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*Joseph A. Moloney*

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The late nineteenth century saw practically the entire continent of Africa carved up and partitioned between a handful of European colonial powers. British and Belgian companies greedily eyed the mineral riches of the Katanga region of central Africa. In 1891 a group of mercenaries led by a British army officer, William Stairs, marched nearly 1,000 miles, through once-fertile lands devastated by Arab and African slave traders, to confront Msiri, the most powerful ruler in Katanga, and annex his kingdom. This is the story of the Stairs Expedition, related by the group's medical officer, Joseph Moloney. First published in 1893, Moloney's fascinating narrative will transport you to a world of cannibals, missionaries and slave traders; of a provocative military invasion and its bloody climax; and of the mercenaries' nightmarish return march - wracked by starvation and fever - back to the coast of East Africa. Containing a lively and detailed first-hand account of the "scramble for Africa", this book is essential reading for anyone curious about the motivation and processes of European conquest in Africa.