

[1899]

Wednesday, Sept. 13.

With a small caravan (as we deemed it best) of men and women, we proceeded across the big plain of three hours' march to N'Demba (Lulua village). There is not a village to be seen. Three hours more brought us to Ebunch and Boengongo Pianga village of a thousand people each. Here we met fifteen men very much frightened, standing at the end of their houses, ready to fly into the bush. After the exchange of salutations, they were more comfortable. They soon found that we were friends, and on the strength of it produced a wild goat as a present, and a tall, stout man, Quaita N'Gola, for medical treatment. This man, a sub-chief, was in the trap on the fatal day, and in leaping the fence his right hand was shot to pieces. We brought out our medicines, for we had gone prepared. The bullet had gone through the hand where the fingers join it. The hand was swollen to twice its size, and the smell was awful. There was another man (Machakola) shot through the back, so they described, but his friends had hid him away in the bush, and they could not find him. From the wounded man I received plenty of information, etc. We slept here. There were three big villages in calling distance, and not a soul except those few scattered men.

Thursday, Sept. 14.

We have secured a guide, and will make a hard and fast march till within an hour of the Zapo Zap camp, and then proceed slowly and cautiously, for we don't know what turn the Zaps will take. We may suffer at their hands, but we are going as near as possible, near enough to smell them, if not in the citadel. I forgot to tell you that "Kedeba", a true son of Chenuma, the big Chief, showed us

last night where two bullets fired at him struck his knife tearing away the wood carving. They were true bullet marks. His big knife saved him. He escaped from the "fatal trap".

We have marched one hour and a half. The village is, or rather was, Betam, now burned to the ground by the Zaps. Here we had breakfast. So he asked the guide of some of the men of his village (Detuda Kapumba) who suffered. So he mentioned the following who reached home: Phuman Wand (dead), shot through the arm; Quaita Maling (dead), shot through the thigh; Myshung (dead), shot in the chest; Quaita Menga (dead), shot in the back; Mot Mosa (dead), shot in the ribs.

Our breakfast was not enjoyed. On the left through a small bush, we visited two small villages, Bone and N'Gala Losha, deserted, but not burned. Our guide tells of the villages to the right that they are all burned. The slaughter took place in the evening, and so the Zaps chased the people the next day, killing, capturing and burning as they went. They made a circle, and returned late the next day to their camp.

So we proceeded on our journey, passing N'Grada (burned), Esue, Bry, M'Banga, Nauch, and Lama Bama, all raided and not a soul in the last named village. There was a dead woman lying against the side of the house, shot on the side of her head. We also passed Cuma, Buma, Bry Yuma, and N'Sing, all raided, the last burned.

Just after leaving our last village we encountered trouble: we were near our death. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon. I had put our guide in the lead, one of my men next, a woman next, and I fourth. The roads are big. You can travel in the forest in your hammock from one village to another. At a curve in the forest

we met face to face with sixteen Zapo Zaps, who, with lightening speed, cocked their guns and took aim. The people before cried out and jumped behind me. I jumped forward, threw up my hands and cried in a loud voice, "Don't shoot, I am Sheppard!" The man in the lead recognized me, I had met him many times at Luebo, his name is Chebamba. They let down their guns, turned them towards the bush and lowered the hammers. Chebamba walked up and caught my hand with a hearty good morning. There was one thick-lipped, greasy-headed devil, who was trying to get at the guide who had taken refuge behind me. My fright was over, and I told him I was not a fighting man, but that I had my tools with me, and if he laid his hands on that man I would send him to look his father, and that quickly. Combulo, Gwaba and Tulua Buza were the leaders in the crowd. I asked for one man to return with me to the camp, so they gave me Chebamba. This party was on their way hunting food and people. We had gone half an hour when Chebamba called my attention to smoke behind us. It was some near village which these men had reached and burned. Our guide was so afraid that we gave him the privilege of escaping through the bush and returning home, and so he skipped. Soon we were on the plain. Chebamba opened up and told me everything I desired to know. He showed me his two men that he had shot. "I ran after them this whole distance. Shot one half way of the plain, reloaded my gun and caught this big one, and here is his spear, and here are the arrows and the bow of the first one". I said "yes", and grinned, but down in my heart was the feeling to revenge this inoffensive people, to turn my gun on the demons they call Zaps, But I must be prudent, or I will lose, or not get my desired information.

We met a boy, and Chebamba sent him to the camp to say to

Malumba N'Cuso that his big friend was coming. In the meantime I asked question after question, and said "yes" and grinned. In twenty minutes we heard the firing of guns, and beating of drums, the war whoop, and here they came as thick as peas, leaping in the air, firing their guns, throwing spears, shooting arrows, falling on the ground as if to escape a passing arrow. As they drew near, we saw their faces - some marked up with red paint, others with native flour and so on. Oh such devils! My they could take any country! But for being with Chebamba my heart would have sunk within me. They were upon us, so we stopped to give "moya" (the salutation), to the whole show, and then they were off again. Such a noise! In a few minutes the chief of the Zaps, Malumba N'Cuso, came and with him another crowd, with other drums and other guns. "Well," I said to myself, "how many of these wild demons are there?" The chief met me warmly, and said he was glad I had come. I did not believe him, but accepted the compliment. Chebamba, as by previous arrangements, wanted to take me to the road where the dead were, but the chief would not allow him, so I suggested to my friend that we go late in the afternoon. Inside the camp, or "fatal trap" I was taken. So enter you must, get down on your hands and knees. He brought me out some kind of a drink in a pot, and placed it before me, but I politely refused, asking for water instead. The man's hands were dripping with the crimson blood of innocent men, women and children. I could hardly drink his water. The camp is about 80 yards long and 40 yards broad, and stinks, for the dead are lying at its very doors.

