

Conquered Cannibals With An Umbrella

Tall, handsome, muscular, with granite-hard jaw and steel-blue eyes... That's the sort of mental picture some people conjure up when thinking of those daring men who explored and opened up the Continent of Africa. But did you know that it took a Victorian spinster to face up to this sinister country of savage tribes and teeming animal life—and to like what she saw?

While the men refused to linger, Mary Kingsley faced the constant threat of death at the hands of cannibals. And her only weapon was an umbrella!

Miss Kingsley, the century of whose birth fell last month went to West Africa in 1893 straight from her Kensington home.

She didn't even stop to change her thick black clothes, which consisted of an ankle-length skirt, long-sleeved, high-necked blouse, and a little black mole-skin hat under her chin by wide ribbons.

During her two visits to West Africa, Mary faced so many dangers that her escape from death were little more than a miracle. She penetrated far into the Congo, where no whites had dared go, and mixed with the fiercest Pan tribes—notorious cannibals.

To contact them she posed as a trader, and persuaded some ivory hunters to capture her among the hills up river to the tribes' haunts.

As they neared their destination, they heard blood-curdling wails and saw a native brandishing what they took to be an elephant tusk. When they got nearer, they saw it was a human leg!

Undaunted, Mary entered the cannibal village, and the canoe went on without her. That night a huge hippo ran riot, crashing the native huts in all directions, and wrecking Mary's with the rest.

Worse followed, for the canoe took so long to return that she ran out of trading goods, and remembered that the natives thought of killing empty-handed traders to regain possession of their better ready for next time.

So she was obliged to dispose of her blouse, which looked comical worn by savage warriors alongside red paint and bunches of leopard tails.

Her stockings, too, were popular stock capsize on the heels, and Mary had nothing left but a toothbrush when the canoe appeared, and she was saved.

On the return journey, with no goods to barter, they had to hide by day, and travel silently by night. For any noisier action risked death. To approach a village on foot meant danger from the swarming forest animal life. But there were other hazards.

When she fell fifteen feet into a spiked pit.

Only her thick skirt saved her from serious injury, and she was able to enter the village the pit was protecting.

There she was well received by the chief and, worn out by adventure, she was preparing for sleep when she noticed some legs hanging on her wall.

Taking one down, she peeped inside and, to her horror, saw it contained a hand, toes, and other bits of body.

Later she learned that cannibals like to keep memories of people they eat!

One day Mary disturbed a group of natives wearing extraordinary head-dresses, and, fearing them to be a secret society practicing black magic, she tried to creep away. For no intruder

interrupting such rites ever lives to tell the tale.

The pad of feet behind her told Mary she was being followed, and she was made to return to the group which set off through the forest taking her with them.

Presently all squatted down under some trees, and were rewarded by monkeys dropping down among them to be picked off by native arrows.

Then Mary understood what the exercise was about. Those tribesmen had decked themselves out to attract inquisitive monkeys down from the trees, and thinking Mary the queerest object they had ever seen, they rightly judged her to be excellent monkey bait!

To others her appearance brought terror, as when a magnificent warrior, covered in war paint, with four spears each, saw her approaching the village where they were guarding, they fled in terror to their huts, where they evidently told "mother" what they had seen. For it was a little old woman who came bravely out to parley.

Later, those same warriors proved their courage by defending Mary against a charging gorilla!

One native thought she looked so entertaining that he grabbed her by the arm, intending to use her as a curiosity to amuse his friends. But she soon ended his hopes by sharply rapping his head with her paddle.

Mary treated all ferocious animals with the same consideration. She was so friendly as the hippo she tickled behind the ear with her umbrella, and the hippo failed to make him go away.

She had several alarming brushes with leopards. Once, while staying in a native village, she was awakened by a violent uproar, and arose to interrupt a furious fight between a leopard and a lion.

With two well-aimed stools she broke it up, only to face an enraged leopard poised to spring. Flinging a water-cooler at him, she fetched him such a crack on the head that he was thankful to sink away.

In another village, she was so disturbed by the howls of a captured leopard that she decided to release it. As she pulled up the stakes to which it was bound, the frenzied animal made furious rushes at her, ripping her dress.

Undeterred, Mary continued, expecting it to dash away when free. Instead it crept closer, and she was obliged to spit. Even at this terrible moment Mary's commonsense did not forsake her.

