

# ADVENTURES AMONG CANNIBALS

The Strange Story Told by Louis de Rougemont.



GOOD use is being made by the scientists of an account of the experiences of M. Louis de Rougemont among the savages of north-western Australia, which appeared recently. His experiences are alleged to have covered a period of nearly thirty years. During that time Rougemont became practically king of a cannibal tribe. He says he escaped from his nomadic life and reached Melbourne in 1895. He arrived in England a short time ago, and on Friday, September 9, told the story of his adventures and his return to civilization at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at Bristol.

M. Rougemont's tale has aroused unusual interest. It is said that his story has been investigated by famous geographers like Keltie and Mill, and found to have every evidence of truth. It was probably because of this understanding that he received an invitation from so staid and distinguished a body as the British Association. Here is the story of his wanderings as reported by M. Rougemont himself.

In the year 1863 I left home, a mere youth, and engaged in a pearl-fishing venture on board the Dutch schooner *Vesland*. Our pearling grounds lay between the Australian coast and Dutch New Guinea. After about ten months the vessel was wrecked on a small coral island, situated about thirteen degrees south and 125 degrees east, off the northwest coast of Australia. I was absolutely alone, save that I had the captain's dog with me. On this island, or, rather, sand-spit, I lived for two years and underwent much suffering. At the end of that time a party of blacks, who had been blown out to sea from the Australian main, were cast upon the island on a native raft, such as is used in fishing expeditions. After a further period of six months' waiting for favorable winds, we set out together in a boat built from the wreck of the schooner, and I landed with my companions on the coast of Australia in the year 1866—the exact locality was Cambridge Gulf, on the northwest coast. Of course, I made many excursions in various directions, always with the hope of reaching civilization, either overland or by sea. Evidently, however, I drifted into the centre of the continent, and only reached civilization in 1895, after an exile of upward of thirty years.

When I first landed on the Australian main it may be necessary to bear in mind that I was absolutely destitute—without clothes, tools or instruments of any kind, except a harpoon, a stiletto and a steel tomakaw. I had no book except a New Testament in the French and English language; all maps and charts had been swept away by the heavy seas that preceded the wreck. I had no writing materials whatever; it was therefore impossible for me, even if at that time I had had the wish, to make any scientific observations or to record my wanderings. For a time, however, I did make notes on the blank leaves and margins of the Testament, using blood for ink and a quill from a wild boar as a pen. This book was, unfortunately, lost after my return to civilization in the wreck of the steamer *Matura*, which was lost in the Strait of Magellan in the present year of 1898.

When I landed on the continent, I believe vast tracts of it were unexplored, and certainly my own knowledge of Australian geography was very small and vague. If I had known even the exact outline of Australia, it would have saved me many terrible journeys and years of suffering. As I have already said, I landed on the east side of Cambridge Gulf, as nearly as I can now remember, that is to say, Queen's Channel, which was the home of my native companions, who found their way back with me from the little islet by steering by the stars. For some little time I remained in the camp of their tribe, where I was received in a most friendly way in consequence of the introduction and representations of my native wife. This woman was one of the family of blacks that had been cast upon my islet.

When we landed, nearly all the members of the tribe and many individuals from other tribes were gathered to see the first white man they had ever beheld. They were not so much surprised, however, at my personal appearance as at the form of my footprints, which differed very greatly from theirs, and the few articles I possessed filled them with amazement, especially my boat. This boat, which I built on the island from the wreck, and in which I reached the mainland with the party of natives, was, unfortunately, lost in an encounter with a whale, and with it disappeared my hopes of reaching Somerset, at Cape York, a settlement of which I had often heard the peavers speak. Thus I was obliged to make the attempt by land, and I started with my wife about October, 1867, intending to travel due east to the Queensland coast. After six or seven months' traveling, at first over a flat coast land diversified by isolated hills, and then through an elevated and very broken country, I reached a desolate and waterless region covered with spinifex, where we both suffered terribly from thirst, and but for the skill of my native wife in finding water and procuring food, I

should probably never have come through it.

