

1294

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,**

RELATIVE TO THE

FREE NAVIGATION OF THE CONGO.

JANUARY 10, 1884.

---

NEW-YORK:  
PRESS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

1884.

18  
1170



PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

RELATIVE TO THE

FREE NAVIGATION OF THE CONGO.

JANUARY 10, 1884.

---

NEW-YORK:

PRESS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

1884.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York,

RELATIVE TO THE

### FREE NAVIGATION OF THE CONGO.

---

Adjourned Monthly Meeting, Thursday, January 10, 1884.

An adjourned monthly meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held this day, at one o'clock, P. M., at the Rooms of the Chamber, No. 63 William-street.

PRESENT.

JAMES M. BROWN, *First Vice-President.*  
WILLIAM H. FOGG, *Second Vice-President.*  
GEORGE WILSON, *Secretary.*

And a quorum of members.

The minutes of the regular meeting, held December 6, 1883, and of the regular meeting, held January 3, 1884, were read and approved.

\* \* \* \* \*

REMARKS OF MR. A. A. LOW ON THE OPENING OF THE VALLEY OF THE CONGO TO THE COMMERCE OF THE WORLD.

MR. PRESIDENT: In the year 1879 the Honorable H. S. SANFORD appeared before the Chamber, and made certain statements respecting the transactions of the African International Association, the theatre of whose operations is the River Congo.

This Chamber was interested in those statements, and appointed a Committee to consider them.

Mr. RUGGLES, who was Chairman of the Committee, has since died, and the matter has slumbered.

In his annual Message to Congress, the President of the United States referred to this subject in the following terms, viz. :

“The rich and prosperous valley of the Congo is being opened to commerce by a society called the International African Association, of which the King of the Belgians is the President, and a citizen of the United States the chief executive officer. Large tracts of territory have been ceded to the Association by native chiefs, roads have been opened, steamboats placed on the river, and the nuclei of States established at twenty-two stations under one flag, which offers freedom to commerce and prohibits the slave trade. The objects of the Society are philanthropic. It does not aim at permanent political control, but seeks the neutrality of the valley. The United States cannot be indifferent to this work, nor to the interests of their citizens involved in it. It may become advisable for us to co-operate with other commercial powers in promoting the rights of trade and residence in the Congo Valley free from the interference or political control of any one nation.”

In view of these facts, I wish to offer for the consideration of the Chamber the following preamble and resolutions, either for present action or for reference to a Committee, as may seem best :

#### RESOLUTIONS.

*Whereas*, The President of the United States has, in his recent Message, called attention to the fact, that the rich and populous Valley of the Congo is now being opened to commerce by the International African Association, and has especially dwelt upon the interest for the purposes of trade and commerce that we have, as a people, in the neutrality of that valley, free from the interference or political control of any one nation ; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, As the opinion of this Chamber, that it is incumbent upon the Government of the United States, through its accredited representative, to apprise the Portuguese Government that it will not recognize, but denies the right of the latter to interfere with the free navigation of the Congo ; that the discovery of this great waterway into the interior of the centre of Africa is not due to Portugal, but was the discovery of an explorer in the interest of no one nationality ; and that the entry, four hundred years ago, into the mouth of the Congo, by the Portuguese, not having been followed up by actual and continued occupation, can give that nation no territorial right to the river or to the countries upon its banks.

*Resolved*, That the recognition by the Government of the United States of the flag of the International African Association, now extending over twenty-two settlements, in the heart of Africa, will be but an acknowledgment of the fact that that organization, under rights ceded to it by African chiefs of independent territories, is exercising rule and authority over a large part of Africa, in the

protection of life and property, the extinguishment of the slave trade, the facilitating of commercial intercourse, and other attributes of sovereignty; and that it be recommended to the President to send an accredited agent of the Government to the Congo, to confer with that Association in the adopting of such measures as may secure to American citizens free commercial intercourse along the course of that river, and through the various settlements or stations established by the Association.

After reading the preamble and resolutions, Mr. Low said :

Knowing my inability to conduct a discussion in this Chamber, and feeling how important it is that the Chamber shall act understandingly, and to this end receive such explanations as may be wanted, I have invited Judge DALY, President of the American Geographical Society, to favor us with his presence and an explanatory address. I shall feel obliged, therefore, Mr. President, if you will afford our distinguished friend the opportunity to speak.

