron will. Leopoldville which now has a million inhabitants, at that time consisted of a few native huts and a dozen white men in all. Most of the expedition, including Parke, were ill with malaria, but on



25th April they embarked again on river steamers. Not the least of Parke's troubles was the sharing of a cabin with Tippu-Tib's twelve wives, and he tried tactfully to persuade that potentate that it would be a good idea if they should wash occasionally! On 20th June 1887 they entered the Aruwemi (Ituri) river, a great northern tributary of the Congo, sixteen hundred miles from its mouth, and by 18th October Parke with the advance party on foot, had reached an Arab settlement called Ipoto in the heart

of the Ituri Forest, in what is now the Oriental Province of the Congo Republic and scarcely a hundred and eighty miles from Lake Albert.

On paper the expedition appeared to have almost reached its objective but the reality was very different. Tippu-Tib now at Stanley Falls (Stanleyville) was unable or unwilling to raise the promised six hundred bearers. When the head of the column reached Ipoto, the rear was four hundred and sixty-five miles behind at Yambuya, where Stanley left Barttelot, James Sligo Jameson and Bonney with the bulk of the supplies, and a rearguard of 271 men, most of whom were too ill to proceed further. The expedition had completely outmarched its commissariat and was living off the country; the sickness rate was appalling.

In that dense tropical forest which covered half a million square miles, direct sunlight never penetrated. Drenched by sudden torrential rains, the men were seldom dry. If they lay down to sleep in their clothes at night, by the morning they were often awash, and their precious possessions such as firearms, watches and compasses had to be dredged out of the water. Stanley who studiously refrained from purple patches wrote ' . . . at every pace, my head, neck, arms or clothes was caught by a tough creeper, calamus thorn, coarse briar, or great thistle-like plants . . . insects also of numberless species lent their aid to increase my misery.'

Every slight scratch or insect bite turned into a foetid sloughing ulcer, dysentery was endemic, typhoid common, and malaria universal. Parke estimates that in the thirty-three months the expedition spent in the interior of Africa, each of the Europeans experienced no fewer than one hundred and fifty major attacks of malaria. They were reduced to living on forest fungoids and on Mbuga, a cooked spinach made of the leaves of certain shrubs. Ants were particularly relished, and Parke declared that white ants (Termites?) when caught in sufficient numbers and ground up, were the equal to caviare! Hornets' nests constituted painful and dangerous booby traps in the forest pathways, and every evening Parke had to use forceps to remove ticks from inside the nostrils of five or six of the men.

In the Ituri forest, the topography and botany of the country forced a curious social organization on the natives. Those of normal size lived along the rivers which they navigated in dugout canoes, practising a primitive horticulture, mostly of plantains, bananas and manioc, grown in forest clearings made possible by their possession of primitive iron implements such as hoes and axes. A tribal area was seldom more than a twenty mile strip along a river. In the forest beyond the clearings dwelt the pigmies living in a form of symbiosis with their giant neighbours. They traded pelts, ivory and edible forest fruits for tobacco and iron arrowheads, and pilfered plantains and livestock, mostly goats and miserable chickens. They were tolerated because their superb woodcraft made them valuable allies, giving early warning of approaching enemies, and harassing them with their pitfalls and poisoned arrows. Starved of meat protein in the forest, most of the normal-sized tribesmen practised anthropophagy on their enemies, but Parke who got to know the pigmies well, considered that cannibalism was repugnant to them, although they were sometimes forced to it.

All the tribes were hostile to the expedition and fled at its approach. This was due to the depredations of the Manyema, or occupants of the Arab settlements, which