We soon found that we had come considerably further south than we intended, and so we struck due north and eventually reached a flooded river flowing eastward, which presently led us to the sea. This river was probably the Ropa, entering the Gulf of Carpentaria, but as I did not know of the existence of such a gulf I believed we had reached the Queensland coast, and I at once inquired of the tribes we met for the nearest settlement of white men. These natives were the most savage and hostile I ever encountered in all my wanderings. They attacked at night, but, having been warned by my native wife, we retired from our guayah, or shelter of boughs, and slept in the bush without a fire. In the morning we would find our shelter riddled with spears.

At length, after several months of coasting, we found the land trending to the west; and here, at Raffle's Bay probably, we found a Malay proa. We landed on the northern coast of Melville Island, and after we had again reached the coast of the mainland through Aspley Strait, we experienced a terrible storm, which must have driven us past Port Darwin. For whole nights my native wife and I would be immersed in the sea, clinging on to the gunwale of our frail craft. At last, about eighteen months after we had left my wife's home in the Cambridge Gulf region, we one day recognized certain islands and also the coast, and soon afterward we found ourselves, to my great surprise, at the very spot from which we had started.

The next attempt I made was to the southwest, starting after some months of rest, and coasting in the dugout as far as King's Sound. I landed upon and explored many of the islands dotted along that extensive stretch of coast, and in some of them I found caves with rude drawings on the rocks. On what was probably Bigge's Island I found a cairn of stones, which I readily saw must have been the handiwork of a white man. We returned to the old camp overland, crossing the King Leopold ranges, which were finely wooded, and appeared to be largely composed of granite.

We next struck what was probably the Orde River, which we followed down to Cambridge Gulf, and returned along the coast to our own home. On returning from this journey I felt little inclination to make another attempt, and for three years I lived among the natives, becoming accustomed to the life and finding it not disagreeable. The desire to reach civilization returned, and about the year 1873 I started with my wife, resolving this time to cross the continent to the south, as I knew in a vague kind of way that there were great towns on the coast somewhere to the south. I had only the very haziest idea, however, of their position. The tribes were very numerous, and altogether it was very thickly populated. I never traveled due south, but found it expeditions to go from tribe to tribe and from water-hole to water-hole. Besides having my native wife with me, I was armed with a certain mystic message stick and, best of all, I had the power of amusing the tribes by means of acrobatic performances, my steel weapons, and the bark of my dog, who could also go through a little performance on his own account, dancing to the tune of my reed whistle. I emphasize these things because they saved my life over and over again.

When we were perhaps seven months out we came suddenly upon four white men. At this time we were with a small party of blacks, who were on a punitive expedition. The party had already been attacked by these same white men and had retaliated, and, therefore, they were by no means disposed to be friendly. Naturally, in the excitement of the moment, I forgot that I was virtually a black man myself, and rushed upon them, but they promptly fired upon us and retreated. I now knew them to have been the Giles expedition of 1874. I should point out that I was perfectly naked, like the savages, and was anointed with the same protective covering of black, greasy clay which is used by the natives to ward off cold and the attacks of insects, but apart from this, the sun had long since tanned my skin out of all resemblance to a European. Repulsed in this way more than once, I despaired of ever making my real character known. Two or three weeks after the encounter my wife came upon the tracks of a man whom she described as a white man, and as a man no longer in his senses. She deducted this latter fact from the eccentric circles which the tracks followed. Following up these tracks, we did find a white man alone and dying from thirst. He was hopelessly imbecile. He lived with me for two years, a serious incurable, and never regained his intelligence until just before he died. He asked who I was, and where he was, and then he said his name was Gibson, and that he had been a member of the Giles expedition. The place where he was lost was, I now understand, called by the Giles expedition "Gibson's Desert," and it lies in the southeast of Western Australia.

After Gibson's death I made up my mind to end my days in solitude, and the reason for this was partly that I seemed doomed to disappointment

every time an opportunity offered itself to return to civilization, and partly, also, on the urgent solicitations of my wife and the tribes with whom I lived. They pointed out to me that I had everything a man could want, and that I could be King among them. It was, moreover, quite evident to them that my fellow white men did not want me. Thus for something like twenty years I made my home with them in the mountainous region near the centre of the continent, where I ultimately became King or ruler over a number of large tribes. From this mountain home I made frequent long journeys and traveled at one time or another a great part of the interior of the continent.