Standing her ground, she shouted angrily: "Go home, you fool!" And the leopard obeyed her!

Instantly a native prostrated himself at her feet—he had watched the incident from the safety of a tree.

At the outbreak of the Boer War, Mary Kingsley volunteered for work at the front, and was drafted to a prisoner-of-war camp at the Cape. There, for two months, she nursed Boer prisoners.

She, who had been strong enough to withstand countless dangers in West Africa, now succumbed to enteric fever and died. She was only thirty-eight.

According to her wish she was buried at sea, the coffin on a gun-carriage escorted to a warship by soldiers. It was a pompous way to bury her, and quite out of keeping for one whose only weapon had been an umbrella.

A Sharp Tongue Says Farewell

Advised that he will be dropped after 1963 as an Oxford University lecturer, A. J. P. Taylor, a self-described "veritable tyrant" whose television appearances and articles have bruised many a political and academic ego, mildly began his valedictory series of lectures saying, "I want to give you my reflections on the nature of history, as this will be my last opportunity to do so." Why had Oxford failed to renew the special lectureship he'd held for ten years? Not the least of reasons was his sharp tongue. Some samples: Describing Sir Winston Churchill, pugnacious old man; on Roman Catholics—"in the service of a foreign power"; on rival Oxford Roger—"his methods of quotation might do harm to his reputation as a serious historian, if he had one." Taylor probably will remain as a Fellow of Magdalen College, if not required to teach full time. But if worse comes to worst, "I think I can manage on making a living elsewhere," he said.

ISSUE 45 — 1962



THAT'S THE RUB — It seems French actress Michelle Mercier prefers the cold nose of a grunting dinosaur to rub noses with It all happened in a moment of joy at the Zoo Museum in Rome, Italy. Anywho, dino seems to like it.

Women's Hair-Do's Get Even crazier

In an ornate ballroom at New York's Hotel Pierre last month, a dapper, precise man made deft passes with a tortoise-shell comb. Clucking a fistful of hairpins, Alexandre, France's famous coiffeur, quickly transformed a model's cowering black hair into a towering construction laced with orange blossoms and yards of tulle. The whole process took only seven minutes.

At the end, the applause from the knowledgeable audience—members of the Pan-American Congress of the International des Coiffeurs de Dames—was long and loud.

During a half-hour display of skydiving new hair styles, Alexandre's girls modeled coiffures that ranged from a number topped by an ungainly loop like the handle of a kitchen pitcher, "Revolution, est mon principe!" cried Alexandre, who was visiting the U.S. as a guest of the coiffeurs' congress.

After the show, Alexandre kicked off his black silk pumps and collapsed on his bed in a hotel room littered with champagne bottles, wigs, and tufts of newly worn hair. The typical American woman, he announced, is too sluggish about changing her hair style. "She goes to her first ball and to her marriage in the same coiffure," he complained.

And the leopard obeyed her! Instantly a native prostrated himself at her feet—he had watched the incident from the safety of a tree.

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Russians Proud And Tighten Belts

Vanya was a bad boy who would not learn his lessons. One day his teacher scolded him, and Vanya ran away to hide. He hid in a Soviet spaceship, and what do you think happened? Whoosh! The rocket took off and there was Vanya inside, unable to control the rocket because he could not read the instrument panel, and pushed button after button. The rocket veered first toward Mars, then toward Venus. Vanya cried, "Finally, as if in a dream, he remembered his teacher drawing the earth symbol on the blackboard. He pushed the right button, returned to earth, and is now the best student in his class."

So runs a current television program for Muscovite moppets, reports Newsweek's Whitman Basow, and, indeed, if you walk down any street in Moscow you find yourself in a curious kind of Sputnikland. Toys and parachee-like games whose prizes are imaginary trips to Mars and Venus. A stationary shop sells gleaming chrome spit-nik paperweights, and picture-nations of all four Russian astronauts.

From a rickety wooden fence that shields some equally rickety shanties, glows a flaming red and orange poster. It shows the Soviet People's Victory Medal. Within hours after Nikita Khrushchev's visit to Moscow, TV exhibited four tulle-haired posies who declaimed their latest verses—on the new space age.

The Space Age has also inspired and provided a cove of sorts for a small group of younger painters who have been working clandestinely in abstract style.

the non-professionals. For all their splendor, however, the new tall coiffures have already antagonized the foreigners who would rather see past them than look at them. Since the opening of the Broadway season, the drama pages of The New York Times have been a platform for such critics. "A gentleman," wrote one theatergoer, "cannot ask a lady to let her hair down in public."

