



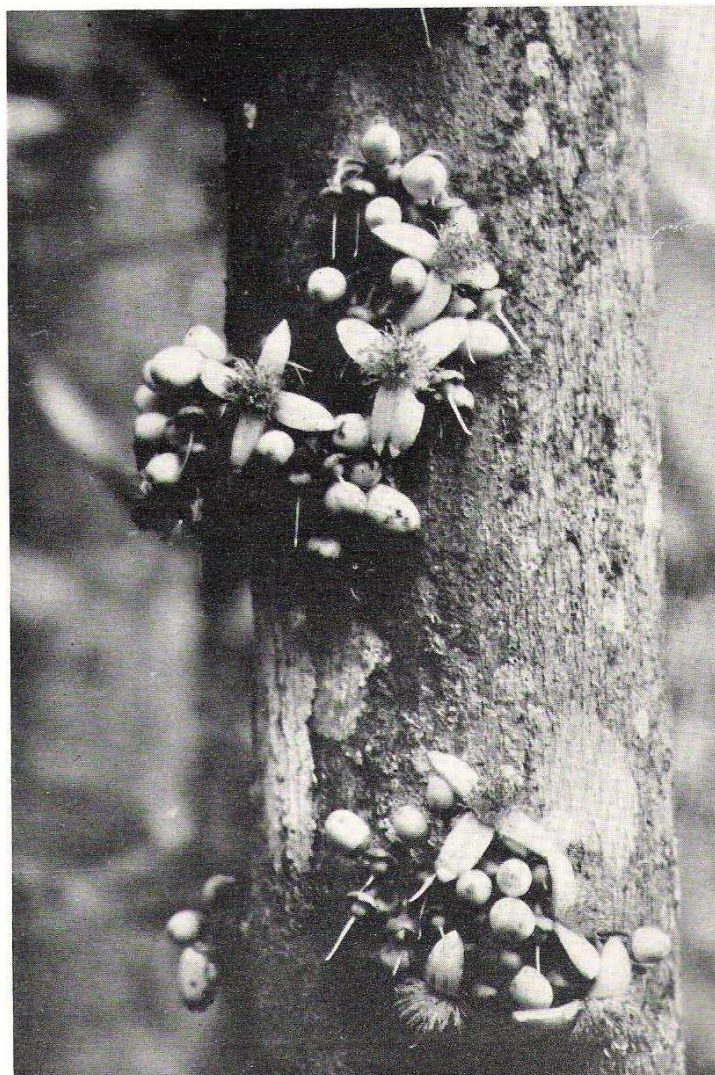
*A familiar and charming scene in the Congo jungle.*

## A Country of Peace and Grandeur

It is scarcely sixty years since the Congo was still a huge unknown region in the center of Africa, a region into whose secrecy no one had yet been able to penetrate. In the west, the most audacious explorers had never advanced more than 175 miles from the Atlantic coast; in the east, Livingstone and Cameron had been brought to a standstill by a river which had never before been explored.

