A PLUCKY WOMAN EXPLORER IN THE HEART OF AFRICA

MRS MARGUERITE ROBY WHO HAS RECENTLY MADE AN 8,000 MILE JOURNEY THROUGH SAVAGE AFRICA

LONDON, January 4.

IMAGINE an American woman in the heart of Africa acting as arbitrator between two cannibal chieftains, whose respective tribes were on the brink of war, "Arbitrating" so successfully, too, that the dusky "parties" jointly declared themselves her slaves thereafter!

The woman who did that is Mrs. Marguerite Roby, who, though not born in the United States, now claims it as her country. This queer experience is only of many she had in the course of an 8,000-mile tramp recently through the most cannibal and largely unexplored Kasai country in the Lower Congo region of Africa, with no other companion than the natives who carried her baggage.

Mrs. Roby, who is a widow, is a really beautiful woman and quite the last one in the world whom you would take for an explorer of savage lands. She is Spanish by birth, and shows it, possessing dark eyes and the blackest of hair, an almost perfect figure and a "creamy" complexion, but she lived for some years in the United States and was married there and is now an American to all intents and purposes. Incidentally, she is what is known in this country as a "well plucked 'un." She went, all alone, to explore the less known parts of Congoland, mainly to find out if what she had read about the atrocities reputedly practiced there in connection with the rubber industry was true, and while doing so she just escaped death half a dozen times. More than once she narrowly missed furnishing a meal for savage natives, and she had several close calls with wild animals and, while in the heart of Africa, with no one near but her native carriers, she came within an ace of dying of black-water fever, from the effects of which she has not yet wholly recovered.

Luckily for herself, Mrs. Roby knows quite a lot about the doctoring business. Her first husband was a Philadelphia physician and she herself studied medicine with her second husband, who was a New York man, and this knowledge not only kept her from succumbing to disease while on her African travels, but also helped her to gain the regard of several native chiefs, whose intentions previously had not been benevolent. While on her long tramp this plucky woman wore male dress and slept every night with a loaded revolver under her pillow, but when she received the writer the other day at a London hotel she was wearing a green Japanese kimono embroidered with scarlet, which became her dark beauty to perfection. A guess would put her age at 42 or 43 and she looked amazingly fit considering all she has gone through since she first set foot on the Dark Continent nearly two years ago.

"I was well on my way to Australia when I suddenly made up my mind to explore in Africa," she said, "and this voyage, which was purely a pleasure one, was only an episode in what really has been a life of travel. I completed my first tour of the world when I was 14 in company with my brother, and since then there is hardly a corner of the globe into which I have not peeped.

"While on my way to Melbourne," Mrs. Roby went on, "I read one of E. D. Morel's books on the Congo, and the statements made in it horrified me to such an extent that I felt I just had to go and see if they could be true. This was in September, 1910. On my way back, therefore, I disembarked at Durban, and started on my first trip through the Upper Congo, starting from Elizabethville, with Lake Victoria Nyanza as my objective."

Food Supply Stolen.

Mrs. Roby got eventually to the lake that was discovered by Livingstone, but her first expedition in the Dark Continent was a long way from being a success, a trader whom she engaged as guide and manager proving a "bad egg." One morning she awoke to find that he had bolted in the night and taken the whole food supply with him, and Mrs. Roby, leaving her native carriers behind, set off on his track, but was bowled over by an attack of fever which proved pretty bad, but which wasn't a patch on the one she contracted some months later. A few weeks afterward, when she was convalescent and had set out for Kilwa, by an amazing coincidence, the man who had over-reached her boarded the same lake steamer by which she was traveling, and the lady promptly pounced on him only to find, however, that he had cheated her from the first and that, instead of having a food supply for several months, as he had contracted, there was only enough for a few weeks. So she had to dismiss most of her native bearers and get on as best she could. On arriving at Lake Nyanza, she found there was still the Kasai, or Lower Congo uncovered, and in January last she started at Boma, on the west coast of Africa, and took a southeasterly course down to Elizabethville. This time she took charge of the expedition herself, her native carriers averaging 25 or 30 in number.

