

# THE AMERICAN MONTHLY

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### THE PROGRESS OF THE WORLD.

The  
bloody End  
of a Dynasty. The tragic change of dynasty in Serbia, while intelligently discussed in the American press in its various issues, attracted popular interest in this country, last month, chiefly by reason of its grim and startling circumstances. The ethics of regicide is a subject that has been discussed for several thousand years; and the affair at Belgrade has led nothing new to the accumulation of arguments and reflections upon that time-worn subject. The facts of the situation in Serbia may be generalized in a few sentences. That little country has for some time been one in which modern liberalism has been widely prevalent, and in which extreme radicalism and republicanism have gained strong foothold. King Alexander had grown arbitrary and arrogant; had recently set aside the liberal features of the constitution by an act of high-handed usurpation, and had shown himself in every way as unfit to exercise royal power as he was unworthy to wear the royal dignity. Of all reigning monarchs in the opening years of the twentieth century, it might fairly be said that Alexander of Serbia was the most conspicuously ill-qualified. The defect that he was without friends at any European court was due only in small part to political complications, or to matters dynastic or otherwise in which he was not personally responsible. Exemplary conduct in private relations, coupled with industry, intelligence, and a right spirit in his public duties on behalf of the Servian nation, would have won friends for him; and in due time he would have made a fitting marriage that would have strengthened Serbia's international position, added security to his throne, and given respect of a perpetuation of the Obrenovitch dynasty. But he was stubbornly perverse.

Alexander's  
ill-omened  
Career. His father, King Milan, had abdicated in 1889, at the same time proclaiming his son Alexander King of Serbia under a regency until he should attain

his majority at the age of eighteen. At that time, Alexander lacked some five months of being thirteen years old. In April, 1893, nearly a year and a half before he had reached his eighteenth year, Alexander performed a bold *coup d'état*, declared himself to be already of age, dismissed the regency, and successfully assumed authority as King. This needless act of violent self-assertion was a bad omen for the future of his career. His father, King Milan, with many attractive and popular qualities, had always preferred a life of pleasure and dissipation in Vienna and Paris to the exercise of his official duties at Belgrade. In the period after the Russo-Turkish War, when Serbia acquired its complete freedom from all nominal connection with Turkey, and in which the Prince of Serbia became a king, there was constant rivalry and intriguing in the Balkan states between the emissaries of Russia and those of Austria. King Milan had placed himself frankly and fully under Austrian influence. His wife, Queen Nathalie, was the daughter of a Russian officer, and was secretly in alliance with the pro-Russian party. It was the work of this party which resulted in securing the abdication of Milan. The Russian court was disposed to do what it could for the young King Alexander, and for several years it exerted itself to help him secure a wife. His quest was the talk of all Europe, and the list of snubs and refusals he encountered was long and varied. The most persistent effort was concentrated by Russia upon a plan to wed Alexander to one of the Montenegrin princesses, a sister of the present young Queen of Italy. But the sturdy old Prince Nicholas, closely attached as he is to Russia, stoutly refused, on what he called purely personal grounds, to have Alexander for a son-in-law. It will be remembered that there was even considerable talk of Alexander's coming to this country to induce an American heiress to become Queen of Serbia. But there was no encouragement from Newport or Chicago.

The evils prevalent in the Congo State are, therefore, now unanimously declared by the House of Commons to be so grave as to call for international action.

#### THE NECESSITY FOR INTERVENTION.

The question whether there is any need for such action can only be answered by contrasting the Congo Free State as it is to-day with the Congo Free State as it was proposed that it should be.