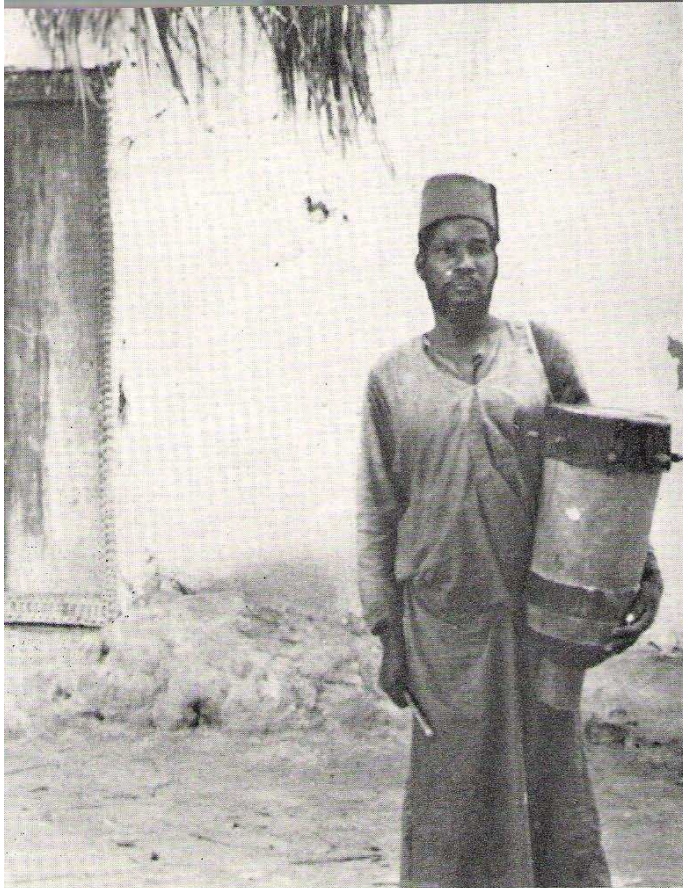
Between this river and the ocean spread the jungle, impenetrable forests and complete mystery. All that was known of this country into which no white man had ever ventured was that it was inhabited by a quantity of black tribes with a dreadful reputation for cannibalism. It was also known that the odious Arab slave traders went there to get supplies for the miserable caravans they took to the Zanzibar coast and shipped to the Levant.

Permanent peace and rule without cruelty now reign where among other more pacific peoples, savage tribes,



*Strange flowers in the Lukolela region.*





*ive of the Arab type.*

*A pigmy and his son*



thirsty for blood and hungry for human flesh once waged ceaseless and furious warfare on each other, and where hostility and distrust of the white man exposed the latter to the gravest danger. The open sore of slavery which cost Africa thousands, if not millions of lives, and against which Belgium had to put up a long fight, is now only a far-away memory, and has been for a long time. The black men of Central Africa can now lead a peaceful existence under the benevolent eye of Belgian authority.

Fifty years ago the population of the Congo was estimated at 30 millions, since then the population has fallen to 10 millions. Slavery, intestinal wars, and sleeping sickness had made terrible ravages among the native population before the Belgians were able to complete the organization of their colony. The mortality rate had reached appalling proportions and one wonders what would have been the fate of the black races of Central Africa without the intervention of Europeans. The pacific conquest of the country by Belgium thus had this first and fortunate result in stopping a decay which was threatening to become permanent.

It must be borne in mind, however that these estimates made fifty years ago as to the number of inhabitants in the Congo were largely approximate, and also that the present census only counts the natives who live a more or less sedentary life.