"I traveled from one rubber post to another," she said, "the country between being often absolutely unexplored, and my path frequently lying through the villages of cannibal tribes. At every post I had to get a fresh escort, as the natives spoke entirely different languages. So different, indeed, are these dialects that the traders have invented a sort of Esperanto, which they use in buying the rubber. I had one boy with me, however, who knew the languages of all the tribes I passed through, and acted as interpreter.

"In many of the villages the people never had seen a white woman before, and when I arrived they would crowd around me, examine my dress, pat my hands and stroke my hair, which I wore in a plait down my back. I had to do this, by the way, because my boys would steal my pins. I arrived in Elizabethville with exactly three left. When we halted for the night they would amuse themselves—and me much more—by doing up their hair in all sorts of fantastic ways with my pins.

"The responsibility of the food supply rested mostly on me. Sometimes I would give the head boy some salt or beads with which to get food from the natives, but occasionally I had to take out my gun and shoot their supper. As a rule, though, I hadn't to go more than 30 or 40 yards to come upon game of some sort.

In a Land of Cannibals.

"Speaking of food, reminds me of once when an unsavory dish was offered me in the shape of a black man's leg! I nearly made food for the natives myself that time. I had just arrived at a point midway between two villages, when my carriers bolted, leaving me with only my interpreter. It appeared that the village we were making for was inhabited by the Bashele, whose chief had a habit of either eating or making slaves of all other natives who had the temerity to approach his territory. I went on a little way, and as we got near the village saw the ruffian coming toward me. As he approached I pretended not to see him, but gazed up into the sky, watching, apparently, some birds hovering not far off. Then I picked up my gun and fired at them, and the birds began dropping down all around. This impressed the cannibal, as I had hoped it would, and he became most friendly. I asked him for food for my followers and myself, which he promised me at once, and said he had some very special meat for me. In a little while I saw two or three men coming along carrying what looked like the body of a man across their shoulders. When they arrived it was the leg of a black man which they had killed and started eating the previous day!

"Another tribe who eat men are the Bapendas, while in the same district are the Babundas, who eat dog. While I was at one rubber post several Bapendas and one Babunda came in bringing rubber. As they were standing all together near the official's house his dog, a white terrier, ran out and went for the Babunda, barking furiously at him. I asked why he had singled that one man out, as at that time I could not see any difference between him and his companions.

"'He's a Babunda,' said the official, 'and eats dog.' Pointing to the terrier, he added: 'He knew.'

"One of the most exciting adventures I had was with a herd of buffalo. We were marching along grassy country and I espied in the distance a knot of natives who were carrying bamboos for building a rubber post, standing all huddled up with fear, and almost immediately after my boys in front followed their example and squatted on the ground in a heap on the luggage. I went forward to find out the reason, and they showed me a fine herd of between 60 and 70 buffalo about 300 yards away. I fired into them, wounding four and killing, as I supposed, one red bull, which dropped in some long grass.

Charged by a Buffalo.

"As soon as I had dispatched the four wounded animals I went to have a look at my 'kill.' Just as I had got right up to him and was taking a picture of him he rose to his feet and charged me. I hadn't time to run, hardly enough even to think, so I just sat down, dropped my camera, picked up my rifle, put two shots into his neck and he dropped again, for good this time."

Mrs. Roby's medical knowledge helped her out of several tight places. Near a village named Salata, in the depths of Congoland, she suddenly beheld hundreds of natives, fully armed, rushing toward her. Her followers for once kept their presence of mind and yelled out "Medicine lady," and the natives became less threatening. Then the chief advanced, showing a terribly swollen face and asked if she would cure him. Mrs. Roby peered into the depths of the black's mouth and found there a gum boil, which she skilfully lanced, and the chief immediately became all smiles. At another village an ulcerated knee was presented to her by its owner, who was scornfully skeptic of her powers, but she proved quite equal to the occasion and healed it for him.