I may say, in passing, that Judge DALY was one of fourteen representatives from different nationalities that were invited by the King of Belgium to visit Brussels, at the initiation of the enterprise now under consideration, viz., the establishment of the African International Association; and it is worthy of remark, that in the promotion of its work this enlightened sovereign has disbursed \$300,000 annually, for many successive years, out of his private funds.

The merchants of our country, hitherto, have had access to the interior of Africa with their cotton goods, *via* Zanzibar, and there seems no good reason why we should not enjoy the advantages of the nearer approach.

Chief Justice DALY, upon invitation, addressed the Chamber as follows :

ADDRESS BY CHIEF JUSTICE DALY.

GENTLEMEN :

In complying with Mr. Low's request, that I should express my views upon the resolutions he has offered, which imply the importance of the future commercial relations of this country with Central Africa, and the necessity of adopting such a National policy now as the nature of our future interests may demand, I feel very much like one arising in a body of merchants in London, say about the year 1621, to impress upon them the importance of a settlement that had just then been made on the coast of North America, at a place called Plymouth, who, had he suggested the possibility that that infant settlement, in connection with those previously made upon the Island of Manhattan, and at Jamestown, might, in less than 250 years, increase to a great Nation of 50,000,000 of people,

he would probably have been regarded as a fit subject for an institution, which, a few years before, had been established in London, called Bedlam.

In addressing this Chamber, therefore, upon the importance to this country of what has taken place in Central Africa within the past few years, in the region of the Congo, I invoke the benefit of this illustration, if what I may say of our interest in this newly developing part of the world should appear, to many of the gentlemen present, as somewhat ideal or extravagant; and, that what I have to say may be more readily understood, permit me to open the subject by a few remarks upon the condition of Africa in the past.

It is a striking fact, that although Africa was the seat of the earliest civilization known to us—that of Egypt—and although one of the greatest commercial nations of antiquity flourished upon its northern shores—the Carthagenians—it is, of all the Continents, the one that has made the least progress in civilization. There has been, however, a satisfactory reason for this, which will be readily understood by a body of merchants. Although Africa has a long and a continuous line of coast—for it is almost an island, being separated from Asia only by the narrow Isthmus, through which the Suez Canal has been cut—it is, throughout the whole of its coast line, so poorly provided with bays, harbors and navigable rivers, that it has remained for centuries practically isolated from the civilization that was going on in other parts of the world. The want of deeply penetrating inlets from the sea, and of good navigable rivers flowing from the interior to the ocean, has prevented the great bulk of the vast population of that Continent, estimated at the present day by staticians at more than 200,000,000, or double that of America, from having intercourse with the civilized Nations of the world, and consequently, up to a comparatively recent period, a large portion of the interior of this great Continent, which is more than three times as large as Europe, has remained wholly unknown.

The contrast which our own country presents, in this respect, will illustrate why it has been rapidly settled since its discovery, less than four centuries ago, whilst Africa has, during the same period, remained almost stationary.

To limit the illustration to the Atlantic border of the United States alone, we have flowing into the sea, from the Bay of Fundy to the western extremity of the Gulf of Mexico, no less than 105 rivers, together with numerous bays, harbors and penetrating inlets from the ocean. Many of those rivers are navigable far into the



interior, and some of them are of great length, which serve as water arteries over the whole country, from East to West and from North to South, facilitating intercourse and the transportation of merchandise to nearly every part of it.

The physical geography of Africa is the reverse of this. It has, as we know from the researches of the past few years, a somewhat extensive water system of great lakes and large rivers, but the navigation of nearly all its rivers is impeded by cataracts, rapids and other obstructions, which prevent them from serving as waterways into the interior. All the rivers on the east coast on the Indian Ocean, from Cape Corientes, about the 24th parallel south latitude, to the upper part of the Red Sea, and on the Atlantic, from the tropic of Capricorn to the Bight of Benin, are obstructed in this way, preventing traffic by water from the coast inward for any considerable distance.

But in addition to this, other causes have contributed to the isolation of this great Continent.

The Egyptian and Carthagenian civilization, which grew up upon the shores of the Mediterranean, could not penetrate far southward because the vast Sahara, Libian and Nubian deserts, which stretch from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, prevented communication, in this direction, with the other part of Africa. Nor could the countries along the coast be successfully settled, as the United States seaboard was, because both on the east and on the west coast, for, at least, a hundred miles inward from the sea, there is a malarious belt, which is not only injurious to the health of the white races, but even the natives of the interior, when they settle upon it, undergo a physical degradation.