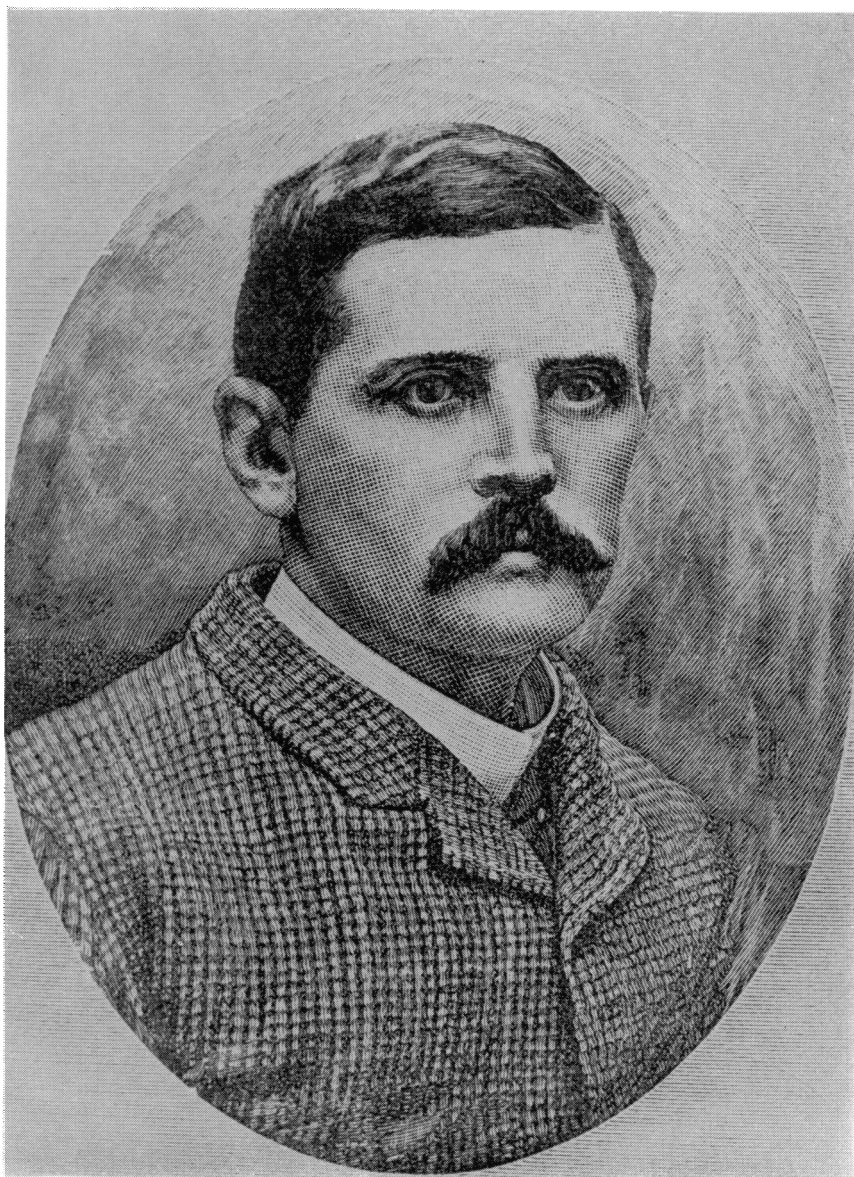
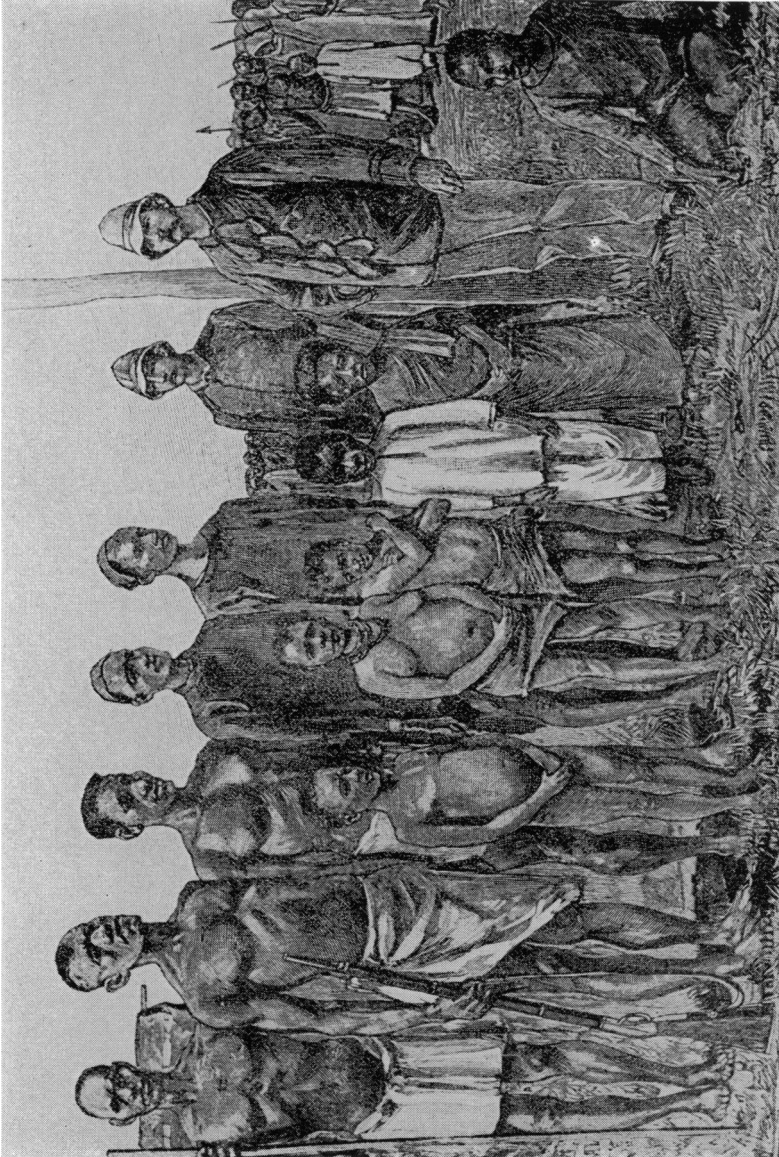


Figure 1  
Thomas Heazle Parke (1857–1893)



**Figure 2**  
Pigmies photographed at Kavalli's with normal-sized Nubians, Somalis and Europeans.

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made all strangers suspect. The Manyuema were offspring and descendants of miscegenous unions between the Arabs and their slaves. The Arabs contemptuously referred to them as 'Slaves of slaves'. They were people with the most revolting moral and sanitary standards, and practised facultative anthropophagy when alternative sources of animal protein became scarce. In spite of their lowly origins, Parke was struck by their generally handsome appearance, and especially that of their women. They manned the slave and ivory raiding expeditions under Arab leaders, and practised unspeakable cruelties on the forest tribesmen, who retaliated in kind when opportunity arose.