Once I followed on the camel track of a white party with the tribe for the purpose of picking up empty tins and for other things useful to us, and I came upon an Australian newspaper. I remember it was the Sydney Town and Country Journal, bearing date somewhere between 1874 and 1876. It was a surprise indeed. I read it over and over, until I had learned it by heart, and I preserved it in an opossum skin cover until it was literally worn to pieces.

Much of the information this newspaper contained puzzled me greatly, and I nearly worried myself into insanity over a statement that "the deputies of Alsace and Lorraine had refused to vote in the German Parliament and had walked out." Turn it over how I might, I could not understand how the representatives of two great departments in my own country could possibly be in the German Parliament—knowing absolutely nothing, of course, of the war of 1870.

The tribe over which I reigned was composed of beings who were certainly low down in the human scale, but at the same time they have elaborate laws which govern their daily life precisely as in the case of civilized people. They are savages, repulsive in appearance, who have not even risen to such a point of civilization as to have permanent houses, addicted to cannibalism, and altogether of a very degraded type.

While my natives did not, as a rule, paint the body on great occasions, such as corroborees, initiation ceremonies and other festivities, they paint and decorate themselves elaborately, each tribe having its own design of decoration, and even a geometrical design for each ceremony. The pigments used in decoration are of many colors, but chiefly yellow, red, white and black. Ordinarily the only clothing known consists of a coating of greasy clay, mixed with charcoal. This serves many purposes. It keeps off the cold during the winter, and is also a protection against the attacks of insects. In summer a special kind of pigment is used to keep off insects, and this material is scented with a kind of pennyroyal.

Cannibalism prevails to a very great extent, but is governed by many rules. Usually it is the slain victims in battle that are eaten by the victorious side, and as the object seems to be to acquire the valor and virtues of the person eaten I endeavored to wean the tribes from cannibalism by assuring them that, if they made bracelets, anklets and necklaces out of the dead man's hair, they would achieve their end equally well. When a family grows too large, and the mother—being the beast of burden—is unable to carry one of the children, the father orders it to be clubbed and eaten. This, however, is entirely actuated by love, as the natives have a horror of natural decay. Maimed and deformed children are also killed and eaten. Women and people who die a natural death are never eaten. When a man has to be eaten there is always a grand corroboree. The natives are not ashamed to confessed cannibalism, nor is an individual considered unclean after joining in a feast.

From this account it may appear that my natives were not a pleasant people to live among. But I found the reverse to be the case. They were always cheerful, obedient and deferential in their manner, and many times did I owe my life to the care exercised by my faithful native wife. It was possible to devise many occupations, which were at least sufficient to pass the time. For amusement I used to search the beds of the watercourses for curious stones. In a great many of these watercourses I found both coarse and fine gold, and in some instances the creeks were extremely rich in alluvial gold.

I found great quantities of gem stones of every shape and color, which could be distinguished by looking through them when wet. In some cases the prevailing color of the stones would be various shades of red, in others blue, and in rarer cases green. This I took respectively to be ruby, sapphire and emerald. On occasion I came across a range of granite hills extending several miles, and the adjacent creeks contained large quantities of pieces of broken reefs and lodes and water-worn pebbles, also immense quantities of heavy black sand, which I supposed to be iron, but which I now know to be tin. In another district I found large quantities of native copper lying about in pieces.

My wild life came to an end at last. An epidemic of influenza swept over the country and carried off my wife. My surviving children were also swept away. Thus left alone, without the old interests that has made life tolerable, I determined to make a last effort to reach my own people, and leaving my mountain home I set out for the southwest. On this, however, as in all my journeys, I was never able to take a direct line, but had to go hither and thither with the tribes among whom I was sojourning. After a time I found a tree marked Forrest, the name of the explorer who had passed that way, and turning south I at length met a party of prospectors

many days north of Mount Marga, the nearest camp.