The Portuguese, who were the discoverers, settled upon the eastern and western coasts, and still retain their settlements in certain parts. But during the four centuries that have intervened, they have done little for the permanent benefit of Africa. They introduced the sugar cane and some other productions, and a few Portuguese explorers, within the past two centuries, have traversed the interior to the mouth of the Zambesi, on the east coast, and as far northward as the great equatorial lakes, but the world was not apprised of the information they may have gathered, and their journeys or explorations had no effect in advancing the civilization of Africa. On the contrary, the Portuguese have been the chief supporters of the slave-trade. They were among the first to begin and the last to adhere to this infamous traffic. To support it, raids had to be made farther and farther into the interior, and

wherever the slave-trader went, the country became a wilderness. Instead, therefore, of advancing, they have retarded civilization; and their past history fully justifies what JACOB BRIGHT said of them last April, in the British Parliament, that their presence on the African Continent had been every where and always a curse.

The Dutch, on the contrary, in the south of Africa, developed the country, because they became permanent agricultural settlers; and whatever has been done for South Africa, in Cape Colony, in Natal, in the Orange Free State and in the Transvaal, has been done by the Boers, as the descendants of the Dutch are called.

The English, who rule over them since they acquired possession of the country, at the beginning of the present century, have not, as a race, been settlers, but generally adventurers, who have gone there for what they could bring away; a class of little value to any country.

This, gentlemen, is a brief statement of what Africa has been. Those present of my own age will recall, that when we were young men, the centre of this great Continent was a blank upon the map. The term of "The Dark Continent" was applied to it, as expressive alike of the races that inhabit it and of our total ignorance respecting it.

I have in my mind, now, a map published in this City by BURR about half a century ago. Upon it, from the Bight of Biaffra, in the Gulf of Guinea, and just above the equator, there is represented, as stretching nearly across the whole of the Continent, a lofty range of imaginary mountains, very appropriately called *The Mountains of the Moon*, and all below this in the interior, to Cape Colony, on the thirtieth parallel of south latitude, is marked "unexplored region." If you look at this map, published last year by Dr. A. CHAVANNE, of Vienna, you will see how extensive and even minute our information is now over nearly the whole of this region.

During the first half of the present century, there was considerable exploration in North Africa, especially up the Nile, and in that part of Western Africa lying between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea through which the Niger flows. But the great work has been done during the last quarter of a century by a series of journeys and explorations over the whole Continent, which has resulted in more knowledge respecting it than had been ascertained for centuries previously. This has embraced the explorations in the north and through the deserts of BARTH, NACHTIGAL, ROHLFS and SCHWEINFURTH. In Central Africa the journeys and explorations for thirty years of LIVINGSTON, (1843-1873,) from

Cape Colony to near the equator, and from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, comprising about one-third of the whole Continent, and which made known the great water system of lakes and rivers that exist below the equator. DU CHAILLU'S journeys, of 8,000 miles, from the west coast in the region of the equator, (1856 and 1865,) BURTON, SPEKE, GRANT and BAKER'S discoveries, (1858-1864,) or rather re-discovery of the three great lakes, Tanganyka, Ukerewe and Mwtan, and the fact that the last two, which the English call the Victoria and Albert Nyanzas, were the long sought sources of the Nile.

The journey of Commander CAMERON across the whole Continent, (1873-1875,) from Zanzibar on the east to Benguela on the west coast, and the reverse journey across it by a Portuguese explorer, Major SERPA PINTO, (1877-1878,) from Benguela to the Transvaal and Durban; STANLEY'S exploration of the Congo, (1877,) from Nyangwe to its mouth, on the Atlantic, and the journeys and explorations of HOLUB, ELTON, the Marquis DE COMPIEGNE, DE BRAZZA, THOMSON and many others; the result of which has been to make known a large part of Africa, especially from the equator to Cape Colony, and to remove very erroneous impressions that had previously prevailed respecting the interior of the Continent.

The water system of the lakes and rivers was found to be more extensive and available than had been supposed, and that the great interior or heart of the Continent, with the exception of the Kalihara desert, at the south, was a fruitful and salubrious country.