The first question the chief asked me was something like this, "You don't like it that I am breaking into this bad Bakuba people"? I smiled, or rather grinned, and said, "That is not my

palaver (fuss or contention). The State has sent you and you have to go ^{by} your instructions". "But has the palaver been a strong one?" I asked in a real friendly way, so as to get the young six-footer started off. He at once began: "I have been here near two months. I demanded thirty slaves from this side of the stream, and thirty from the other side. Rubber, goats and fowls, two points of ivory, 2500 balls of rubber, thirteen goats, ten fowls and six dogs, some corn chumy" etc. "I don't like to fight", he continued, "but the State told me if the villages refused to pay to make fire".

"To what villages did the State send you?" I asked.

"To the Bakette, Bena Pianga and Bakuba, and especially Lukenga's".

"Are you going to Lukenga's?"

"I don't know".

Here some of his men spoke up, "Yes, yes! we are going. Yes we are going to kill them all, for they don't want the white men to come to their village".

The words were nasty, and spoken in a nasty way, as if not only to demand payment for the State, but also to revenge an old feud which had begun long ago between the Zaps and Lukenga.

"You really killed some people?" I asked in an inquiring tone, as though I simply wanted to know for myself.

One long legged brute (excuse me) pointed to a big stain on the ground where were hundreds of flies swarming.

"Look at that, that is our work, we are strong".

"Is that so", I said with another of my grins, "well, how many guns have you?"

The chief then answered, "We have 130 cap guns and 8 State rifles".

"I have a good rifle, have you seen it?" I said.

"No, show it to us."

So I produced my rifle, after a little while when they had finished I said, "I see you have a belt full of cartridges, will you not show me your 8 rifles?"

So in a few minutes they were produced. I saw them.

"And I have plenty of powder, a big box full, which the State gave me, plenty caps, but not many balls, so I have my blacksmith making iron balls".

I saw and watched the smith. In all this interview my people were with me, and saw and heard all the talking in the old Babula tongue.

"How did the fight come up?" I asked, as if curious that the Pianga people, so good and quiet, should attack them.

"I sent for all their chiefs, sub-chiefs, men and women, to come on a certain day, saying that I was going to finish all the palaver. When they entered these small gates (the fence being made of fences brought from other villages, the high native ones) I demanded all my pay or I would kill them, so they refused to pay me, and I ordered the fence to be closed so they couldn't run away, then we killed them here inside the fence. The panels of the fence fell down, and some escaped".

Oh! my heart burned, but I hid it as well as possible.

"How many did you kill," I asked.

"We killed plenty, will you see some of them?"

"Oh, I don't mind", I said reluctantly, but that was just what I wanted.

He said, "I think we have killed between 80 and 90, and

those in the other villages I don't know, I did not go out but send my people".

The chief and I walked out on the plain just near the camp. There were three people with the flesh carved off from the waist down.

"Why are the people carved so, only having the bones". I asked.

"My people eat them," he answered promptly. He then explained, "The men who have young children do not eat people, but all the rest ate them". On the left was a great big man, shot in the back and without a head. (All these people were nude).

"Where is the man's head?" I asked.

"Oh, they made a bowl of the forehead to rub up tobacco and dimba in".

We continued to walk and examine until late in the afternoon and counted 41 bodies. The rest were eaten up by the people.

On returning to the camp, we crossed a young woman, shot in the back of the head, one hand was cut away. I asked why, and Mulunba N'Cusa explained that they always cut off the right hand to give to the State on their return.

"Can you not show me some of the hands?" I asked.

So he conducted us to a frame-work of sticks, under which was burning a slow fire, and there they were, the right hands, I counted them, 81 in all.

There were not less than 500 guns all told, and 60 women, (Bena Pianga) prisoners. I saw them. Some of his followers or principal men are Lualaba, Kabunga and Zapo Kingonda.

We all say that we have as fully as possible investigated the whole outrage, and find it was a plan previously made to get all

the stuff possible, and to catch and kill the poor people in the "Death Trap".

We are yours most respectfully,

(Signed) W. H. Sheppard.

P. S.

Remba Malemba (if I spell the name right) I know him well, he was once my table boy for a short time. He speaks French and English, having been in the service of Mr. Stach (of the S.A.B.) for a long time. He in the presence of me witnessed that he had received 30 pieces of cloth from Mr. Van dan Andel with which to buy rubber. He was buying in a Baketti village, when Mulumba N'Cusa heard of him and sent and brought him and his cloth saying, "Follow me, and when I get rubber from the people I will give it to you and you give me the cloth". You see the point? The Zaps return to Malanze, and say that they have received no rubber, the people refuse to pay. The chief Zao has sent sixteen men to the State. The women are stopping. What will happen to the women when the Zapps are hungry and food is diminished? I saw them on my return empty the last house of corn, as they empty the villages of corn, then they burn them.

(Signed) W. H. Sheppard.

Later.

On the way for four hours' march. Every now and then you can smell the awful stench of the wounded one, who would make his way home, but crawled off in the bush near the road and died.

(Signed) W. H. Sheppard.