Taught by bitter previous experience, I knew that before I could appear among the whites I should have to get some of my natives to procure some clothes for me by any means known to them. When at length I presented myself before the white men I was afraid they did not at first look with favor on their guest. I answered their questions, and when they heard I was without mates and had been journeying hither from the interior for nine or ten months they were convinced I was a person of intellect. A question of my own, "What year is this?" convinced them altogether that they were right in their conjecture. However, in the end I obtained help and work, and in 1895 I reached Melbourne, whence by slow stages and not without difficulties I got back to Europe.

## ROOFING A FARM.

Remarkable Precautions to Protect a California Orchard from Frost.

Frost is a frequent feature of orange growing in California and many devices for keeping it from harming the orchards have been tried from time to time with only partial success.

During the day the earth and trees become warm, but as the night cools the atmosphere the process of radiation sets in and the heat from the earth and the trees is carried off, the cold, frosty atmosphere taking its place. This warm air must not be allowed to escape. The fact was evident that the trees must be covered.

A fog would do this effectually, but fogs cannot be manufactured to order. The idea was conceived by a Mr. Everest of covering the orchard with canvas, which could be rolled up in the morning and let out at night. One acre was covered in this way and it was found to be expensive and unstable, as the canvas would get wet and decay. Then Mr. Everest thought of a covering of leather, and it was tried, was a success and to-day is an accomplished fact.

A visit to this ranch would remove any doubts one might have regarding the feasibility of the new plan. A dial set in the ceiling of the house at the head of the stairs indicates the direction of the wind at any time of the night or day. At another place can be seen a system of electric bells. These ring when the thermometer has fallen to a dangerous temperature. The men are then called up and a process of firing up is commenced. And yet with all these precautions the frost has often been too quick.

Now the trees are roofed with canvas and laths. Although this shelter has been used over but fifteen acres, the entire ranch will be covered as soon as the work can be done. Last spring the fruit which was covered matured perfectly, while that uncovered was more or less injured.

The operation is perhaps considered an expensive one, but when the value of a crop is considered it is infinitesimal. The cost is about \$400 to the acre. It has been demonstrated that the temperature is some five degrees higher under the cover than outside, with no fire at all, while with a small fire the temperature can be brought up eight degrees higher. With this cover the rancher is absolutely sure of a crop from any citrus orchard.—San Francisco Call.

## SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Flour milled into bricks by hydraulic pressure is reduced two-thirds in bulk, and rendered proof against damp.

By means of a toughening process, recently discovered, glass may now be moulded into lengths and used as railway sleepers.

Cast iron is now being used for stills for concentrating sulphuric acid, and it is confidently anticipated that it will supersede both glass and platinum or that purpose.

M. Victor, the French naturalist, says that a toad will live twenty-eight months completely embedded in plaster of paris poured on as a liquid, and then allowed to harden.

Guttapercha from the leaves of the caoutchouc tree is now being used by French makers of submarine cables. It has all the advantages of the product from incision into the tree, while less expensive and more durable.

A new kind of carbon for arc lamps is reported to have been patented in Russia. It is made from ninety per cent. of very pure carbon and ten per cent. of carburet of silicon, the ingredients being very finely pulverized and agglomerated with pitch.

To increase the durability of lime stones used for buildings, a French engineer proposes to coat their surfaces with a solution of hydrate of baryta, which is finally converted into barium carbonate or sulphate, both of which are hard and insoluble.

## Knew His Business.

A baby beaver was caught and given to a gentleman as a pet. Beavers, as you know, build dams in which they can make their houses. But here was this poor baby living in a house where there was no possibility of his having the kind of a home that he would love to have. One day when the little beaver was in the kitchen, a leaky pail was put on the floor. The moment the baby beaver saw the water running in a little stream across the floor he ran out in the yard, and appeared in a minute with a chip. The gentleman who owned the beaver was called to see him. The chip was placed in such a way as to stop the water, and the beaver hurried out and came in with another bit of wood, and then some mud. Orders were given that the beaver was not to be disturbed, but allowed to work out his plan; and in four weeks he had built a solid dam around the pail in which was the water.—The Outlook.