The fact that so large a part of the interior of Africa was of this description; that it was inhabited by a very superior race of savages, upon whom the slave traders, in their terrible raids, were constantly encroaching, drew, in 1876, the attention of His Majesty, the King of the Belgians, to this dark Continent, and to the consideration of what could be done to open it up to civilization. His Majesty, like the present Emperor of Brazil, is an accomplished geographer, and being profoundly impressed with the importance of some general movement of this nature, he addressed letters to the geographers of the different countries of the world, and to distinguished African travellers, inviting them, as his guests, to a conference in his palace in Brussels, in September, 1876. He did me the honor to invite me by a personal letter to come as the representative of the United States, but my judicial duties at that time, much to my regret, prevented my accepting the invitation.

The conclusion reached at this conference was, that the best way to bring the interior of Africa into communication with

the civilized world was by a systematic and scientific exploration of it, especially across the heart of the Continent from the east to the west coast, so as to facilitate intercourse, and prepare the way for trade, commerce and the civilization that would follow; that to accomplish this it would be necessary to establish a series of stations or settlements, from the east to the west coast, below or in the vicinity of the equator; and for this purpose what is now known as the International African Association was formed in 1877, composed of representatives from Belgium, Germany, Austria, Spain, the United States, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The work of carrying out its objects was intrusted to an Executive Committee, of which His Majesty the King of the Belgians is the head.

This Executive Committee consisted of three, representing the English speaking, the Germanic and the Latin races. It was composed of Sir BARTLE FRERE, Dr. NACHTIGAL, (the African Explorer,) Mr. DE QUATREFAGES, (of the Institute.)

On the appointment of Sir BARTLE FRERE as Governor of the Cape Colonies, he resigned, and was replaced by the Hon. HENRY S. SANFORD, of Florida, our former Minister to Belgium.

The first movement was the establishment of a line of stations from the eastern coast, opposite Zanzibar, to Lake Tanganyka, a distance, in a direct line, of about 450 miles, and the founding at the end of these of a permanent settlement on the lake called Karema, the successful accomplishment of which involved a large expenditure of money, and the loss of the lives of several members of the expedition from the great labor and fatigue undergone.

How much has been accomplished by this alone will be apparent when I mention that BURTON, the discoverer of the lakes, was six months in his journey from the coast to it, that it took CAMERON, afterwards, eleven months to make it, and that it is now made in a month and a half.

Whilst this was going on on the eastern coast, STANLEY made his great discovery, that the large river, the Lualaba of LIVINGSTON, was, in fact, the Upper Congo, STANLEY having followed it from Nyangwe, where LIVINGSTON left it, and proceeded along and upon it in its northerly course beyond the equator, and to the second parallel of north latitude, where he found that the river made a great curve to the west, and then flowed southwesterly, with a varying width of from two to ten miles, until it empties into the Atlantic. The source of this great river is a large lake, discovered by LIVINGSTON, (Lake Bangweolo,) on a high plateau, which extends to 12°

south latitude, and near the southern border of which lake this greatest of African explorers afterwards died.

The whole length of the river is put by STANLEY at 2,900 miles, making it one of the largest rivers in the world; and the entire area drained by it he computes to be about 860,000 square miles.

After this important discovery of the extent of the Congo—that it was, in fact, the great artery of Central Africa—another organization, the Congo Committee or Association, (Comité d'Étude du Haut Congo,) was formed in Brussels, in 1878, to utilize this discovery by establishing regular communication between the upper and lower parts, as well as along the whole course of the river, and to connect it, as a means of communication across the Continent with Karema, on Lake Tanganyka, and the line of stations from there to the east coast, so as ultimately to establish regular and rapid lines of communication from the mouth of the Congo, on the west coast, across the entire width of the Continent, to Zanzibar, on the east coast. For the past five years, the whole of the operations of this Committee have been carried on under the direction of Mr. STANLEY. Both Committees, though distinct organizations, are, in effect, practically the same, as they both aim to accomplish one object, in different parts of this great line of communication, which they mutually carry on under one general flag, which they have adopted as the symbol of the combined organizations. Their design is not to engage in any commercial operations, but in those which are purely scientific, geographical and philanthropic; so that, to use the language of a recent writer, "Every traveler, whatever may be his nationality; every missionary, whatever may be his faith; every legitimate trader, whatever may be his commerce, may claim assistance, (at the stations,) and be certain of meeting with hospitality."