In his "Civilization in Congoland," Mr. Fox Bourne has set forth the story of the way in which the authorities of the Congo Free State have violated all the more important provisions of the Act of Berlin. In his "Affairs of West Africa," Mr. F. D. Morel tells the same story from a somewhat different standpoint. In those two books will be found chapter and verse for each count in the indictment against the Congo government. Mr. Fox Bourne and Mr. Morel tell the story of how year after year, by stealthy encroachments and bold usurpations, the Congo Free State has been converted into the Congo Slave State; how its territories, which were supposed to be dedicated forever to free trade, have been given over to shameless monopolies;

how the open door guaranteed by international law has been closed and bolted in the face of the world; and how a state created for the purpose of protecting and civilizing the natives has practically become a gigantic agency for slave-raiding, forced labor, forced military service, systematized oppression, and the importation of firearms throughout the whole of the vast region intrusted to its care. The pamphlet entitled "The Case Against the Congo Free State," published at a penny by the International Union, British branch, Mowbray House, contains in brief the substance of the impeachment which the Emperor of the Congo has to answer.

#### A CASE FOR THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL.

The question as to the kind of action that should now be taken is still left open. It is to be hoped that, as the powers unanimously declared at The Hague, that disputes as to the interpretation of international conventions are specially fit and proper subjects for arbitration, that the question as to whether the closing of the open door in Central Africa is a violation of the Berlin Act will be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration for adjudication, as proposed by the American minister to Belgium.

## II.—PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF CONGO MISGOVERNMENT.

BY THE REV. W. M. MORRISON.

(For six and one-half years a missionary of the Presbyterian Church [South] at Luebo, Congo Free State.)

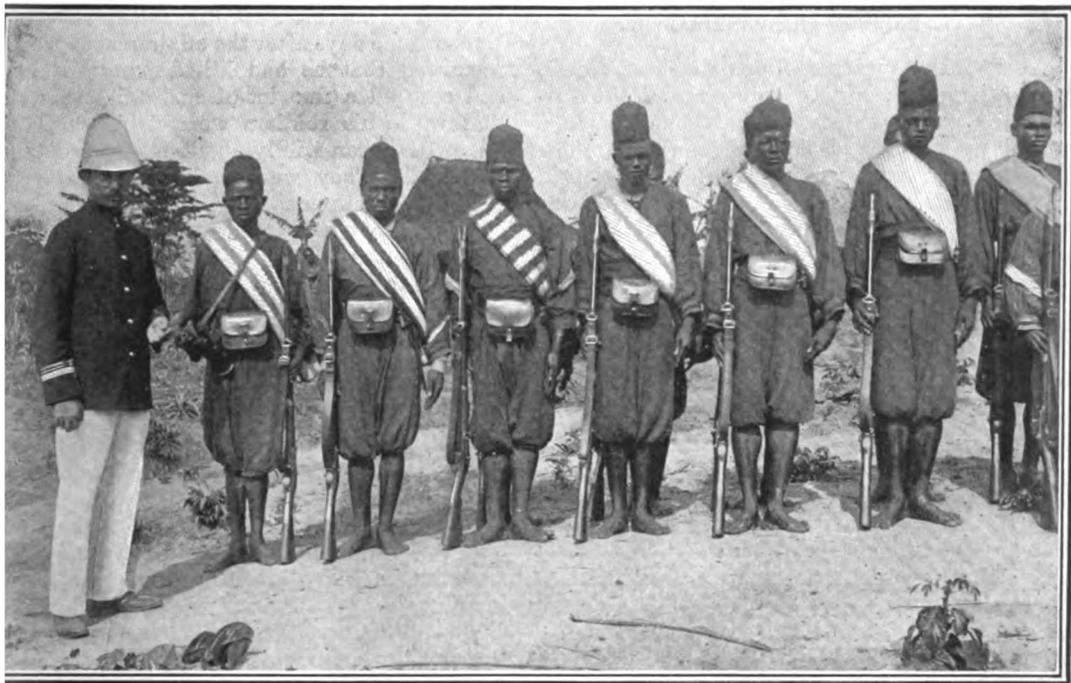
**T**HOUGH the Treaty of Berlin made the international blunder of forming an absolute despotism in Africa, yet it attempted to guard the rights of natives and foreigners in that territory by certain stipulations which are most carefully stated in the General Act of the Berlin Conference. The three most important of these were (1) the suppression of the slave trade, (2) the free and unhindered carrying on of trade and commerce by all nations, without the formation of any monopoly within the prescribed territory of the State, and (3) the encouragement of missions and other philanthropic and scientific enterprises without any "restriction or impediment whatsoever."\* Moreover, a special declaration was drawn up between the United States and the new Congo State to the effect that the latter would "assure to strangers who settled in their territories the right to buy, sell, or lease the lands and buildings therein sit-