How She Settled a War.

"My fame as a doctor spread before me from village to village," she said, "and the natives began to look upon me as a kind of amateur providence, able to settle all their difficulties for them of whatever kind. Thus in the village of Djokapunda I found war impending, the chief of the tribe who inhabited it, and who practiced cannibalism off and on, having stolen a woman from a neighboring village. Arriving at this critical moment, I advised them both to submit to arbitration. They agreed and appointed me arbitrator. I heard the arguments on both sides, and then decided that the woman should be returned, with three women slaves as 'costs,' and that the other side, whose chief, it appeared, had bagged 12 goats, should hand over two men slaves. This judgment commended itself to both parties, who signified their satisfaction by placing ashes on their heads and swearing to be my slaves forever.

"Illness was my biggest danger," she went on. "In a country like that, one ought to take quinine every day; in fact, people who live there have it always on the table. But sometimes I was too dead tired at the end of the day to do more than have a cup of tea and fall into bed. I had some terrible bouts of fever and one of them gave me this," pointing to a broad sweep of white hair over her left temple; "when I was unconscious I banged my head against a table, and it killed the roots of the hair. At another time when I was delirious, I tried to throw myself into the fire and my boy had to tie me to my chair. But the worst time I had was the attack of blackwater fever which I got nearly at the end of my journey. We were right out in the bush, and I had no one to look after me. I got gradually worse, and on July 6 my temperature was 106."

Near Death From Fever.

Here Mrs. Roby crossed the room and fetched a small morocco-bound dairy. She opened it at July 3, and showed some pretty shaky writing. On July 6, straggling all across the page in very faint pencil, were the words: "Kyembe Makula. Temp. 106.2. Think I shall peg out!" The page devoted to July 7, the following day, is if anything more eloquent still, for it is a blank.

"I was unconscious all that day," said Mrs. Roby, "but gradually got a little better after. I was frightfully weak, of course, and my boys had to carry me in a chair for a long way. I managed to limp into Elizabethville at the end of my journey—with a temperature of over 100 degrees—and lay there very ill for for many days. In fact, I haven't quite recovered from that attack yet.

"The whole return trip took me nine months, and toward the end of it I made several wide detours because I heard that the natives had rebelled and were being cruelly massacred. I found them in revolt, it is true, but they were fighting among themselves, and I saw no single instance of cruelty or oppression all the way. A certain amount of starvation there must always be in those hot countries. The rains fail, there are no crops, and they starve; but then they do that in India, too. But, as a general rule, I found the natives happy, prosperous and contented. Quite often, I found them dancing, and oppressed people don't dance."

MARY HARFORD.

[Copyright, 1913, by Curtis Brown.]

TREASURES OF THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

BY JAMES N. YOUNG.

A FEW years ago a certain artist, with a delightful knack of cleverly phrasing his thoughts, inspected Baltimore and pronounced it a place of interesting vistas, charming colonial details, an example of a city where bronze statuary is properly used in public places, and, chief of all, the home of the Walters Gallery. His judgment was excellent, for there is certainly no spot in the city which can quite equal the wonderful store of things beautiful to be found in the art collection so handsomely housed on Washington Place.

When James Gibbons Huneker, that wizard of words and cleverest of art critics, completed a careful examination of the Walters Gallery, he wrote: "It has been a panoramic tour. A year might be profitably employed in the same gallery." And when he referred to his initial trip around the long gallery, "breath catching" was the adjective he used in describing what proved, even to a man who knows the collections of Europe thoroughly, a truly big art event. It seems to be the consensus of opinion of those who ought to know throughout the country that, with the exception of the vast collection owned by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, of New York, Mr. Walters' treasures are indisputably deserving of the first rank among the private collections of this country.

