

TRAVELLERS AND EXPLORERS.

**Mungo Park's Discoveries in Africa—
Marco Polo's Adventures in
The Fair East.**

While modern travellers and discoverers are reaping great gains of fame, one should not forget some of the older ones, who, like Mungo Park and Marco Polo, were pioneers in exploration, and so far as fame and honor went had little but their labor for their pains.

Mungo Park was a Scotchman born in the beginning of this century, apprenticed in boyhood to a surgeon, and fired for African travel by an early voyage to Sumatra. He was twenty-four years old when his services were accepted by the African Association for the exploration of the River Niger. After his arrival, while ill in Africa, he learned the Mandingo tongue in five months, and then set out on horseback, with six negroes, meeting with all sorts of difficulties on his tour. In one place a wild bear was let loose upon him, but it refused to attack him, finding meat more to its liking in others. After enduring a long suspense here while his captors debated whether they should take his life, his eyes or his right hand he managed to escape and found the Niger again, and nothing daunted, continued his way. But the King of the country he had now reached forbade him to cross, and a negro woman admitted him to her hut and took care of him and sang a song about him—memory of which has since been famous—that of the "Poor White Man." At last the King sent him a guide and a large gift of money in cowrie-shells. But after some progress the tropical rains, protracted sickness and the hostility of the Mahometan inhabitants of that portion of the continent made it impossible for him to proceed, and he was nearly a year in returning to the coast. There an American vessel took him to Antigua, and he at length reached England after an absence of two years and a half, where his return aroused great enthusiasm. Eight years afterwards, when he had married and begun the practice of medicine, the British Government sent him out to Africa again with the brevet rank of captain and a company of some forty men.

The party reached the sources of the Senegal and Gambia, found the inhabitants friendly, but the climate so deadly that Park was presently left with but four companions. He continued his way, however, and at Boossa, where the river narrows between precipitous walls, the men of the King of Yauri attacked the little party with a murderous rain of lances, arrows and stones, and Mungo Park found his fate in the waters of the river he was exploring. One of his journals was saved, the rest remained with the savage king. With dire struggle and small meed of praise he gave up his life at thirty-five.

A very different fate from Mungo Park's was that of Marco Polo, a Venetian traveller, some five and a half centuries earlier, and one inspired by no such high motives as Park. His father and uncle having returned from a trading expedition that had led them over the Black Sea, through Bokhara and into what was called Cathay, took Marco, a lad not yet twenty, on their next trip, the Pope having given them letters and gifts to the Khan of Tartary. They threaded wildernesses, crossed deserts, great rivers, great cities, and were at last met by an escort and conducted into Peking, where the Khan conferred great honors on Marco, gave him a place about the throne and in time sent him on embassies to neighboring powers. Probably the Venetian beauty made him an attractive youth, but his prudence and good sense and daring won such way for him that he saw the most sacred and secret things, was loaded with wealth and made the governor of a city, the ruler—who was that one of whom Coleridge in his opium dream wrote:

In Xenadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure house decree—

refusing to let him leave him for his own people.

At length a Persian embassy having won the daughter of the Khan as a bride for their own King, Marco and his companions were given leave of absence, on a promise to return, and went with the Persian embassy by sea around Borneo and Sumatra to the Persian Gulf, and were entertained for nearly a whole year in Persia before they left it, again magnificently enriched. They reached Venice twenty-four years after they had left it, and no one would at first believe it was they, long thought to be dead, bronzed by the sun, aged by years and travel, and speaking their own dialect with a strange accent. Giving a great feast, they received in rich oriental garments of red satin those who ought to have been their friends; the guests being seated, these garments were exchanged after the first course for those of heavy crimson velvet.

At the close of the banquet they were in the usual Venetian dress, and then distributed the superb and curious garments that they had taken off among their guests. Then they brought out the Tartar clothes which they had been wearing, and ripping them here and there, out tumbled treasures of priceless jewels. This was enough, and they were soon recognized as the travellers who had left them so many years before, and they received many honors and appointments, Marco being given command of a galley in one of the naval wars. But, although Marco was one of the first to make the existence of Japan known, and the most that he said and wrote of his explorations and discoveries was true, he never received any credence, not a word of his stories was believed.

The Invention of the Lucifer Match.

A quarter of a century ago Mr. John Walker, of Stockton-upon-Tees, then carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist in that town, was preparing some lighting mixture for his own use. By the accidental friction on the hearth of a match dipped in the mixture a light was obtained. The hint was not thrown away. Mr. Walker commenced the sale of friction matches. This was in April 1827. "Young England," who has come into being since that day, now buys a pocketful of lucifers for a penny. Mr. Walker, for a box of 50, with a piece of doubled sandpaper for friction, got a shilling! "Prometheans" and other competitors beat him down to sixpence. And then, unwilling to be beaten down still further, he renounced the sale. Old Harrison Burn, an inmate of the Stockton Almshouse, was Mr. Walker's matchmaker, and John Ellis, book-binder, made the paper boxes at 13d each. Mr. John Hixon, solicitor, was Mr. Walker's first customer. Production has been cheapened in all directions, but few commodities have "fallen like lucifers."

MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

BY MRS. BOWSER.

