

BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE,
NEW YORK, N. Y.

LORILLARD SPENCER, Pres.
MAURICE M. MINTON, Gen. Mgr.

THE ILLUSTRATED AMERICAN

J. McKIM MINTON, Treas.
ANDREW H. MICKLE, Secy.

NEW YORK, 24th December, 1891.

Prof. Othniel C. Marsh,
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Sir:-

I desire to bring before you a matter of great importance to the scientific world. I beg, therefore, that you will give to this letter your immediate attention and assist me, - in the great undertaking to which I have pledged myself, - with your hearty co-operation and valued advice.

As the Editor of The Illustrated American I made, about one year ago, a very careful study of "In Darkest Africa" for the purpose of reviewing the same in this news-magazine. I became fascinated with the literature of Equatorial Africa and the reports of Explorers. The impression made upon my mind is that Explorers have been path-finders across the Dark Continent and have left the greatest work of all yet to be done. I am convinced that the scientific world is yet to be benefited. What do we know of the fish of the Congo, of the inland lakes, and streams; of the animal and reptile life, of the birds and insects, - in general of the flora and fauna; of the geology and mineralogy of that great expanse; of the dwarfs, pigmies, and races of negroes? What branch of science is not yet to be enriched by intelligent explor-

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ation? It is not for me to say more than this, Sir.

It is my wish that an expedition be sent to the Congo; that it penetrate the dark forest; that it pass into the clear lands of the Undessuma country, that it reach Lake Albert Nyanza and ascend Ruwenzori, the Mountain of the Moon. That it be an expedition in which every branch of science has a worthy and well qualified representative; that it secure specimens.

Whether an expedition can or can not be sent across Africa; how it should be equipped, etc., is immaterial at this moment. I am prepared to prove that it can make the march and furthermore, that as I have interested several rich gentlemen, who will assist me in raising the required money, I believe a great American Scientific Expedition can be fitted out within a few months.

At this stage I desire to procure from leading scientists an expression of their views concerning the value of information which might be obtained, provided, of course, the expedition was successful in its progress over the Dark Continent.

Will you please communicate with me fully as to your views? Will you assist me with your knowledge in your special line of science? Will you point out in what way your special

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branch of science would be benefited if it were ably represented on this expedition?

I ask nothing of you, Sir, but your kind and learned advice, and this I ask in the name of Science. Later, if you will assist me further, I shall be honored with your co-operation.

In order to avoid discussion, in newspapers until the proper time arrives, I have conducted all matters appertaining to this projected expedition quietly and in a business way, paying all expenses out of my own purse, I beg, therefore, that you will not give this matter too much publicity so that at the proper time we may have the support of the daily and scientific press. Should you care to know more of me than as the Editor and General Manager of The Illustrated American I shall be happy to name gentlemen of the highest scientific, financial and social position in this city as references.

Yours truly,

Maurice M. Minton
Editor.