uated, to establish houses of business, and to trade, on the sole condition of obeying the laws." The Berlin Conference also stipulated that no import duties were to be levied for twenty years.

The Congo Free State being thus founded, with the rights of natives and foreigners carefully guarded by a sacred treaty, in which all the great powers of the world had taken a hand, it now remains to be seen how faithfully the conditions of the treaty have been carried out. In dealing with this side of the question, I cannot perhaps do better than to take up in order the three important stipulations as above enumerated.

The horrors of the African slave trade had for many decades been stirring the conscience of the world, and all had bright hopes that under the philanthropic government of the King of the Belgians this dark blot on the life of Central Africa would soon be wiped out. I make bold, however, to say that after the Congo State has been in existence for eighteen years the condi-

\* See General Act of the Berlin Conference, Chap. I., Arts. I., V., and VI.



A GROUP OF NATIVE SOLDIERS, TAKEN AT LUEBO, WHITE OFFICER IN CHARGE.

of the natives under the sway of the State worse than it was before King Leopold began his professedly philanthropic enterprise,—the re-raiding of the Arabs was better than the cherishes of the cannibal army of Leopold to. No sooner had the King found himself in session of this vast domain than he began to metamorphosed from a philanthropist into a trader and taskmaster. By various decrees issued during the years 1885–90, the natives were gradually deprived of the right to their lands, and these were turned over to the King himself personally or to the State. Not only so, the King was not long in discovering the wealth of rubber and ivory in his domain, and in various chosen districts the natives were compelled to bring in these commodities as tribute. The story of this forced tribute system in the Congo State marks undoubtedly one of the darkest and bloodiest pages in modern history. The King, seeing visions of gain, called the Brussels Conference in 1889, and, by the usual proclamation of philanthropy, secured the right to raise a native army for the professed purpose of putting down the Arab slave trade.

#### OUTRAGES BY NATIVE SOLDIERY.

The government was now firmly established at Luebo, and the whole territory of the State was divided up into districts, with a commissaire

and a number of subordinate white officers in each. Men from the wildest native tribes, cannibals preferred, were caught and forced into this native army, which has borne the euphemistic name of *force publique*. These soldiers, armed with repeating rifles, and hungering for pillage and often for human flesh, were scattered at various posts throughout the State, and their number has now grown to upwards of eighteen thousand. These soldiers are the terror of the regions in which they are posted. I have seen villages pillaged and devastated and desecrated, and that too when the soldiers were accompanied by white State officers; I have seen at least fifty thousand native people living for weeks in the forests, hiding from the outrages of this native soldiery; often have the helpless women and children of the villages near to our mission station at Luebo fled into my house and those of our other missionaries seeking protection; almost daily at Luebo slaves are exposed for sale, and they have been caught either by the State soldiers in their raids or by certain chiefs with whom the State has made friendship, and whom it either tacitly permits or secretly instructs to make raids for securing slaves and booty. I presume that three-fourths of the five or six thousand slaves at Luebo have been caught by one of these friendly chiefs or by the State soldiers.