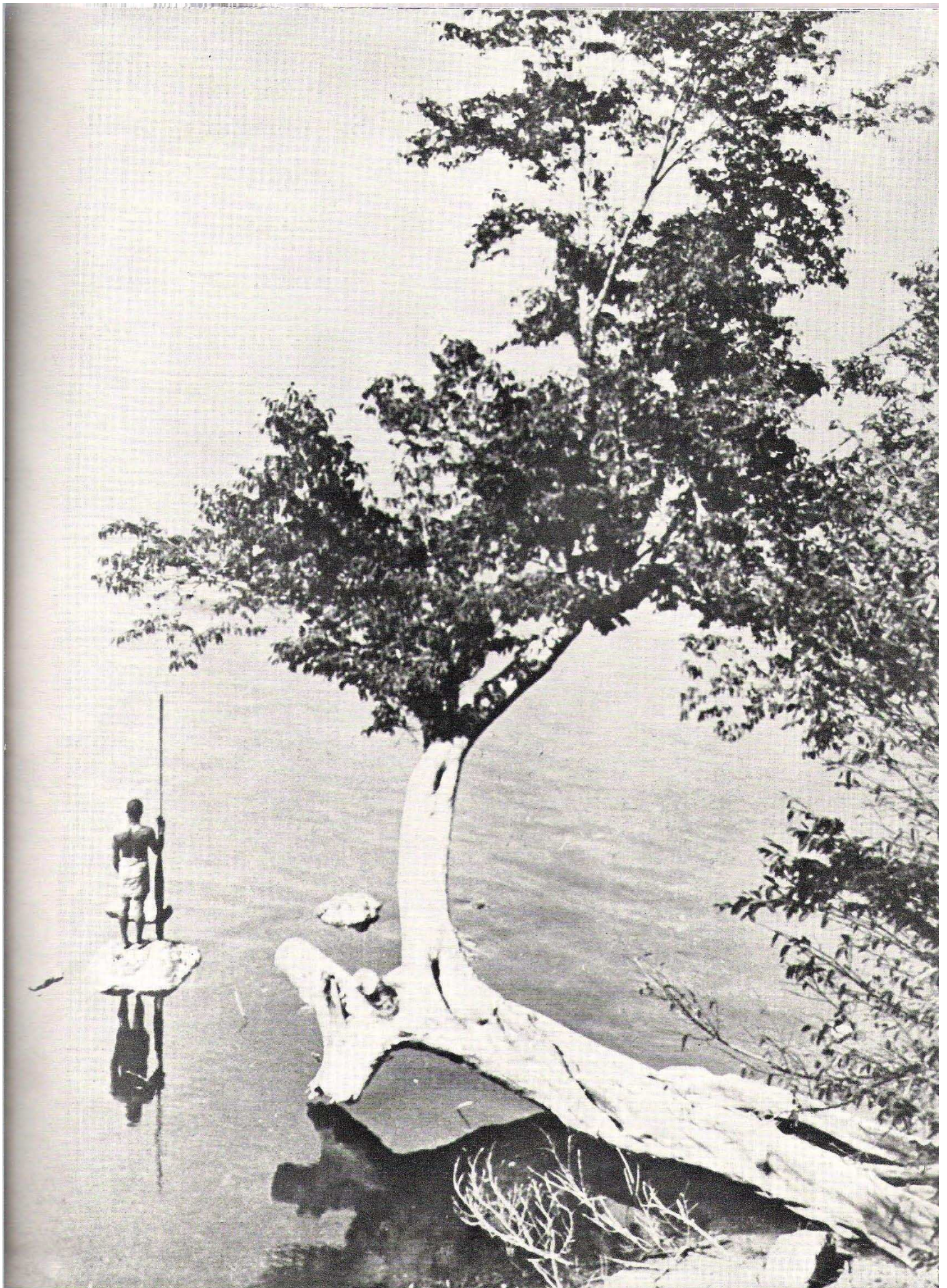
At any rate, the scourges which were destroying the black race have been energetically wiped out. The slave-trade, as mentioned above, gave rise to great bloodshed. It received its death-blow when the Belgian Dhanis inflicted a last defeat on the Arabs at the end of 1893, after a campaign lasting more than a year. With the opening-out of the country, it was possible to put an end to the incessant fighting which had been going on between the tribes. Sanitary measures and the creation of hospitals and infirmaries have stopped the spread of sleeping-sickness. In addition, the bettering of the natives' living conditions, and, in particular, their health, is the constant care of the Belgian authorities. It is more than likely that the population, after the present stagnation due to past causes, will slowly begin to show an increase.

But progress, the creation of industries and the exploitation of the Congo, have not altered the primitive face of Central Africa. The tribes have not lost their picturesque aspect and customs. African nature has kept her mysterious charm and grandeur in spite of towns and industrial centers. She still gives shelter to abundant fauna, and the gorilla, the lion, the famous okapi, not to speak of the elephant and hippopotamus, are magnets to attract the seeker of adventures.

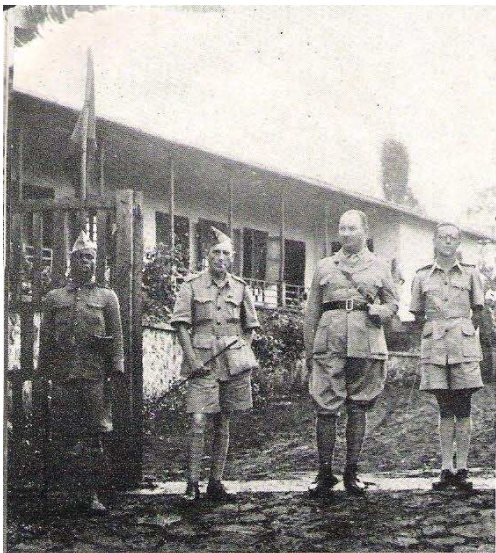
Ruanda-Urundi is also to the east, a territory over which Belgium exerts a mandate, with a population principally consisting of the Watuzi tribe, as remarkable for their great stature and admirable proportions as they are for their intelligence and nobility of manners.