The other morning we got a telegram from mother, saying she was ill, and asking me to come out for a day or two, and when Mr. Bowser had read it he said:

"You can go just as well as not, and you needn't hurry back on my account."

"But the cook left yesterday, and how will you get along?" I asked.

"Oh, you never mind me. I can sleep here nights and lunch down town. You needn't worry about me. Just take the baby and go and see your mother and stay as long as you wish."

"And you—you—"

"I shan't elope or get drunk."

"But you won't try to make any changes in the house while I'm gone?"

"Changes? Do you suppose I'm going to put on new doors and chimneys?"

"Well, please don't buy any new furniture or carpets, or move things around."

"Don't you worry about my buying anything more this spring. Hurry up, now, and I'll telephone for a coupe. I may lock up the house at noon and go up to the club house for a couple of days. I feel the need of a little rest."

Mr. Bowser caught at my going so eagerly that I half suspected him of some design, and the more I thought it over after getting away the more I was convinced that there was something in the wind. On the morning of the third day I telegraphed him that I was coming home, and when the train got in he was at the depot to meet me. His face fairly beamed with happiness, and as he beckoned to a carriage he said:

"Here's the keys, as I can't be up for a couple of hours yet. I suppose it will take you a couple of hours to clean up the mess I have made."

I had a presentiment and it was verified before I got into the house. Glancing at the front windows I saw that my lace curtains had a queer, strange look, and I rushed in to find that they had been washed. They had been taken down, washed with bar soap, laid out on the grass to dry, and then ironed like a sheet. Any housewife can imagine the result. They showed soap stains in a dozen places, and hung as limp and lifeless as the tail of a kite on a telegraph wire. I sat down on the floor and had a good cry, and then started out to see what else had happened. There was a queer, oppressive odor in the room, and it did not take me long to discover that some one had varnished the furniture—gone over the natural oil finish with a coat of furniture varnish and left bristles from the brush at every foot. It could have been no one but Bowser. His work was further identified by six queer-looking spots on the velvet carpet. He had spilled varnish and then tried to scrub it out with soap, and in each instance he had run the colors sufficient to make a blotch.

After weeping some more I went into the sitting room. There was the same smell here, and I soon found by the bristles sticking up all over it that Mr. Bowser had varnished the sewing machine. He had likewise repainted the radiator, making it a dark blue, and in decorating it with white and red stripes, his paint had crawled around like so many fishworms. Baby at once wanted to tie a string to it and ply horse. Mr. Bowser had upset the varnish pail in this room, and although he had tried soap and water a great spot three feet square remained as a sad witness of his carelessness. While I stood looking I heard a step behind me, and Mr. Bowser called out:

"Surprise! Surprise! I knew I'd surprise you!"

"Yes, you have," I answered.

"Why, w-what's the matter?"

"If you had only let things alone!"

"Let things alone! This house needed slicking up, and I've nearly broken my back in putting things in tidy shape, and now you complain of it!"

"What is it?"

"That pitcher!"

"Yes, I know. It hadn't been cleaned in a month."

"But you used sand-paper on it!"

"Of course, and you ought to have seen the way the dirt peeled off! Anything else to find fault with?"

"And you—you sandpapered all the silver!" I shouted as I looked into the dining-room and saw everything on the table.

"Yes. What have you got your voice way up in 'G' for?"

"You've ruined it! See the scratches!"

"That's it—take on and find fault! No one ever does anything right but you!"

"And what ails the glass over the mantel?"

"It happens to be clean for once. I worked at it all of an hour."

"But you sandpapered it!"

"No, I didn't! I used powdered brick. I don't know how the scratches came there, unless the cat did it."

"And these curtains, too!"

"What are you crying about now! I got a colored woman to come and wash them, and I know she put 'em through three tubs and then laid 'em on the grass to dry. I pinned and hung 'em up myself."

But next day came to find Mr. Bowser's composure fully restored, and when he came home and found a furniture wagon loaded with bedsteads and bureaus, going off to be scraped and redressed, he went in by the alley gate and spent half an hour in the barn so as not to see anything.

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

Sorrow is a lamp which illumines life.—[Seraphita.]
See that you can untie what you tie.—[Spanish Proverb.]

Ask not "art thou in the nobility, but is the nobility in thee."
If a man is earnest in finding the Truth the Truth will find him.

There's always morning somewhere in the world.—[Mrs. Jamieson.]
Be a lamp in the chamber if you can not be a star in the sky.—[George Eliot.]

A good man's prayers
Will from the deepest dungeon climb heaven's height,
And bring a blessing down.

[Joanna Bailie.]
It is at our own will whether we see in the despaired stream the refuse of the street, or looking deep enough, the image of the sky.—[Ruskin.]

Hard may be burdens borne,
Though friends would fain unbind them,
Harder are crosses worn
Where none save God can find them.

"My heart wishes it to be exactly so," is the Chinese rendering of "Amen."
Whom the heart of man shuts out straightway the heart of God takes in.—[Lowell.]

Whoever desires the good and takes sides with it, becomes a magnet to attract good.

How idle it is to call certain things God-sends, as if there were anything else in the world!—[Hare.]

Life, as we call it, is nothing but the edge of the boundless ocean of existence where it comes upon soundings.—[O. W. Holmes.]

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