When the head of the expedition reached Ipoto (18th October, 1887) they found it to be a Manyuema settlement of about 1,500 people, under an Arab leader called Kilonga Longa who at that time was away on an expedition. They were nominally tributary to Tippu-Tib, and Stanley decided to leave Parke here in charge of a sick officer, Nelson, and forty-seven Zanzibaris and Nubians who were too ill to proceed. He made a written agreement with the Manyuema that the invalids would be fed until relieved, and then as was his wont, pushed on with the remainder of the expedition to keep his expected rendezvous with Emin on Lake Albert on 15th December. Fighting all the way he reached the lake on 13th December 1887, but there was no news of Emin, so he immediately turned back and after penetrating about fifty miles into the forest, on 6th January 1888, started to construct Fort Bodo, or 'peaceful fort' as his basis of operations for the rescue of his rear column. The fort was about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the lake.

Meanwhile at Ipoto, things had gone badly for Parke and Nelson, and even worse for their men. In spite of promises the policy of the Manyuema was to starve the survivors into selling their weapons, ammunition and clothing for food. The Zanzibaris and Nubians were only given food at the rate of five corncocks a day if they worked in the fields. Those too sick to work starved, except for such food as Parke could afford to buy with his equipment, short of exchanging the rifles, which would have left them completely helpless in the hands of these barbarians.

As their flesh fell away from starvation, Nelson and most of the Zanzibaris, developed ulcers over every bony projection especially on their legs. In washing the ulcers the camp water-supply became contaminated. Parke developed a chronic septic left inguinal adenitis, and recurrent attacks of what he called erysipelas on the neighbouring abdomen and thigh, this was probably filarial in origin. One day they were to see the slaves of the Manyuema overpower one of their own number, dismember, cook and eat him on the spot.

Relief from this earthly purgatory only came on 25th January 1888, when Stairs, one of Stanley's officers, arrived back with a strong party to conduct the survivors forward to Fort Bodo. The majority of the sick perished miserably at Ipoto, or on the march forward with Stairs' column. They were harrassed all the way and their supposed friendly association with the Manyuema made them a target for every tribe through whose territory they passed. The whole forest was aroused; every village they came to was abandoned and burnt down. The Wambuttu pigmies were particularly malevolent. On the approaches to their villages they planted makongas, or wooden spikes concealed in the brush; these were designed to pierce the sole of a naked foot,

or longer spikes to impale the abdomen of a man jumping from a fallen log. These weapons were invariably poisoned, and ingeniously contrived with a groove at the neck, so that the shaft broke away leaving the point *in situ*.

Any man who lagged behind was cut down by half a dozen poisoned arrows. It is scarcely surprising that the men marched on with unextractable wooden spikes lodged between their metatarsal bones, and as the bones sloughed, they kept on marching. The only small comfort they had was that jiggers which had been universal in the early days of the expedition became rare in the deep forest. They arrived at the comparative safety of Fort Bodo on 8th February 1888, where they were welcomed by Stanley. Evidence of his demoniac energy was everywhere at hand. In a brief month a stout wooden palisade had been built with a watch-tower at each corner, huts had been prepared for all the men, a good water supply ensured, and some fourteen acres of forest had been cleared and planted with maize, beans and tobacco, and plantain trees left by previous inhabitants of the site, recultivated.

On 16th February 1888, Stairs was despatched with a party of twenty-five men, to return west to Ugarowwa, a distance of two hundred miles to bring up fifty-six invalids who had been left there, and Stanley was about to start for Lake Albert once more when he fell ill. He had a suppurating bubo in his left axilla, and in addition what was probably acute cholecystitis. He told Parke that this was the same illness which had nearly killed him on three former occasions, one of these attacks had occurred when he lived in chambers in Bond Street, and he had taken three months to recover. During this illness Parke opened the axillary bubo using cocaine as a local anaesthetic.

On 2nd April 1888, Stanley was well enough to proceed, and accompanied by Parke and Jephson set out again for Lake Albert. Nelson was left in charge of twenty-seven invalids at the Fort. There was still no news of Stairs, overdue from Ugarowwa, and still less of Barttelot with the rearguard at Yambuya, five hundred miles away. Soon Stanley developed an acute arthritis of one knee and had to be carried. In addition they carried a portable boat in sections for eventual use on the lake. Their advance was resisted all the way by the pigmies, who showered them with poisoned arrows. Parke found that if the arrows could be extracted quickly, and the wounds sucked clean, few succumbed.