To secure the right to this great pathway for civilization, and that protection to life and property which is indispensable in the use of it, seventy-nine treaties have been made with independent chiefs, the tribal sovereignties being numerous over so large a space in this part of Africa, these treaties covering two thousand miles of the river banks of the Congo and neighboring streams; and twenty-two stations, or settlements, have been established, the principal ones extending from the lower part of the Congo to the equator, a distance of about 700 miles.

The river is, at its mouth, six miles in width, and 150 fathoms in depth, and from there to Vivi, the first station or settlement of these Associations, the distance is 115 miles, upon which the

Association have two steamers. Seven miles above Vivi the river is obstructed by thirty cataracts, or rapids, for about forty miles, to overcome which a road has been constructed for land travel from Vivi to Insangalia, a distance of fifty-two miles, from which the river is navigable again for seventy-three miles, and upon which the Association has placed a steamer to Manyanga. From Manyanga the river is again obstructed for ninety-five miles, along which another road is constructed to the fourth station, or settlement, Leopoldville, upon Stanley-pool, where the river forms a great basin, twenty-five miles long and sixteen miles wide, with seventeen islands upon it; and from this point, Leopoldville, named in honor of the King of the Belgians, there is an uninterrupted navigation through a magnificent and thickly peopled country for the long distance of 940 miles, upon which the Association have now placed three steamers, having seven altogether on the river. The river is again obstructed, below the equator, for sixty-two miles, at what is known as Stanley Falls, after which there is uninterrupted navigation for the very considerable distance of 220 miles. At the end of this, the river is obstructed by a fall, fifty miles below Nyangwe, and by another fifty miles above it. Beyond this, the river, to its source, in Lake Bangweolo, is but imperfectly known, and is supposed not to be navigable.

I have thought it necessary, gentlemen, to be thus particular in describing the river, to show that this great water artery of Central Africa is navigable for at least 1,400 miles, and to explain what has been done to facilitate travel, by the construction of roads along those parts of the river where it is obstructed by cataracts or rapids.

It is necessary, if I may detain you so long, that I should also say a few words respecting the country through which the Congo flows, and which is drained by it and its affluents.

The region usually regarded as Central Africa is that portion of the interior extending from the Desert of Sahara in the north, to the Kalahara Desert in the south, and between the 10th and the 40th parallels of east longitude, which is computed to embrace an area of about six millions of square miles. It is in the eastern portion of this that the great water system I have referred to, of lakes and rivers, exists; of which the Zambesi, emptying into the Indian Ocean, the Nile into the Mediterranean, and the Congo into the Atlantic, are the largest rivers. The portion of Africa extending along the western coast from Sierra Leone to the mouth of the River Ogowé, below the equator, and from thence across the inte-

rior to the western shores of the Victoria Nyanza, is a vast belt of forest, the vegetation here being exceedingly prolific and dense from the tropical heat and great rain-fall throughout this region. Below this great wooded belt to the Congo, and even further south, there is an open savannah country of large grassy spaces and park-like grouping of trees, which is fertile, salubrious and densely populated by, as I have said, a very superior race of savages, who are handsomely formed, exceedingly vigorous, industrious, and who exhibit, for savages, considerable skill and handiwork in agriculture. This is the country mainly through which the Congo and its affluents flow, and of which that river is the great artery. From the mouth of the river to Boma, a distance of eighty miles, the land is low, marshy and malarious, Boma being the hottest place upon the river, and unsalubrious, as it is surrounded by mangrove swamps. But though, for this distance, the low flat land through which the river runs to the sea is malarious, it is not as much so, nor as injurious to health as the coast north of it, especially at the mouth of the Niger and upon the Gold Coast, where these lagoons and swamps exist, with bottoms of fetid black mud, which make them the hot-beds of African fevers.

As the river is ascended from Boma, it is cooler and healthier, and at Vivi and beyond it, up the river, dysentery, which is endemic upon the coast, is almost unknown.

These facts are derived from Mr. H. H. JOHNSON, who spent some time upon the Congo last year, and who says that the temperature when you reach Stanley Falls is delightful. Commander CAMERON is most enthusiastic in his description of certain portions of this region, which he passed in his journey further south, to describe the beauty of which, he says, would be impossible, as neither poet nor painter could by pen or pencil do full justice to it.