*The mighty Congo River, always an object of admiration and awe to the natives*









General Gilliaert and Colonel Dronckers-Martens at the Italian headquarters of the Saio after the conquest of that stronghold.

Belgium has crossed the entire continent of Africa to take its first revenge on the Axis. In a tropical campaign, in the course of which the Belgians had to surmount heavy tolls of dysentric and pulmonary diseases as well as numerous natural obstacles, and in face of an Italian army superior in numbers, firing power and strategic positions, the Belgian forces seized for the British some of the natural mountain fortresses of Ethiopia.

Thanks to the daring Belgian expedition, England no longer needs to worry about the White Nile's headwaters, the other source of Lower Egypt's indispensable annual supply of fertile topsoil and life-giving water. Congolese troops under the direction of Major-General Auguste Gilliaert, Belgium's solidly built, six-foot general, and commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Leopold Bronckers Martens, have delivered the watershed to Britain. An idea of the magnitude of the forces met by Belgium's hand-made army may be derived from the fact that General Gilliaert's two lieutenant-colonels and three majors, heading three battalions of colonial troops, received overtures of peace from nine Italian generals and 370 ranking officers. To these were added 15,000 Italian and native N. C. O.'s and men.

In every one of the bitter engagement culminating in the siege of Saio, the Belgians were outnumbered three and four to one. For periods of as long as two months, due to the impassable roads and ebb conditions on the tributaries of the White Nile, the Congolese troops were cut off from supplies. Their condition was continuously more precarious than that of their antagonists.

The risks of taking the Congolese defense force upon a trans-African expedition several times as long as any similar caravan ever had attempted, and and through virtually uninhabited country, were closely studied before hand.

# In Ethiopia Nine Italian Generals Surrendered to the Belgian Congo Forces

(Based on George Weller's articles in the "Chicago Daily News.")

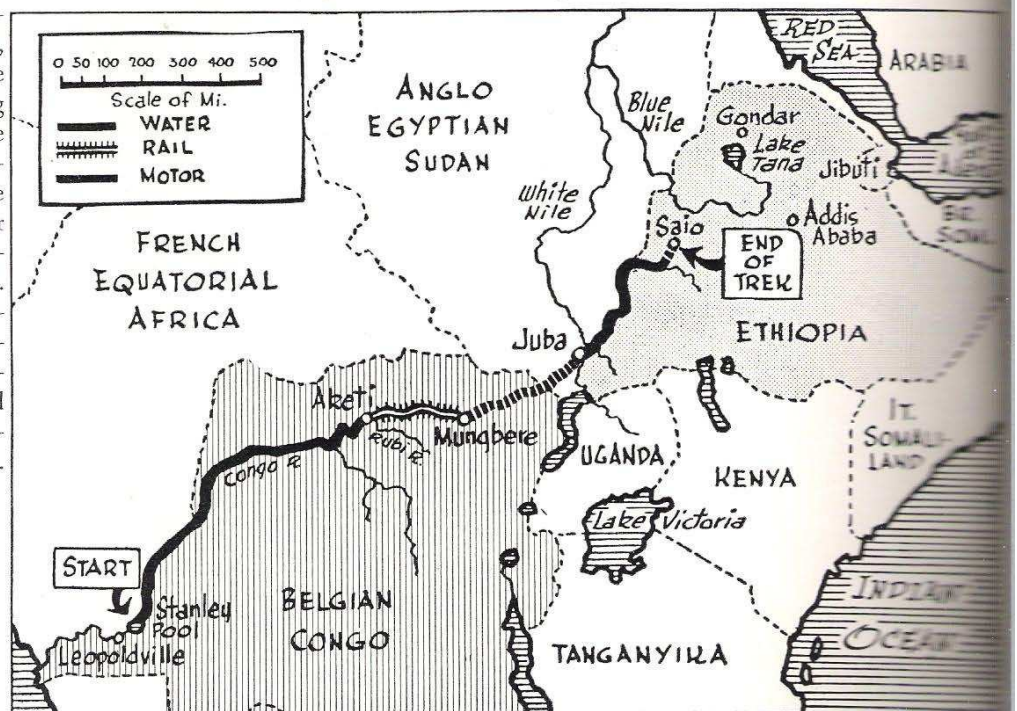
Governor-General Pierre Ryckmans and Lieutenant-General Paul Ermans, commander-in-chief, took part in the discussions with the South African and British military missions in Léopoldville.