## SLAVE-RAIDING AND CANNIBALISM.

About three years ago, one of these chiefs, named Mulumba Nkusa, being under the surveillance of a State post at Luluaburg, made a raid into the region just east of Ibanj, one of our mission stations near the head of navigation of the Kasai River. One of our missionaries was dispatched to investigate the affair. He found the chief an amiable fellow, who confessed that he had been sent by the State officer, and that he had been given guns and powder; he said that he had already sent some slaves to the State post. He had eighty-one human hands slowly drying over a fire, and these he was to take back to the officer to show that his work had been well done. I may say here that this barbarous custom of cutting off hands when the exorbitant tribute is not forthcoming seems to prevail in several widely distant parts of the State, proving conclusively that the State alone is responsible for such barbarities. Our missionary also saw over twoscore of bodies lying near the stockade, into which the people had been treacherously invited and then killed. Many of these bodies had the flesh carved off, and the chief said that his people had eaten the flesh.

Only ten months ago, two white State officers came to Luebo and caught by force a number of men,—I saw about eighteen of them taken away with ropes around their necks in true Arab slave-raiding style. On March 25 last, I boarded the Congo railway train at Leopoldville, on Stanley Pool, and found three trucks loaded with slaves, who had been caught only a few days' march east of Luebo and were being taken they knew not where. The frightened fellows begged me for food, and asked me most piteously if I knew where they were being taken. At Boma I met soldiers from my own district, over one thousand miles distant, who said that they had been caught and forced into service, and that they had little hope of ever seeing their homes again. It is the universal custom for the soldiers to be transported to regions remote from their own homes.—this is to prevent mutiny.

## UNRESTRAINED SLAUGHTER.

In the spring of 1899, a State officer made a raid at a village about five days from Luebo. I reached the place some days after the occurrence, at the invitation of the chief, and the natives reported fourteen men killed. Only a year later, another more devastating raid was made at the same place. The chief was killed, with many innocent men and women, and the village was

burned. The officer who made this raid was in Luebo some days after the affair, and he jokingly remarked that he had killed many people, and had secured a fine lot of curios. He also said that while his soldiers were firing on the villagers they ran wildly about crying "Shepите! Shepите!" They were calling for one of our well-known missionaries, Rev. W. H. Shepard, F.R.G.S., to come to their assistance. No explanation was ever made to the people of the reason for these raids, although the State has pretended that they were intended as punitive expeditions.

And so I might go on, reciting incident after incident of these cruelties which have come under my own observation or have occurred so near to my station that there can be no doubt of their having been committed. If such things as I have narrated have taken place in the very limited region with which I am personally acquainted, which up until the past year has been reserved as a free-trade zone, one can scarcely imagine the awful barbarities that have been practised up the great Congo River and in those large areas of the State which have been exploited by the State or the monopolist companies of which I shall speak later.

## THE SYSTEM OF FORCED LABOR.

This forced labor and military system began as a result of a special decree of Leopold issued soon after the adjournment of the Brussels Conference, about eleven years ago. Finding that by this system, certainly the most iniquitous since the days of the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, his coffers were being enriched and his dreams of avarice were being realized, he, on June 16, 1897, issued to his agents in the Congo State his famous Gospel of Labor Proclamation, in which he says to them: "You have to place the population under new laws, the most imperious as well as the most salutary of which is assuredly that of *work*." A fresh impetus has thus within the past few years been given to the oppressions which had already grown heavy as a result of the decrees issued in the early '90's. As a result of this forced labor system, the rubber and the ivory have been pouring into the port of Antwerp, and the blood of thousands of innocent men and women in Africa has been freely shed to satisfy the greed of the man who poses as their benefactor.

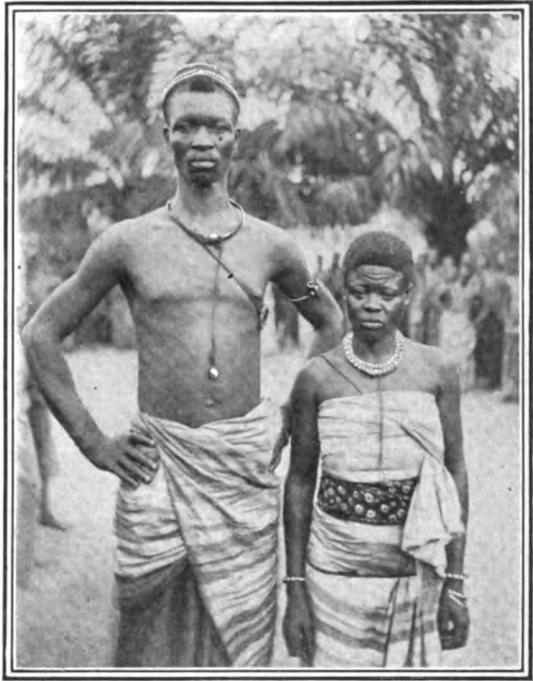
## HOW COMPLAINTS ARE SMOTHERED.