## Indian Legend of Hiawatha

The Indian story of Hiawatha is even more beautiful than that which Longfellow has told so charmingly in the justly popular poem bearing that title, but it depicts the hero as a very different man from the bold and tender-hearted warrior of whom the poet writes. The Indian story, though in part fiction, is founded on fact; there is no doubt that such a man as Hiawatha once lived, and that he played a leading part in forming the compact of the Six Nations.

According to the story, Hiawatha was the wisest man of the Onondagas, and when the different tribes were troubled by the Hurons, who lived to the north of them, and the Algonquins, who were their eastern neighbors, he proposed a meeting of the tribes to form a union for mutual defense. But the scheme was defeated by Atatarho, a great war chief of the Onondagas, who was jealous of dividing his power, and Hiawatha was driven out of the tribe. He did not give up the plan, however. As he journeyed toward the south he came to a beautiful lake (probably Oneida). On the shore he picked up a quantity of beautiful white shells.

Hiawatha, living alone all this time, and never seeing any man, learned much from the Great Spirit. It was finally revealed to him that his people were at last ready to unite, and he hastened back to them. Then there was a great meeting, which all the chiefs attended. Atatarho still sat back defiant, saying never a word. When at last Hiawatha arose and began to speak the people were charmed by his voice and listened in silence, for it seemed to them that he spoke with the wisdom of the Great Spirit himself. Lifting his strings of wampun, Hiawatha unfolded his plan for the union, telling off on each shell the position and power allotted to each tribe and to its chief. Atatarho was to be made the great war chief of the confederacy—which shows that Hiawatha was something of a politician—and at this even he gave way and the treaty was adopted.

While the people were celebrating the treaty with the usual feasting, it was observed that Hiawatha was sad and silent. "Feasting is not for me," he said, when his friends urged him to join the festivities; "I am to go on a far journey."

At that moment a beautiful white canoe was seen approaching across the lake, driven by some unseen power. When it reached the shore Hiawatha, bidding farewell to those who had crowded about him, stepped into the canoe, which moved rapidly away. As it reached the middle of the lake it suddenly rose into the air. Higher and higher into the blue sky flew the white canoe with its single passenger, until it became a dim speck and then vanished altogether.

That was the last of Hiawatha, but the league which he founded continued for centuries and was never conquered by its enemies, and every year since the wampun has been brought out at the great council and the solemn rites with which Hiawatha had instituted the confederacy have been rehearsed.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

## A Novel Bridescake.

For a home wedding the last and most artistic touch of festivity centers in the bridescake and the cutting thereof, says the Chicago Record. The cutting has a drawback. If the cake is as rich as it becomes a bridescake to be, the cutters are apt to have fingers slightly greasy, and a trifle sticky when they are through. But that keeps no young woman from trying her fate by its auguries. Nevertheless, she would try it with better grace if she could manage to do it without detriment to her gloves or soiling the tips of her dainty fingers.

All this was achieved at a swell wedding down south not long ago. The wedding supper table was set in the form of a fan. The bridescake was another fan, laid all over so as to resemble point lace, with a bouquet of orange blossoms in icing where the sticks joined. It was exceedingly pretty. The novelty, however, was in the ribbons—short lengths of white satin ribbon, which came through the icing all around the fan's outer edge. The ring, the 5-cent piece, darning needle and so on were made fast to some of the ribbons. Instead of cutting, each young woman pulled a ribbon. If she drew blank, well and good—if she happened to lay hold on a freighted length, she had to accept her fate.

## England's Greatest.

The Independent contains some reminiscences of Gladstone, suggestive, as all such reminiscences must be, of his wonderful intellectual and moral power. He learned French late in life, incited to do so by his enjoyment of French literature. At eighty-six he mastered Danish. A few years ago a dinner was given him by Jules Simon and other distinguished Frenchmen.

"Shall I speak in French or English?" he asked an American friend, on arriving.

The American would not venture to advise Mr. Gladstone in anything, but added:

"If I were expected to speak, and could do so in their own tongue, I should certainly use it."

"I will speak in French," said Mr. Gladstone, and so he did for half an hour, to the astonishment and delight of all who were present.

No subject seemed too slight to attract his interest. Some American accents were placed on the table near him,

and one of our countrymen remarked: "Those are rather fine apples." "Yes," said Mr. Gladstone. "You sent us seven thousand three hundred and sixty-five barrels last year."