On 8th April 1888, when they emerged from the forest into the brilliant sunshine of the open savannahs, Parke had spent 289 days in the forest. By now the natives were very much more friendly, they had realised that the expedition was not interested in slave-raiding, and that its warlike actions were dictated by self-defence. On 29th April they at last made contact with Emin Pasha, on the western shores of Lake Albert. This meeting has often been described. Emin was not at all the expected heroic figure, but a diffident little Prussian doctor who had assumed Turkish nationality and the Moslem religion, and most improbably had been made Governor of Equatoria. He was very self-sufficient and to Stanley's disappointment, although short of military supplies, was very far from being in need of rescue.

After lengthy consultations it was agreed that Emin, who had two small paddlesteamers on the lake, should return to the northern end of the lake, taking Jephson with him, to try to persuade his 10,000 followers (Shades of Xenophon!) to be



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evacuated via the east coast with Stanley. Meanwhile Stanley was to return to Yambuya, six hundred miles to the west through the forest, to bring up his rearguard and its supplies of ammunition.

On 20th April 1888, while on reconnaissance near Kavalli's kraal, twenty miles from the southern end of Lake Albert, Parke and J. H. Mounteney-Jephson became the first Europeans to sight the snow-capped peaks of Ruwenzori. They reported this to Stanley who was sceptical, but on 24th May Stanley's eyes were directed by a Manyuema bearer to what he said was a mountain covered with snow. The clouds had lifted momentarily, and Stanley slowly realised that he was gazing at Ruwenzori, the fabled Mountains of the Moon.

On the open grassland near Lake Albert cattle, goats and crops of corn and sugar-cane were plentiful, and the sick members of the expedition rapidly gained weight and their ulcers started to heal. However malaria was rife, and it is interesting to note the enormous doses of quinine administered by Parke, himself sometimes taking over 100 grains (6 grams) in a day. At times the mosquitoes were so troublesome that the officers built smoky fires of green wood, and huddled round them all night. Although Parke was aware that mosquitoes were vectors of filariasis, in no place does he indicate any awareness that they might be implicated in the transmission of malaria, although Emin informed him that he always carried a mosquito curtain, as he regarded it as an excellent protection against the miasmatic exhalations of the night.

On 8th May 1888, Parke gave a very remarkable exhibition of extra-sensorial perception to Emin's people, thought-reading, finding hidden objects and so on. He does not explain how it was done, but says he was surprised at his own powers; it certainly caused great excitement. At this stage many of the Europeans and Africans began to suffer from tapeworm infestation. Parke thought that it was due to drinking surface water contaminated by antelope excretion; but it was almost certainly caused by eating the undercooked meat of wild pigs. It was to have fatal consequences for poor Parke some years later.

At length Emin was ready to leave in one of his steamers, and on 1st June 1888, Stanley started back for the forest to recover his rearguard; he was to be accompanied by Parke as far as Ipoto. Before leaving, Parke dined with Emin and Jephson and toasted the Queen in spirits of Emin's manufacture, and also ate cheese of his own making. Stanley's journey was to surpass in horrors anything so far experienced: it meant another seven months in the forest. His column now consisted of about 120 of the original party and 140 Equatorial bearers supplied by Emin. They took some cattle with them, and lived on bananas and game until they reached the forest. They arrived at Fort Bodo on 8th June. They found Stairs and Nelson well, but of the fifty-six men who had been left behind at Ugarrowwa, and whom Nelson had gone back to rescue, only fourteen reached Fort Bodo. On 16th June Stanley and Parke set out for Ipoto of ill-fame, and arrived there on 23rd June.

Stanley at once showed his extraordinary mastery. He recovered most of the stolen rifles and equipment; the formidable chief of the Manyuema, Kilonga Longa, at first blustered and lied, but eventually became obsequious, and begged Stanley not to report his ill-treatment of Parke's party to the Sultan of Zanzibar. It was here that

Parke purchased the freedom of one of the Arab's slaves, a female Monbuttu pigmy, who became his devoted valet and watch-dog, and was to remain with him for over a year.

Next day Stanley started again for the west, and Parke set out to return east to Fort Bodo with a detail of thirteen Zanzibaris as guards, and Equatorians and Manyema slaves to carry the boxes of ammunition and clothing which had been stored at Ipoto. After a running fight with the pigmies all the way, they reached Fort Bodo on 6th July 1888.

By the time Parke and his contingent had returned to Fort Bodo the rains had set in heavily. This was good for their horticultural projects, but bad for the health of the camp. The corn and beans were doing well, and rice which had been obtained from Emin was now planted. Here Parke, Stairs and Nelson, with fifty-two men were to remain in utter misery until the return of Stanley on 20th December 1888. Their food supplies were continually endangered by raids from pigmies of the Washenzi tribe on their crops and banana trees, so that a constant guard had to be set.