Every possible means is used to keep the world from knowing the truth about the situation. The King is known to be so absolute in his power that State officials, traders, and even

missionaries, are cowed into abject silence, some of the latter have even gone so far as only lend their voices in the support of a wicked institution. Only last year, I appealed to the director of one of the large monopolies in my district to join with me in appeal to the State government to stop the abuses then going on in our region. His reply was that he had explicit instructions not to interfere in the least way with anything the State government do.

The King has also blinded the world by the appointment, some years ago, of a commission composed of missionaries, Protestant and Catholic, the duty it was to protect the natives and report cases of injustice. The two Protestant members of the commission,—I do not know about the Catholic members,—were decorated by the King with the medal of the Legion of Honor before they were put on this commission. Whether they were soothed their consciences or not, I do not know, but I do know that they have lived for the past seven years in the midst of these injustices; they have had these stories recounted to them by missionaries and others; they (at least one of them) speak boldly against the State government, but, so far as I know, they have reported a single case of outrage. Several times I have brought instances to their attention, and they have taken refuge behind the fact that the State has forced labor and military conscription as they have on the Continent, and there is nothing can be done about it, and that the villages do not furnish the tale of tribute and taxation, punitive expeditions are necessary. These men saw the three trucks loaded with slaves to which I referred a moment ago, and now that he has never said anything to the government about it. A member of a prominent English missionary society, which has since the beginning pursued the policy of upbraiding Leopold and his Congo State, came along with me on the same train, but I fear he did not had the courage to tell publicly in England what he saw on that train.

And then the King appoints some special officer who goes out with a great flourish of trumpets and pretends to investigate the truth and reports of cruelty. It may be interesting to know that one of these officers was only a few miles away from the scene of the Mulumba raid, which I have described above. A few weeks afterward, one of our missionaries, who had also visited the scenes of the outrages, called out this officer and made a report to him about the affair. The officer only shrugged his shoulders, and said that he was no longer acting as inspector.



MULUMBA NKUSA.

(A chief of the Zappo Zapps, who led the raid near Ibanj. The woman is one of his wives.)

#### BOGUS "INVESTIGATIONS."

The State is constantly "investigating" the charges that are made against the soldiers and officers, but when it is remembered that all evidence in such cases is taken in secret by a State officer, and that no one else is permitted to be present, or even to bring out from witnesses evidence not asked for by him, and when it is remembered that the evidence thus secretly taken is left unsealed in the hands of the State official, and when it is remembered that this evidence is then sent to Boma, to be there passed upon by another State officer in sympathy with his fellows, it can be seen that there is little chance of justice being done. The King is always ready, therefore, to put this "investigation" machine into operation, for he knows that the result can only be favorable to himself. So far as I know, not a single person has been punished for the outrages that have come under my personal observation. Occasionally some subordinate officer is detained a while at Boma, but even this is only a part of the policy to keep the world blinded. It is also a notorious fact that whenever charges are made against the State there is always in every prominent country an emissary of the State, one who is now or has been

in the employ of the State, who at once, without knowing any of the facts of the case, proceeds to publicly deny the charges.