Every year for a period of three or four months, during the winter and early spring, the massive bronze doors of the Baltimore building under the shadow of the Washington Monument, swing back twice a week, in order that the public may wander through the fascinating rooms and halls, where every conceivable branch of art may be seen excellently represented. Last Wednesday — New Year's Day—the New Year was most auspiciously ushered in by the opening of the gallery for the first time in many months, and from now on through April, every Wednesday and Saturday, from 11 o'clock until 4, the exhibit will be the mecca of thousands of discerning people, who realize just how splendid a treat one may enjoy and who believe in seizing Opportunity when it brushes near them.

Beauty in Many Forms.

Any attempt to describe in a limited space even a small part of the rooms full of paintings of every school, bronzes, statues and statuettes, tapestries, ivories, jades and scores of other objects of artistic value, must prove futile. From the time that one passes the deferential colored attendant at the door, checks his hat and coat at the desk and ascends the marble steps leading to the first floor to secure his initial peep at the splendid scene, until, hours later, he very unwillingly departs, he may wander around dreamily drinking in the beauty of the modern paintings in the south gallery; he may glance through the varied cases of objects gathered in every nook and cranny of the world, any one of which is capable of "teasing us out of thought;" he may go into silent raptures before marble after marble from the chisels of the masters of all time; he may note the many excellent features of the noble home of the treasures, and the chances are when he leaves, if he be an ordinary mortal, with the exception of a few paintings and objects which loom large in his memory, everything else vanishes from his mind, leaving him with a vague, but delightful, impressionistic idea of beauty in many forms hopelessly blended. It is, indeed, a mammoth collection of things good to look upon.

Six cases of recently acquired objects constitute the sole addition made to the collection during the past year. All of the new bits of art are small in size, but large in interest and value, and in the main court, under the shadow of that titanic figure of a brooding man, Le Penseur, the masterpiece in bronze of the master of all modern hewers of marble, Rodin, one may study at leisure many history-haunted specimens of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century carvings, marble pieces, bronzes and enamels, along with Italian, French Renaissance and Egyptian fragments of numerous forms of art. These cases proved particularly popular on the opening day with those who already are thoroughly acquainted with the older features of the exhibit.

Notwithstanding the fact that the very excellent museum at Cairo has, during the last few years, made it quite difficult for valuable specimens to be removed from Egypt, the new cases contain many objects of great interest brought from the land of the Pharaohs. From Karnak come three dark-green granite statuettes of scribes, dating from the twenty-second dynasty, which crumbled into dust how many centuries ago? And near the solemn-faced scribes sits an equally expressionless wooden monkey, exquisitely carved in what was in those early days considered a classic method.

About a thousand years before the Star of Bethlehem shone in the East, in far-away Bagdad a tablet of clay was covered with quaint characters telling a story which today, even to the archeologist, means little, after which it was run into an oven and baked. Mute testimonial to the fact that other civilizations than ours, of which we are so proud, once flourished and passed away, that little tablet rests today in one of Mr. Walters' glass-covered cases. Near it we find a tiny lion, perfect in every detail, in spite of the centuries, and instantly our thoughts fly to the Swiss city where Thorwaldsen's huge animal frets the hours and years away, for the little lion in the case, who is 2,000 years or more old and hails from vanished Dendura, is strikingly reminiscent of his younger relative.

Statuettes of Ancient Egypt.

Thanks to the dry, sun-soaked air of the Nile country, Mr. Walters possesses several most perfect wooden statuettes, all executed in that quaint, geometrically exact method in vogue when Aida lived and loved her tragic life out so many centuries ago. From Assiout there comes a wooden statue bearing a label saying that it was made in the twelfth century; there is a basalt statue of some forgotten king which for two thousand years has been packed deep in the desert sands within a stone's throw of the silent Pyramids; from mystic Fayoum comes a small collection of pottery, and a statue of Horus, with carefully enameled body, and a bronze statuette made during the eighteenth dynasty in resplendent Luxor solemnly stare us out of countenance with their unblinking golden eyes.