STANLEY estimates the population of this fertile and salubrious region as high as 49,000,000; and KERTH JOHNSON, the geographer, says, in taking a general survey of it, from Lake Tanganyka to the western coast, it is evident that it is a country of enormous natural wealth. The oil palm flourishes throughout the broad valley of the Upper Congo, and cotton, coffee, tobacco, pepper, nutmeg and India rubber are among the vegetable productions that grow wild. Indian corn, wheat, rice, sweet potatoes and other vegetable products which have been introduced by the Portuguese, grow everywhere, and as respects the metals, iron and copper exist in abundance; iron, in fact, being very skillfully worked by the natives. The curse, however, of this favored land is the internal slave trade, of which the Portuguese

are still the principal abettors, but whose efforts have been greatly arrested by the power and influence already acquired by the African International Association and the Congo Committee, the efforts of these combined organizations being largely directed to the suppression of this dreadful traffic, which, wherever it is successfully carried on, leaves behind it a wilderness. What has already been accomplished by those two philanthropic organizations has involved the expenditure of an enormous amount of money, the principal part of which, it is known, the King of the Belgians has supplied from his own private purse. In fact no such example of enlightened munificence in forwarding geographical exploration has been seen, as he has exhibited, since the days of Prince HENRY of Portugal, surnamed the Navigator, who by his comprehensive insight and large expenditure of means, inaugurated, in the fifteenth century, that great movement for maritime exploration, which led to the passage of the Cape of Good Hope, and the discovery of America. But although much has been done during the last six years, much is still to be done. "Two-thirds of the way," says a recent writer, "remain to be marked out. In traversing it, there are immense regions to be explored, and millions of human beings to be brought within the reach of civilization."

After these six years of laborious efforts on the part of these bodies, acting practically as one organization, and what they have done; their large expenditure of money, the territorial rights and privileges they have acquired by treaties with the barbaric sovereignties who are in actual occupation; the steamers they have placed upon the rivers, the stations they have established, and the protection they have afforded to life and property; exercising, in fact, under a general flag, the incipient powers of government; the small European monarchy of Portugal, with little more than four millions of inhabitants, suddenly starts up and claims the right to control the mouth of this great water artery of Africa, upon the claim of having discovered it four centuries ago, which discovery, if it conferred at the time any rights to the river or to the land upon either bank of it, have long since been lost by non-user, and what that control means, the commercial gentlemen present will understand, when I state that in the Portuguese possessions on the western coast, below the Congo, the capital and seaport of which is St. Paul de Loando, all merchandise brought into Africa there, is subject to a duty of 40 per cent., with a rebate of 30 per cent. if the owners of the merchandise are Portuguese, a regulation which practically



excludes all other nations, except the Portuguese, from trading with the interior of Africa along that part of the western coast.

To claim a territory by the right of discovery which has not been followed up by actual and continued occupation, is, as to its effect upon other nations, of no more value, in the present age, than paper blockades. The maritime and commercial interests of the world, at the present day, will tolerate no such assumption. The claim of Portugal to the mouth of the Congo and the territory adjoining both banks of the river below Yellala Falls, amounts, as I understand it, to this : that just four centuries ago, this present year, or in 1483, one DIEGO CAM, a Knight of the household of the King of Portugal, discovered the mouth of the river, and formally took possession of it by erecting a stone pillar on the south part, now known as Point Padron ; that he sailed up the river a short distance, which was then called by the natives the Zaire, but afterwards received the name of the Congo, as it was on the border, and the boundary of the kingdom of Congo. He brought some of the natives, with the consent of the King of Congo, to Portugal, leaving Portuguese hostages in their stead, until he returned them the following year.

This, with some trading factories, which the Portuguese had, with other nations, during the active years of the slave trade, is about all that they have done for centuries to possess themselves of the river, or of the countries through which it flows. They did settle in the capital of the King of Congo, at the south, which they named San Salvador ; but practically abandoned it afterwards for San Paul de Loando, upon the coast, further south. They retained formal possession of San Salvador, but even this they entirely abandoned before STANLEY'S great discovery. The fact is, the northern limit of the territory of which they now have possession, is a few miles north of Ambris, the outlet for the coffee trade of the interior ; the northern boundary of the Portuguese Dominion being a small river, a little above Ambris, called the Loge. Over the country north of this, or its people, they have no control whatever ; any influence they may formerly have had has passed away, the people being now independent of them, and opposed to allowing any of the white races to penetrate their country from the coast to the interior. Beyond the river and the coast is a European settlement, Kinsambo, which is cosmopolitan and independent.