Can't hairdresser design a lady's coiffure (sic) especially for attending the theatre? A lady replied, "I was ready," she wrote testily, "to stand up and shout, 'Off with their heads!'"

But the new high style sometimes has its advantages in the theatre. At the Broadway premiere of a wondrous play called "Step on a Crack," The New York Herald Tribune's critic spotted a woman in the audience "with one of those cotton-candy coiffures." Kerr asked himself, "How does she expect anyone to see?" In his review he admitted: "I took it all back. I wished she was sitting in front of me."

Just before opening in Irving Berlin's new musical, "Mr. President," star Nanette Fabray mentioned that she could barely hear the score without a hearing aid concealed under her chestnut hair. The bouncy, 40-year-old soubrette told of her nearly total deafness since childhood while visiting a class of deaf students at Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C.

"Were in the same boat," she told them, "but remember—you can be anything you want to be." When the story of her handicap reached the press, Miss Fabray laughed it off: "I've never made any secret of the fact that my hearing is handicapped," she said. "I've talked about it for years and I've visited a lot of schools."

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Working now in the open, they are painting what they call "cosmic art." This consists of oblong rectangles, jagged shapes "which do not exist on earth, but only in space and on other planets," a painter explained.

How far the party's cultural watchdogs will permit this trend to go remains to be seen, but as another painter speculates, "Gagarin in the long run may do more for Soviet art than Picasso."

Undoubtedly the greatest impact has been on the younger generation, but a national feeling of pride makes it easier for many Russians to accept the changes they are making to stay ahead in the space race.

As one thoughtful architect said: "Of course, the spatulas haven't affected my personal life directly, nor that of my family. We have been living in this same room for five years. We still share a bath with four other families. My wife still waits on him almost to greet him at the door. But," he added with a quick gesture, "this is not important. What is important is that we have been able to send four men around the earth. And they have come back. This is a great achievement."

"Listen to him talk," snorts his wife, a short energetic woman who works in a lab store. "I can wait, but I-I cannot wait my own apartment, my own kitchen—and my own bathroom. It's important to take care of things on earth—they are bad enough. When everything is arranged here, then we can worry about Venus."

This kind of domestic squabble sums up prevailing attitudes. "Not rashe myaso" (There's our meat!) says a young taxi driver, sarcastically thrusting his hand skyward as he rolls his cab down Horzen Street.

In short, the Russian people know the space race means belittling.

when everybody came for a corn feast, and great platters of ears stood on the table under linen napkins to keep it warm, and buckets were set about the floor for cobs. This much, in Kansas, could be had, they thought, and they gathered up two dozen ears of the wonderful Kansas product and retired to the privacy of their off-beat apartment to enjoy their lost pleasures.

The little wife scrubbed out her scrub pail, for she knew there is but one true way to cook good corn, and she set it on the stove with some Kansas water in it with a small handful of salt added to create the illusion of seaside joy. They heard a gurgling, and stood with butter spreaders poised for the onslaught.

I am positive you know the outcome. I will spare our Kansas readers the exact wording of the letter home. I was to the general effect that sweet corn should not be attempted by people who have no place to do it. That sweet corn in Kansas is a hoax, unless perhaps all you know is Kansas sweet corn. They told her they buttered, and bit in, and baked away. Twenty-four ears of Kansas sweet corn appeared in the next day, two of which had one bite removed.

I can only report that the sweet corn has been very fine this summer. I took a package each of Seneca, Golden Rocket and Mother's Joy, mixed them together, and planted a half acre. The ground was mellow, and just enough on the side hill. It would probably look splendid to a Kansas, and hardy to the work. It did attract the raccoons, and I had Jimmie Griffin come with his red hounds and chase them away. When they came back, Jimmie would come and chase them away again. Although they ate some and spoiled more, we've had a lot of it. I would probably look splendid to a Kansas, and hardy to the work. It did attract the raccoons, and I had Jimmie Griffin come with his red hounds and chase them away. When they came back, Jimmie would come and chase them away again. Although they ate some and spoiled more, we've had a lot of it. I would probably look splendid to a Kansas, and hardy to the work. It did attract the raccoons, and I had Jimmie Griffin come with his red hounds and chase them away. 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