But we must not tarry too long among the remnants of ancient pomp and vanity of Egypt. Other cases await our inspection. In a neighboring cabinet rests a hand pastille burner of exquisite Spanish workmanship of the sixteenth century which once formed a part of the Duc Duao's collection, and there is also a Limoges enamel, made by none other a celebrity than Jean Penicoud, in which the artist quaintly depicted in a series of little pictures the Calvary.

Of all the recent acquisitions in the cases none have probably attracted so much comment as a set of three pieces of jewelry secured from the treasures of the late Shah of Persia. The set comprises a huge pendant, an elaborately bejeweled hair ornament and a belt, all of the most marvelous enamel work and all thickly encrusted with rose diamonds, which sparkle dully in a manner strangely suggestive of the luxurious Orient. A Greek mille-fleur tray, found in the vicinity of Jerusalem, is in the same case.

Rivaling the popularity of the Shah's jewelry is the head of a child executed in white marble and surrounded by a golden border. It is not in itself a particularly beautiful bit of sculpture, but when one learns that it is a product of the chisel of Donatello he cannot fail to become interested in it. Certainly it is a feature of the recent additions.

Limoges ware is well represented, and one of the best pieces is a painted enamel done by Pierre Reymond. Covering it is a series of biblical scenes, which once upon a time were among the inspirations of Pierre Seguier, chancellor of France in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Hans Schuler's Ariadne.

The recent purchases have been cursorily glanced through. Let us now take a peep at some of the old favorites. Right at our elbow is Ariadne, a lovely reclining figure done in marble by one whose name is known to all Baltimoreans—Hans Schuler. The work was awarded the third prize at the Paris Salon in 1901, quite an honor for an American, and it is probably the best thing Mr. Schuler has thus far produced. In a nearby room there is to be seen the finest collection of works by Barye in the world, for the present owner of the collection, like his father before him, is passionately fond of the bronze animals of the great sculptor who is so familiar to all Baltimoreans on account of his imposing lions in Mount Vernon Place. Five of the virile, strongly modeled groups—tigers, deer, bulls, lions and bears—are unique, for they were cast in cire perdue for the Duke of Orleans, whose banquet-room they graced for years. A number of Barye's water colors and oils are also in the room, for he was a painter as well as a worker in bronze.

An interesting relic, which is kept near the Baryes, is a palette which once was the property of Bonnat, and around it are Barye's modeling tools, highly prized by the present owner. On the palette is a picture of the great sculptor's hand while at work, executed by Bonnat, who was one of his close friends. It may be of interest to many to learn that both William T. Walters and the present owner of the collection knew many of the premier artists of Europe whose names today are household words, and on the walls of the gallery are specimens of the works of all of them, secured, in many cases, after personal interviews.

On May 9, 1902, took place one of the greatest art coups in the history of art, for on that date Mr. Walters purchased the art collection of Don Massaranti, a wealthy connoisseur of Rome. When the transaction was made public, and the news was flashed around the world that the Baltimorean had paid $1,000,000 for the Italian's remarkable collection, art circles everywhere were thrown into a fever of excitement, and when a later announcement to the effect that the entire collection was to be put on board a specially chartered ship at Civita Vecchia and shipped to Baltimore, via New York, was made, art lovers in this city rejoiced greatly, for it was a well-known fact that the Massaranti collection comprised some of the masterpieces of the Venetian, Florentine and other schools. The ship loaded with her precious burden made the voyage in safety, and presently Mr. Faris C. Pitt and a corps of assistants were busily at work arranging the treasures in their new home.