Before reaching the Ethiopian rampart held by Italian troops, Belgian Congo had to hold together an armed column of trucks carrying soldiers, porters and munitions 1,400 miles across almost uninhabitable country. The first aim of the attack was Asosa in the region drained by the Blue Nile, about 300 miles north of the Italian headquarters at Saio.

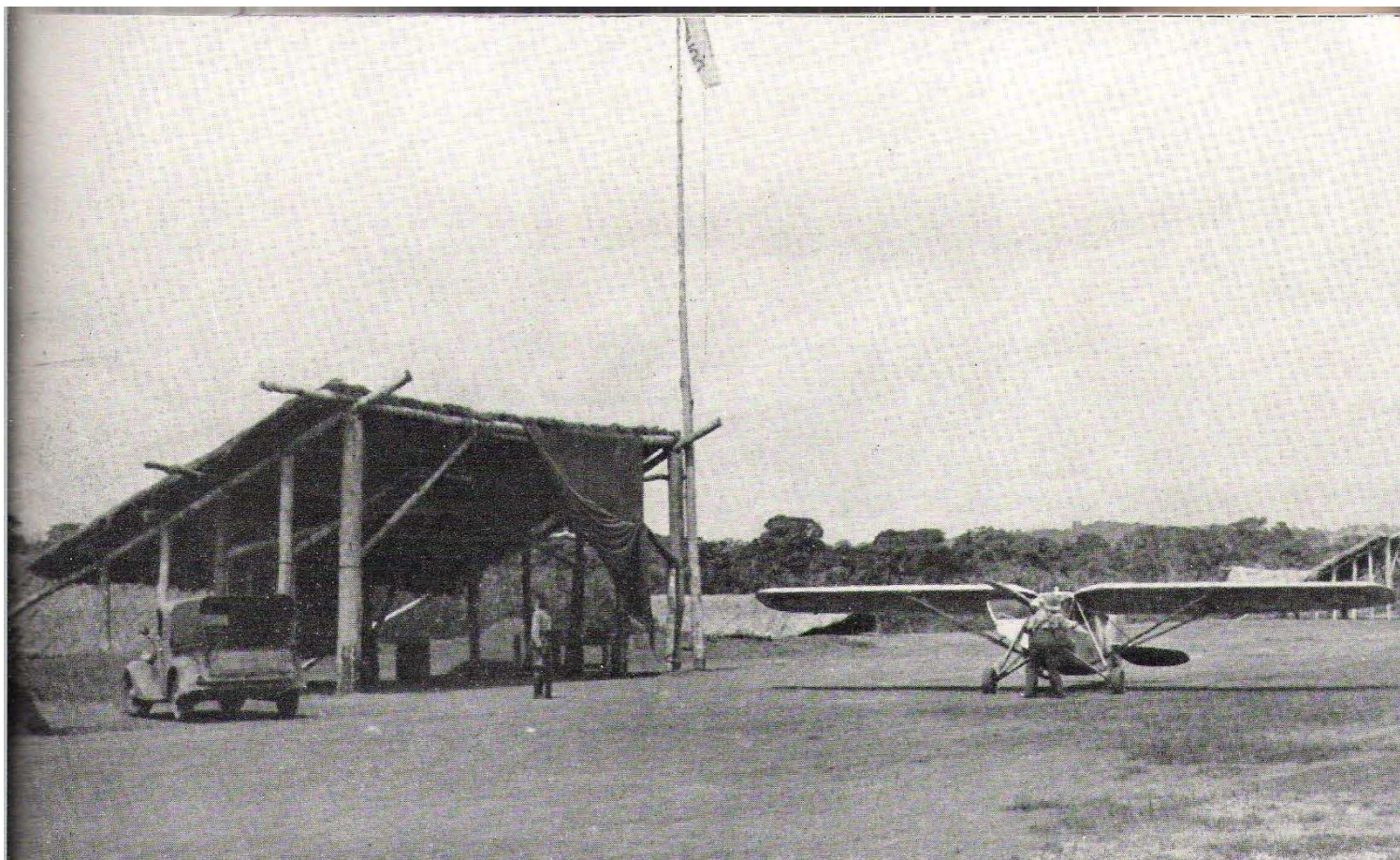
Starting from Watsa, in northeastern Congo, the first battalion to depart climbed slowly out of the Congo watershed, whose crest is marked by the Congo-Sudanese frontier, and descended by way of Yei to Juba, head of navigation of the White Nile. En route, the troops pitched camp in the region where the aging Theodore Roosevelt came before the first World War for his last shooting expedition, where the scarce wild rhinoceros still hides and giraffes and elephants abound.