Point Banana, the settlement on the north side of the mouth of the Congo, consists of factories of Dutch, French and English. Boma is *the trading port* of the river, containing factories or

agencies of many nationalities, chiefly Dutch and English, and is rapidly increasing in trade and population. It was formerly a great slave station, to which slave-ships of different nations resorted, being maintained then by the raids of the slave-traders into the interior, who depopulated the whole country far inward.

Upon what is here stated, the discovery of the mouth of the river, their formally taking possession of it by the erection of the pillar aforesaid, and that they have never given up what they thus took possession of symbolically, is, as I understand it, about the extent of their claim. They seem to think that the putting up of their stone bauble, four hundred years ago, at the mouth of this great artery, although they have done nothing since to develop it as a pathway to the interior, entitles them now to control those who have, which is so preposterous and absurd, in respect to the immense region to which the Congo is the natural water-way, that the mere statement of its absurdity is sufficient. Whatever other nationalities may do, we certainly will not, as a great commercial nation, assent to any such claim. We are called upon now to enter our protest, and to enforce it, if necessary, against any such pretension, not only as a commercial nation, but as the home of a population descended from the natives of Africa, who are greater in point of numbers than the entire population of Portugal. The whole population of Portugal is but a fraction over 4,000,000, and the colored population of the United States is over six millions and a half.

It has been suggested by European writers that an International Protectorate should be established at the mouth of the Congo ; but I see no occasion to resort to this entangling diplomatic contrivance. It is much better to leave those who settle on the Congo to apply to their condition the principle of self-government, as was done in the settlement of this country, and of which our history furnishes a satisfactory illustration ; and, as was done by the Boers, in the Orange Free State, and in the Transvaal, before the English followed and claimed the right to govern them against their will. The settlers on the Congo, and in the countries adjacent, will manage their own affairs infinitely better than officials acting as the representatives of a combination of foreign governments. In fact, this is now taking place over the whole field of the operations of the International African Association, and its coadjutor, the Congo Committee ; and the true course is to allow this organization to go on with its practical work, and for foreign nations, like ourselves, to recognize it as an organization, in actual occupation of the country,

administering its affairs in the general interests of civilization, and to the satisfaction of the native races within its influence, for whose benefit it was instituted. Portugal's idea of the colonization of Africa is the very opposite of this. It is to colonize it, not for the benefit of Africa, but for the benefit of Portugal. This she may do, on that part of the southwest coast of which she is and has long since been in actual possession ; but when she undertakes to assume control of the mouth of the great artery of Central Africa, other commercial nations will, or at least we will, say "hands off," and, if need be, exercise the power of a large nation to enforce it.

The proper course now to pursue, to prevent future difficulty, is the one embodied in the resolution presented by Mr. Low, to recognize the two international African Associations as in possession of the country over which their operations extend, and, *de facto*, exercising the power of government under a common flag. To do so is not without precedent. In 1878 the Sultans of Brunei and of Sala, in Borneo, ceded to Baron OVERBECK, an Austrian, and to Mr. DENT, an Englishman, all their rights over a considerable territory in the northern part of the island. These gentlemen having made over their title to an English company, this company obtained, in 1881, a charter of incorporation from the English Government. The grant of this charter gave rise, in the House of Commons, to a discussion, in which the ground taken by the Ministry was, that they found themselves confronted by accomplished facts ; that the company was legally in possession of a part of a foreign territory, and that they had confined themselves to conceding the advantages of a purely commercial recognition, in exchange for a certain control which the crown was to exercise in the interests of the natives and of general peace.

And it appears further, from the declarations made by Lord GRANVILLE, in 1882, that neither Holland, nor Spain, nor Germany, which latter nation was formally consulted by the British Government, had "raised any question as to the capacity of private individuals or companies to obtain from uncivilized races or rulers the concession of rights, implying the exercise of sovereignty ; and other illustrations might be given.

Thanking you, gentlemen, for the attention with which you have listened to me, I can only say, in conclusion, that, in my judgment, the resolutions offered by Mr. Low embody the policy which our Government ought to pursue, and which it seems to

me most appropriate that this Chamber, as a leading representative of the commercial interests of this country, should recommend.

