

Charles Malloy

(Unfortunately when taking photos of two pages this book I omitted to take one of its title and author. I can only say that it was published in the 1920s; the author was putting together a safari for a visit to the Congo in Fort Portal. I can only add that page 101 is headed 'In Kabaka's Country' and page 102 is headed 'Through Central Africa'.)

When we got back to Toro the rest of our lazy porters had arrived from Masindi, and, using our personal pull, again, we secured nearly a hundred men and started on the trail for Irumu. But before we leave Toro let me relate a little incident that thoroughly refutes the theory of a renowned medical gentleman and professor who proclaimed it his belief that the man who passes his fortieth year had better be knocked on the head and consigned to the scrap heap. It is most encouraging to relate it when one has passed that baleful climacteric. There had drifted into our camp, on the second night after our arrival, a sturdy little figure, with grey stubble on a very determined chin. That the Emerald Isle could claim him as a wandering son was evident from the first words he spoke; as he asked if there was not "a jintleman from New York in the party" Charles Malloy was our visitor's name and he had gone to California with the 'forty-niners' to look for gold, and, bless his soul, he was born in the year 1828, and he was still looking for gold on the slopes of Rwenzori! He referred to all men of sixty as 'bhoys', and, ascertaining the date of my birth, proclaimed I was a child in arms.

We cultivated Mr Malloy, in fact made a hobby of him during our stay in Toro. He was a living encyclopaedia of things that had passed away. His memory was absolute, his opinions dogmatic, and his expressions both virile and picturesque. To hear him begin "In 1852 when I was up in Vancouver I had a great experience with Siwash Indians", and then how he crossed the Isthmus of Panama in fifty four, and how in the late sixties and early seventies he built houses in New York was like reading the dusty back numbers of some ancient periodical. He brought the past up to date, and resurrected people dead and gone with a startling quality that seemed to make them alive. He had been in Africa since 1875, "Sure", he said, "they know me from Cape Town to Kilo". And I dare say they did.

When the angular gentleman with the scythe and long grey chin whiskers finds Charlie Malloy, he will find him with a prospector's kit on his back, a hammer in one hand and a rock drill in the other. But we must get out of Toro, and leave him and our good friends the Government representatives to their labours, their golf and good fortunes. There is a long journey ahead.