At Juba, with the burning bowl of the White Nile before them, the column turned northward along the White Nile, then still in the dry season. River boats, with the current favorable, brought them in five days to Malakal where dwell the strange, long-legged Shilluk people, a cattle-keeping tribe of extremely thin physique who wear tan, knee-length tunics. When the clothespole Shilluks

Map of the Ethiopian campaign.







*An Italian military airport in Ethiopia taken by the Belgian Congo forces.*

first saw the sons of Congo, with their sharpened teeth and tattoo-corrugated faces, it was difficult to say which were the more surprised.

### **The attack on Asosa**

At Melut the column turned eastward, pushing their American trucks through two days of blistering, waterless desert to Kurmuk. Major Isidore Herbiet, known to his battalion as Tata—meaning father—prepared for attack upon Asosa. The King's African Rifles, consisting of natives from East Africa, commanded by Colonel William Johnson, were already moving into line at Asosa and awaited Belgian help.

Asosa, also called Bari Cossa, is located in a depression surrounded by hills and possesses barracks, a radio station, a hospital and an airdrome. It required three days for the battalion, with sweating porters carrying machine guns upon their heads, to mount from Kurmuk, Sudanese border town, to positions outside Asosa, which is over 5,000 feet in altitude.

The combined attack of the Congolese troops and the King's African Rifles began on March 11, 1941, just six weeks after the Belgians left the Congo. The Italians were too completely taken by surprise to meet the combined thrust. They abandoned Asosa, pushing southward to join their next garrison along the Ethiopian massif at Ghidami, 120 miles distant.

Asosa finished with virtually no losses except by disease.

The Belgian battalion was given the hard task of doubling back across the Sudanese desert to the Nile port of Melut, a distance of about 225 miles, ascending the river to the point where it meets the Sobat at Malakal, then doubling back eastward again parallel to the Sobat and Baro Rivers, 275 miles to the Ethiopian foothills to close the open mouth of the trap laid for the Italians.

There was the growing danger in this period of the campaign, when the Italians were still strong and well organized, that the withdrawal into western Ethiopia, which in general was orderly, might abruptly turn into a dangerous attack upon British positions in the Sudan. At almost all points the Italians were better armed and more amply provisioned than any allied troops.

Had they been able to repeat the Belgian maneuver in the reverse direction and cross the burning Sudanese plain to the big airdrome beside the Nile at Malakal there was the prospect that the British might have to withdraw troops from the Libyan front, where the Germans were making themselves sharply felt, in order to hold the Sudanese rear positions.

The King's African Rifles who had elected to try to force the Italians southward from Asosa toward Ghidami, along 120 miles of ravines of Italian highland, were in the meantime halted by General Gazzera. It was unmistakable to the Belgians that the Italians were planning, if not to strike at the Sudan immediately, to summon all their energies for a bitter defense of Saio's natural fortress