Soon almost all of the men were disabled by ulcers, and a new dimension of horror was added by the rats from the cornfields invading the huts at night and creeping into the recesses of the enormous ulcers on the men's backs and legs, and feeding on the insensitive putrid flesh. Parke described some of the men as literally rotting away. Scabies was a nuisance, but responded well to that old soldier's remedy, an ointment made from gunpowder and fat. Parke now developed chronic urticaria with swollen eyes, this was possibly due to trichinosis conveyed by a diet of rat-flesh. He again reported that intestinal tapeworms were almost universal, on 14th October he suffered from an attack of 'haematuric' or blackwater fever, and a week later went temporarily blind from quinine amblyopia. A favourite remedy throughout the expedition was the quaintly named 'Livingstone Rouser', a pill consisting of rhubarb, jalap, calomel and a small quantity of quinine.

Parke was entertained to see his pigmy female valet removing lice from the head of a child and eating them. He eventually won her complete confidence and she showed the plants from which her people prepared their arrow-poison. There were five different varieties and he obtained specimens of all. It says much for his character and training that he could maintain his scientific curiosity in these surroundings. The plants were later examined and identified at Kew. Only two of them had any significant pharmacological action; one contained erythrophloeine, a sedative and paralyzant with a curare-like action. The other was one of the strychnos group whose active principle was strychnine. This explained the mystery of why so many of those wounded with arrows developed 'tetanus' within a few hours instead of the expected incubation period of several days; what he had witnessed were the symptoms of strychnine poisoning and not of tetanus.

On 31st August 1888, a disaster occurred when a hailstorm largely destroyed their plantation. Their stores of food were already consumed, and as Parke put it, they would have to live by 'grazing' until Stanley returned, or perhaps until Emin should arrive with a large party from Lake Albert to rescue them.

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From then on they waited at Fort Bodo, with increasing hopelessness; sometimes against orders the men went foraging into the forest in ones and twos, and those who did so seldom returned. Parke had no doubt as to their ultimate fate. 'All the inhabitants of the bush are cannibals, their "banquet" will not be as good in quantity as quality, as the missing individuals are poor in flesh . . . the men returned this afternoon, but no Mohamed A.; so that we suspect all the more that he is at supper with some convocation of political natives—not where he eats but where he is eaten.'

Towards the end of September the Equatorians in the camp simultaneously became further incapacitated by an outbreak of guinea-worm. As this helminth is not endemic in the Congo basin, the men must have been infected a year before on the upper reaches of the Nile. As the string-like parasites, up to 100 cms. in length, came to the surface of the victims' bodies, usually on the legs, further ulcers formed. At this stage Parke developed arthritis of one of his knees, possibly an early symptom of onchocerciasis infection, as some months later he was seriously affected by what he called 'ophthalmia.' In spite of this Parke fared better, and lost less weight than any of the others, because his pigmy freed-woman collected insects and edible leaves and fungi and brought them to him secretly at night.

On 13th October 1888 Parke was down again with bilious remittent fever, and his temperature did not settle until 29th October. On 10th November he succeeded in extracting an arrow-head which had been lodged in Stairs' chest-wall and caused a discharging sinus for fifteen months. A great day was 15th November when they harvested such of their maize as had been spared by the hail. The total yield was four tons, so they were saved from the prospects of immediate starvation, but they craved animal food and when Stairs shot a stork, it was a great treat for the three white men.

On 20th December 1888, when they had almost given up hope of relief, Stanley returned on the very day he had predicted. He had a dreadful story to tell. Of the 271 men in the rearguard at Yambuya, less than one-third survived to arrive with him at Fort Bodo. Barttelot, the victim of his own ill-temper had been murdered by an Arab at Yambuya, and James Sligo Jameson, who had been at Stanley Falls when Stanley reached Yambuya, was already dead from cerebral malaria, although the party did not know this as yet.

Let us read in Parke's own words, the state of Stanley's group when they arrived.

I have never seen so repulsive a sight as that furnished by the unfortunate creatures; eaten up as they were by enormous ulcers. As they came dropping in, the stench—emitted by the putrid flesh and the dirty scraps of bandages—was sickening, and actually filled the air all round the Fort, as well as within it. The great majority of the ulcers were on the lower extremities—great, gangrenous rapidly sloughing surfaces most of them—Many were up to a foot in length and half as wide, with the bone exposed along the whole length. Many had hopelessly destroyed the feet: In some cases the tarsus, metatarsus and phalanges had all dropped out by degrees, the great strings of putrid flesh were left hanging out from the stump. This day I have removed as much dead bone as could conveniently be packed on two soup plates.

In these circumstances it is a fantastic tribute to Stanley's personality and powers of domination, that when he started to pack with the object of the whole party leaving at once for Lake Albert, they were not only willing, but eager, to follow him.

Stanley was now forty-eight years of age, thin and careworn, his hair had turned silvery grey since the start of the expedition, and he looked an old man; but his will to 'push on' never wavered, and his men realized instinctively that their only hope of ever escaping from the forest was to hobble along with him. The whole expedition was together again for the first time in eighteen months. Of more than eight hundred who left Zanzibar, only about two hundred still survived to continue the march, together with some three hundred Manyuema bearers of both sexes.