The purchase of the Massaranti collection reminded the world of art that Baltimore contained a collection well worthy of consideration. Today one may find traces of the sensational purchase in almost every section of the gallery, for the range of the collection was large. There were a number of Titians, the best known of which is, perhaps, his St. Christopher, in which a small portrait of the artist himself may be seen in the background. The Duke of Urbino, by the same master, came with the collection. Then, too, there are five portraits by Tintoretto, one of them being the famous Venetian Lady, a glorious example of the artist's style. But a list of the Massaranti treasures is interminable, 200 of them at least being undoubted masterpieces.

From the viewpoint of the antiquarian one of the most interesting of the relics in the gallery is the original model in wax and painted paper of the mahogany jewel casket which the Duc d'Aumont ordered Gouthiers to make for Marie Antoinette in 1770 upon her marriage to the Dauphin of France, who later became Louis XVI. In the mahogany case, bought a few years ago by Queen Victoria and now in Windsor Castle, were kept the jewels of the unfortunate queen, among them the famous necklace about which so many romances have been written and which, according to Carlyle, played an extremely important part in her tragic fate.

A $40,000 Tapestry.

Hanging demurely from one of the walls is a piece of tapestry—Flemish—which an expert of international fame a few years ago valued at $40,000. Wherever one turns he encounters art objects of every variety—vases, dishes, statuettes, candelabra, plaques of Wedgwood Chelsea, Dr. Wall's Worcester, Bristol, Bow, Langton Hall and Plymouth varieties of all sorts of objects. There are three table cases given up entirely to a wonderful collection of snuff boxes of eighteenth and early nineteenth century workmanship. There is a collection of pottery unsurpassed save in the very largest galleries. There is a group of Chinese procelain and Japanese ivories, swords, lacquers, jades and crystals—all proclaiming in their every graceful line and their ravishingly rich and at the same time harmonious color schemes and strange shapes, their Far Eastern origin—which is deserving of the first rank in America. There are ceramics which have come from every country, and paintings, bronzes, marbles and knicknacks of various kinds in lavish profusion.

So skilfully have the pictures been hung and so cleverly have the large skylights been arranged by the architect that the light invariably falls upon the works in the most advantageous manner, and there are seldom any strong lights or shadows to mar the effect. Indeed, one of the striking features of the exhibit is the method in which it is housed. The building itself constructed of marble and limestone after the Renaissance style of architecture, viewed from the outside, in its very simplicity and genuineness, is beautiful. From the main entrance on Washington Place the visitor ascends a marble stairway and finds himself in the main court, a spacious room, the lower floor of which is designed of marble laid so as to form geometrical figures. The vaulted arches are sustained by many fine pillars of creamy marble, and directly opposite the main entrance appears another stairway of marble, said to resemble strikingly the stairway in the great art gallery in Naples. This stair leads to the galleries where most of the paintings are hung, on the second floor. Directly in the middle of this large court and dominating the entire scene sits Le Penseur, whose massive body and tense face instantly draws the attention of every passerby.

The building, which is practically fireproof, contains very little wood work, and that which is visible in some of the doors, the window sills and other light trimmings is of rich walnut, cut so that the natural grain may be plainly seen. The floors for the most part are of highly polished hardwood, and the heating and ventilating arrangements are perfect. In addition to the natural light which floods the rooms and halls from roofs of glass, a myriad of tiny electric bulbs, cunningly placed so that they will not show, shed a fine, mellow glow over portions of the scene in the endeavor to aid nature.

A Handy California Preacher.

[From the San Francisco Bulletin.]

Rev. Selah Munger, "the man who does things," is pastor of El Monte Methodist Church. He believes in physical as well as mental and moral work, and he has been demonstrating this. He turned the first spade of dirt to start the church residence, and was master carpenter while the building was being erected. Not content with this, after the building was completed, he became the painter of the building and the interior decorator. Yesterday he planted the flowers, lawn and shrubbery.

A new rule has been established by the preacher. He did not look at his watch to see how long he had worked, and beginning at dawn he worked till eve. The pastor believes that this will be a good example for his church members.

©Maryland State Archives, msa_sc4150_1_156-0112