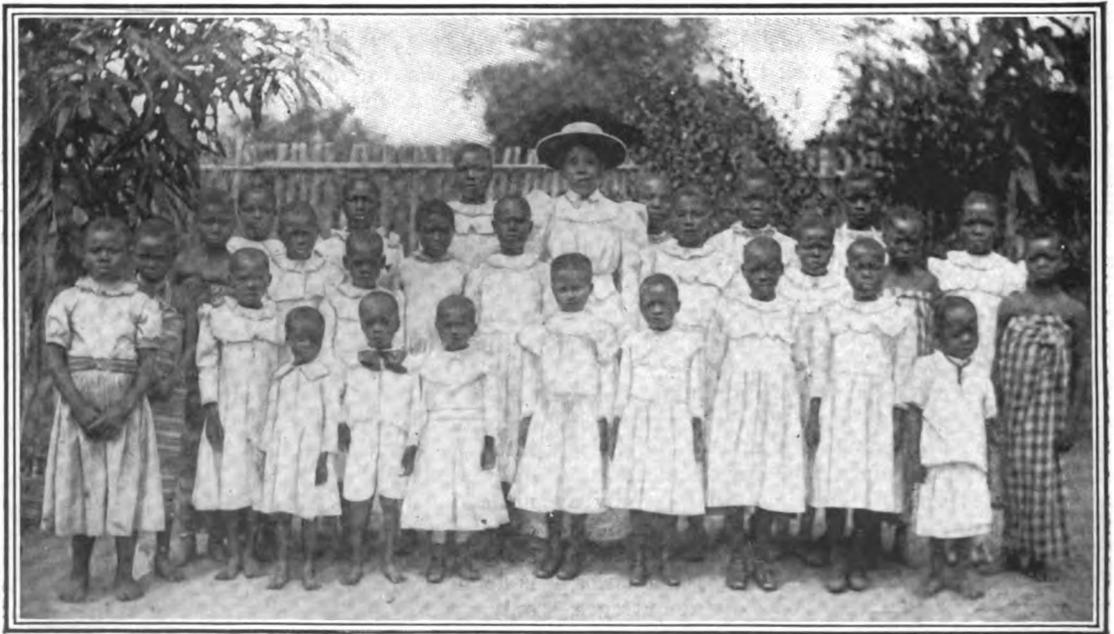
I must say, however, that I have little sympathy with the punishment of the soldiers and white officers, even if the government were honest in administering it when deserved,—it is the whole *system* of forced labor and military service which must be condemned, and not primarily the officers and soldiers who are intrusted with putting the system into execution. And this means that Leopold, and he alone, should be brought to judgment for the inauguration and the carrying on of such a system.

#### HOW THE LAND IS MONOPOLIZED.

Having taken up so much space in the discussion of the treatment which the Congo State metes out to the native population, there is little room left for the questions of free trade and the rights of missions to carry on their work unmolested. These two questions can, however, be easily grouped together and summed up in the one sentence: The whole of the Congo State, with the exception of a small section on the West Coast, has now been divided up among the King and a number of great land monopolies, of which the State is, in nearly every instance, the largest shareholder, with the result that all free trade is now at an end in the interior and

neither traders nor missionaries can any longer purchase land either for commercial or religious purposes. Prior to 1898, land could be bought, although under many restrictions; since 1898, the State has refused to sell land. Leases, for a short term of years, have in some cases been given, but when I state that the mission of which I am a member has made application for four land grants in the past four years, with the result that all of them have been refused, and when I state that the law of the State forbids our staying for more than fifteen days in the same place without having a land grant there, and when I state that both free commerce and missions are necessarily at a standstill, it can be seen that the Congo Free State has at last reached the highest stage of boldness and effrontery in its systematic violation of the treaties.

The King sends forth periodically his denials of the charges and his protestations of philanthropy. Such men as Sir Charles Dilke and others who have made this matter the subject of careful investigation pronounce the Congo State an "open sore," which the powers who founded it are responsible for curing, and not the least responsible among these is the United States, which, though not one of the signatory powers to the General Act of Berlin, yet played the most prominent part in bringing the Congo State into existence.



A GROUP OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AT LUEBO.

(The majority of them had been caught in slave raids by the Zappo Zapps or others friendly to the State.)