Before leaving on 23rd December 1888, Stanley ordered that Fort Bodo be razed, this was to produce a feeling of irrevocability akin to the burning of boats. They had to go forward or perish. A glass demijohn three feet in height, containing a letter by Nelson and some articles of European manufacture was buried deep on the site of the enclosure, to puzzle 'the African antiquarian of a thousand years hence.' Bonney had brought up from Yambuya some letters for Parke, these included a bill from the British Medical Association for the sum of £1 7s. 6d.!

When the expedition staggered to the edge of the plains again at a place called Kandekore on 10th January 1889, it was clear that a great many of the men were incapable of further effort, and Stanley once more established a 'convalescent' camp of some hundred and thirty men, with Parke, Stairs and Nelson in charge. Food was reasonably plentiful here, especially bananas and even a few chickens and goats were available. A description of this camp would be mere reiteration of life at Fort Bodo, except that nutritional wants were better supplied, and the men began to improve in health. Parke held a daily 'sick-parade', when too weak to stand he sat in a chair, and doled out Burroughs and Wellcome's 'Tabloid' medicines, which he said were superior to any other form available to travellers at that time, not only for efficiency and constancy of strength, but also for convenience of transport and rapid dispensing.

At Kandekore a balance sheet was made of the manpower of those who had been left behind at Yambuya in the middle of 1887. Of the total of 271 men, only thirty-six blacks and one white succeeded in reaching Kandekore, the great majority of the others were dead.

On 10th February 1889, instructions arrived for the party at Kandekore to proceed to the lake, where Stanley had met with Emin and Jephson again; and the survivors from Kandekore finally reached Kavalli's kraal, twenty miles from the lake and two thousand feet in elevation above it, where they were received by Stanley, Jephson, Emin and six of his officers, Vita Hassan, his Tunisian apothecary, Casati, his Italian second-in-command, and Emin's little daughter Ferida aged eight, whose mother, an Abyssinian, had died some years before.

At Kavalli's Parke learned the reason for Emin's apparent inaction during the previous nine months, and why the succour promised by him for Fort Bodo had never arrived. When he and Jephson had sailed up the lake in June 1888, and on to Wadelai on the Upper Nile, they had been immediately imprisoned by his mutinous followers, and had only been released after some months when the Mahdi's troops began to invade Equatoria.

In conversation Emin told Parke that one reason so many of the expedition's men had perished in the Congo was due to their eating improperly prepared and cooked

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manioc. This root which can yield a highly nutritious flour requires shredding and washing in numerous changes of water to leach away its poisonous principle before it can be safely dried and eaten. The poor starving Zanzibaris had been too feckless to embark on this tedious procedure, and had been in the habit of gnawing the raw tubers.

At Kavalli's Emin and Parke found a common interest in anthropology, and made detailed measurements of the pigmies. Their height averaged 130.6 cms. (4 ft. 3.2/5 inches), and the length of their feet 20.6 cms. (8.1/10 inches), which is surprisingly long for such diminutive people. Parke does not make the point, but these may have been mountain pigmies, who are known to develop an elongation of the os calcis due to the pull of hypertrophied gastrocnemius and soleus muscles through the tendo achilles.

On 10th April 1889, the whole caravan more than 1,000 strong started for the coast. This journey might be considered as being comparatively uneventful, and so it was, compared with the time spent in the Ituri. But the trek was not without medical interest. The Egyptian officers were bloated and sallow, due to their previous life of indolence in Ecuatoria and their addiction to home-made whisky, which the resourceful Emin had taught them to distil from grain. In addition they all had enormous enlargement of the spleen due to schistosoma mansonii infection, which is very prevalent in Ecuatoria. This disfigurement led to the Zanzibaris calling them the 'Yellow bellies.' Emin told Parke that he treated Egyptian splenomegaly by local inunction with tartar emetic in a fatty base. Many years later intravenous injections of tartar emetic became the standard treatment for Schistosomiasis, and remained so until superseded by more sophisticated compounds of antimony in the nineteen thirties and forties.

On 13th April 1889, three days after starting the journey to the coast, Stanley was again laid low with acute cholecystitis and Parke called Emin in consultation. Stanley's desperate situation was made worse by Parke going down with his second attack of blackwater fever, and Bonney took over the care of Stanley. When convalescent he was carried in a chair to pronounce sentence and supervise the hanging of one of Emin's men who had been found guilty by a 'Court Martial' of desertion and of stealing a rifle. The hanging was a failure as the rope broke, but four plies were soon plaited together and the poor wretch re-suspended. We can understand that the members of the expedition had by now become pretty callous.

As they travelled they were plagued by malaria, and Parke noted that every man, woman and child was affected at some time, and blackwater fever was common. As they moved slowly south along the western foothills of Ruwenzori, they heard that Kilonga Longa's Manyuema were raiding in the district, but they made off when they heard that Bula Matari (Stanley—literally 'The Rock Breaker') was approaching. Towards the end of May 1889 they turned to the east around the southern end of the mountains. In the middle of June Parke developed a palmar abscess which he had opened by Nelson rather than by Bonney.