On motion of Mr. CONKLING, the thanks of the Chamber were presented to Chief Justice DALY for the interesting address he had made, and he was requested to furnish a copy for its archives.

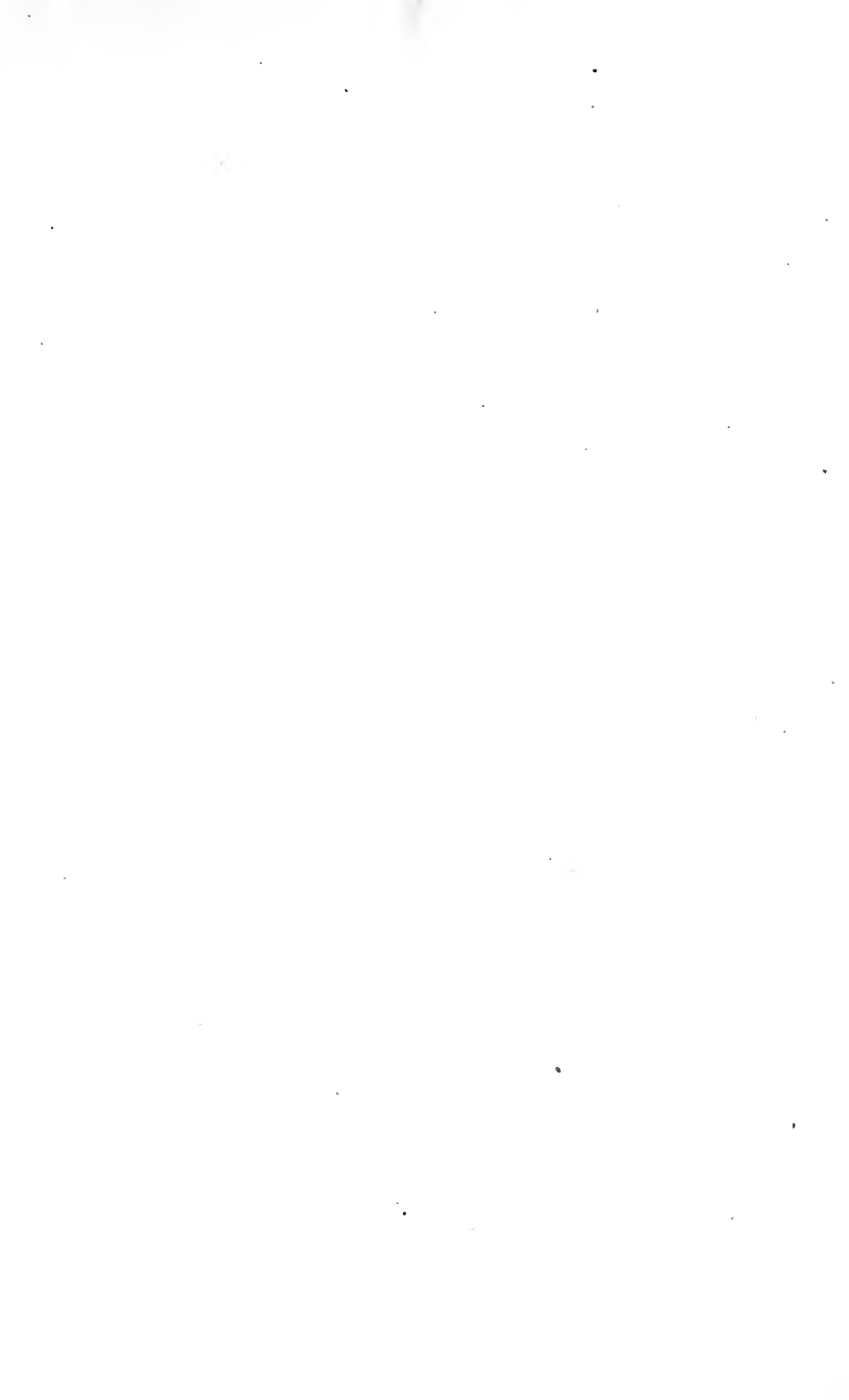
On motion of Mr. FOGG, the resolutions were unanimously adopted, and a copy, authenticated by the signatures of the officers and the seal of the Chamber, was ordered to be transmitted to the President of the United States.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Chamber then adjourned.

Attest:

GEORGE WILSON,  
*Secretary.*







DT  
639  
N7