Among the two hundred guests present, possibly there was not another one who could so promptly have stated a fact of such merely general interest.

It is good to hear the generous (or just!) commendation of one great man for another.

"When you meet Mr. Gladstone," John Bright once said to a visitor in England, "you will see the greatest Englishman of our time."

A titled lady was one day railing at Mr. Gladstone, as was the fashion in England until recently. Suddenly Mr. Bright turned and asked:

"Has your son ever seen Mr. Gladstone?"

The son was at that moment standing beside them. "No," was the surprised answer.

"Then, madam," said Mr. Bright, "permit me to urge you to take him at once to see the greatest Englishman he is ever likely to look upon."

## Harmony and Contrast.

The following is a list of colors which contrast and harmonize:

White contrasts with black and harmonizes with gray.

White contrasts with brown and harmonizes with buff.

White contrasts with blue and harmonizes with sky blue.

White contrasts with purple and harmonizes with rose.

White contrasts with green and harmonizes with pea green.

Cold greens contrast with white and harmonize with blue.

Cold greens contrast with purple and harmonize with citrine.

Cold greens contrast with pink and harmonize with brown.

Cold greens contrast with gold and harmonize with black.

Cold greens contrast with orange and harmonize with gray.

Warm greens contrast with crimson and harmonize with yellow.

Warm greens contrast with maroon and harmonize with orange.

Warm greens contrast with purple and harmonize with citrine.

Warm greens contrast with red and harmonize with sky blue.

Warm greens contrast with pink and harmonize with gray.

Warm greens contrast with white and harmonize with white.

Warm greens contrast with black and harmonize with brown.

Warm greens contrast with lavender and harmonize with buff.

Greens contrast with colors containing red and harmonize with colors containing yellow or blue.

Orange contrasts with purple and harmonizes with yellow.

Orange contrasts with blues and harmonizes with red.

Orange contrasts with olive and harmonizes with warm brown.

Orange contrasts with crimson and harmonizes with white.

Orange contrasts with gray and harmonizes with buff.

Orange requires blue, black, purple or dark colors for contrast, and warm colors for harmony.

## Sayings of Americans.

"Don't swear; fight!" The phrase has the ring of sound metal.

The American army of invasion advancing upon Santiago de Cuba was preceded by a body of rough riders. Suddenly the Spaniards, who were lying in ambush, fired a deadly volley, and the startled rough riders replied with an outburst of curses. "Don't swear; fight!" called Colonel Wood. The phrase will live.

America is a big country; it is destined to become a great country, for there is manliness and vigor in the memorable phrases coined by celebrated Americans. It was Stephen Deatur who originated the toast, "Our country, right or wrong." Henry Clay said: "Sir, I would prefer to be right than to be president." The last words of Nathan Hale were: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." William Penn coined the phrase: "I prefer the honestly simple to the ingeniously wicked." And it was Henry Ward Beecher who uttered the words: "The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom."

When nations become artificially refined the phrases which their great men coin are generally either cynical or flippant. Thus, to Tallyrand is attributed the phrase, "Mistrust first impressions, they are always good." Voltaire declared that "Ideals are like beards; children and women never wear them." To which might be added, "except when they are monstrosities." Antonio Rivarole said, "It is an immense advantage to have done nothing, but one should not abuse it." Sainet Rogers said, "When I was young I said good-natured things and nobody listened to me; now that I am old I say ill-natured things, and everybody listens to me." To Sydney Smith we are indebted for the following ungracious description of a fashionable woman: "Don't mind the caprices of fashionable women. They are as gross as puddles fed on milk and muffins."

Whether Colonel Wood uttered them or not, the words, "Don't swear; fight!" will ring for long in the memories of many generations.—London Truth.

A cake of magnesia is a good friend to the economical woman in these days of many light frocks. Rub the soiled spots on both sides of the goods when the dress or waistcoat is taken off, and after airing hang away with the magnesia still there. When the dress is wanted again dust the magnesia off lightly, and it will be found to have carried away part of the soil and to hide the rest. A light dress thus may be kept immaculate in appearance several days after it would otherwise have to go to the cleanser.