On 1st July they reached Lake Edward, whose waters they found brackish and unpalatable. On 13th and 14th July, two of the Zanzibaris died of what Parke called 'sunstroke.' His clinical description of bulbar palsies and paralysis of the respiratory

muscles in the two men, makes it certain that they really perished of infective encephalitis, or polio-encephalitis. As this was six years before Quincke performed the first lumbar puncture, an exact diagnosis was not possible at the time. As they passed through Uganda and Ruanda, ophthalmia became a pest. This was probably trachoma, which is still endemic in Uganda, and Parke suffered from partial blindness the whole way to the coast, but his trouble may have been due to onchocerciasis contracted in the Congo. While they were still in mountainous country several of the children with Emin's people died of the cold.

As the column approached Lake Victoria, a great personal sorrow fell to Parke. Although the rest of the expedition had waxed fat in the open country, the pigmies who accompanied them, were out of their element since leaving the forest, and were fading away. The little Monbuttu woman who had tended Parke since leaving Ipoto, fell ill and had to be left behind with some friendly natives. He wrote an affecting tribute to the little woman whose name he seems never to have learnt.

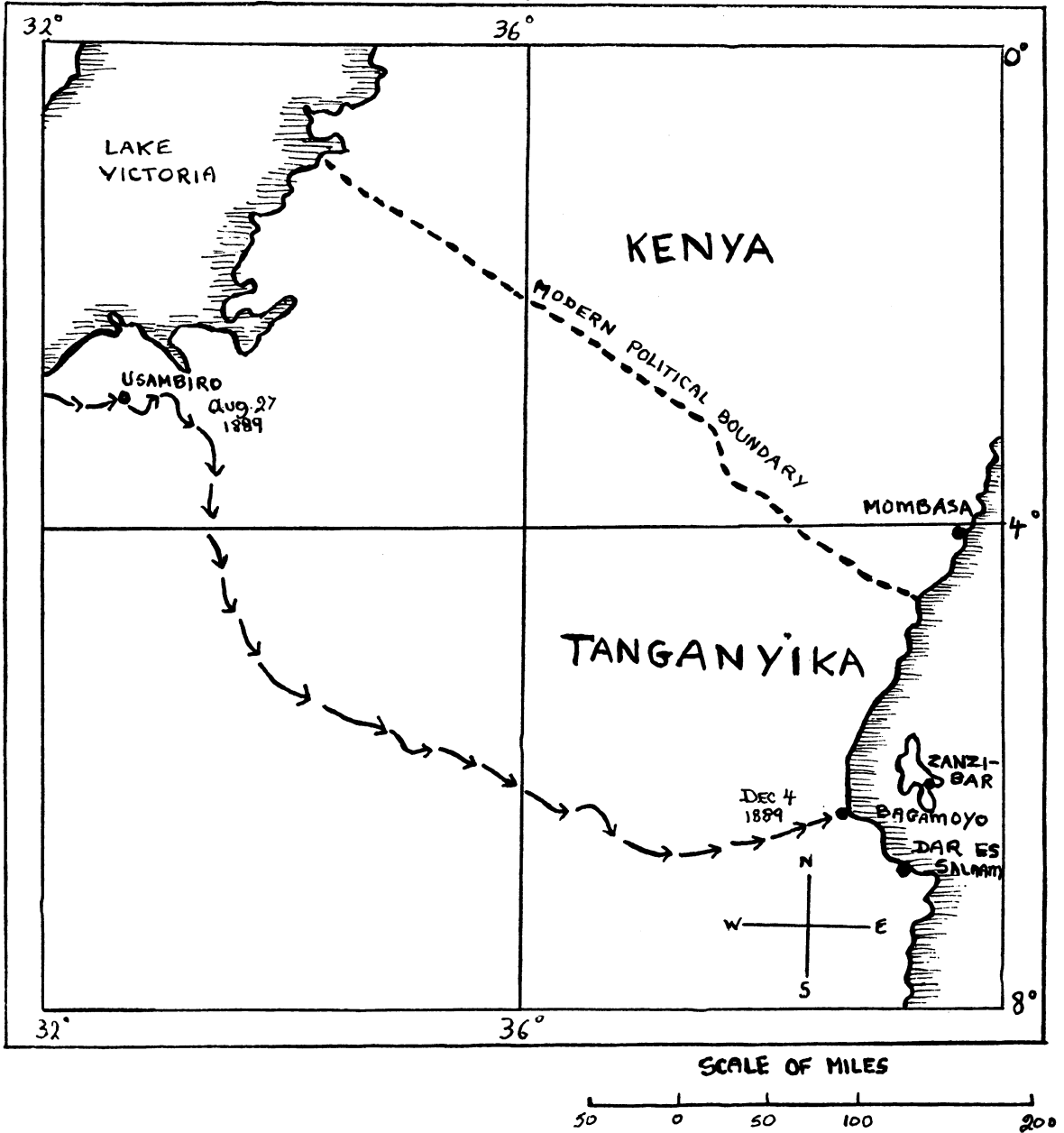
. . . unlike some other ladies of the dark continent her morals were entirely above suspicion . . . and she was a general favourite always cheery and obliging, although her scanty costume only consisted of Mr. Stanley's scarlet breeches, an umbrella and a vine tied around her waist . . . yet this little dwarf always maintained an exalted dignity and superior position. She nursed me through many a fever with characteristic tenderness and modesty, and her last act at parting was to give to me the ivory bangles which she wore in the forest, but which now dropped from her attenuated arms and ankles.

On 18th August 1889, they arrived at the Victoria Nyanza, and on 28th August made their first contact with civilization at Usambiro at the southern end of the lake, in the person of the remarkable A. M. Mackay, a missionary whose contemporary fame rivalled that of Livingstone. From Usambiro their progress to the coast, although it took three months, was a comfortable safari compared with what had gone before. They reached Bagamoyo opposite Zanzibar and thirty miles north of Dar es Salaam on 4th December 1889, and on sighting the sea, the shrieks of joy from the ebullient Zanzibaris was a re-echo of 'Thalassa, Thalassa' from an earlier expedition.

The Germans, who were now in occupation of the coast, gave them a tremendous reception, and a congratulatory wire from Kaiser Wilhelm awaited Emin. Parke's account of Emin's head injury after his fall from a veranda on the night of the arrival differs in many respects from Stanley's. Stanley in his book tended to minimize the injury, perhaps to justify his own departure two days later for Zanzibar, having safely conveyed his 'trophy' as far as he had contracted to do. Parke however leaves no doubt that he considered Emin to be seriously ill, with a couple of broken ribs and probably an extensively fractured skull base. He was very touched that the first word Emin uttered on recovery of partial consciousness was 'Parke.'

Emin continued to lose cerebrospinal fluid from both ears and four days after the accident developed broncho-pneumonia. Parke remained on to care for him, together with two German naval doctors, but after three weeks, Parke again developed blackwater fever and was transferred to the care of Dr. Charlesworth and the nuns at the French Hospital in Zanzibar. Here his life was for a time despaired of, and Stanley and the other officers were summoned to see him breathe his last. However after a

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Map showing the route from Usambiro (27th August 1889) to Bagamoyo (4th December 1889).

week's diet of iced champagne he was well enough to be carried on board the steamer taking Stanley and the others to Cairo, which they reached on 16th January 1890. Within a few days Parke was back at his army duties, and finally reached England in May 1890.

On their return the officers of the expedition were loaded with honours. Parke was entertained to a banquet by his brother officers of the Army Medical Staff. The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland gave him an honorary fellowship, and at a banquet in Dublin, welcomed him to a company whose roll included the names of Joseph Lister, Louis Pasteur and James Paget. On 6th June 1890, the editorial staff of the *Lancet* entertained him in their office and presented him with a silver salver. That evening a banquet was given in his honour under the presidency of Sir Andrew Clark, P.R.C.P., and the principal speakers were Sir Jonathan Hutchinson and Sir James Paget. The British Medical Association awarded him its gold medal at Birmingham, and Durham University conferred on him its Doctorate of Common Laws. He also received high Egyptian decorations, and was the recipient of gold medals and honorary fellowships from many geographical societies.

In contrast to all this, the Government proved rather niggardly, and the only official recognition Parke received was permission to count his time with the expedition for full-paid service. Stanley called attention to this lapse in the strongest terms, in his preface to Parke's useful little book *Guide to Health in Africa* which was produced in 1893. In addition, in 1891, Parke published a large volume *My personal experiences in Equatorial Africa*, which was based on his diaries of the expedition. This provides a useful commentary and counterpoint on Stanley's much better-known account.

After his return, Parke was appointed Surgeon-Captain to the 2nd Life Guards in London, and later was employed at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley. He was gazetted Surgeon-Major on 5th February 1893. Within a year of his return to England he began to suffer attacks of Grand Mal. In the light of hindsight it is probable that these were due to cerebral infestation with cysticercosis cellulosae, the intermediate stage of the pork tapeworm, *taenia solium*, which afflicted so many members of the expedition. There is a family tradition that at this time Parke was engaged to the daughter of a Scottish peer and it was while on a visit to the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans at Alt-na-Craig in Argyllshire, that he died suddenly on 10th September 1893 at the age of thirty-six.

His remains were returned to Ireland and interred in the family burial ground at Kilmessan in Co. Leitrim. A public subscription was raised in Ireland, and a bronze statue of him was erected in the grounds of the Natural History Museum, in Merrion Square, Dublin. His brother officers put up a memorial brass in the garrison chapel at Netley, and a Parke Memorial Hall, which contained a portrait of Parke, was built in Carrick-on-Shannon; this hall unfortunately was burnt down in 1922, during the 'troubles.'

In a letter to the *Lancet* of 23rd September 1893, Stanley wrote a final valediction to his friend. Coming from a man of his iron-hard character, it was an extraordinary tribute and fitting epitaph ' . . . true to the core, a very honest and punctiliously honourable gentleman; one made up of sweet simplicity, tenderness and loving sympathy.'



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