

# YAKUSU

THE VERY HEART OF AFRICA



H. SUTTON SMITH



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“YAKUSU”







MONJI - the greatest *nni* in the district.

*Photo by the Author.*

# “YAKUSU”

THE VERY HEART OF AFRICA.

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Being some account of  
the Protestant Mission  
— at —  
Stanley Falls, Upper Congo.

BY  
H. SUTTON SMITH.

*Baptist Missionary Society.*

MARSHALL BROTHERS, LTD.,

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY LATE  
BELOVED COLLEAGUES,  
MANGWETE (REV. WALTER HY. STAPLETON),  
AND  
BOKANDA (REV. SAMUEL OSBORNE KEMPTON),  
THIS STORY IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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## PREFACE

**N**O attempt is made in the present volume to deal with the work of the Baptist Missionary Society on the whole of the Congo, nor even on the upper reaches of the river beyond Stanley Pool. A complete and detailed account of so extensive a series of operations would not be possible in a work so modest in length as this. It is fully recognised that each station has its own entrancing story to tell, and that, in a sense, each forms a mission within a mission, and could not be dealt with *en masse* except at considerable length. The language barrier and the difference of tribal custom and belief help to cut off station from station, so that each one has become self-contained, and to a large extent independent. Whilst admitting that barriers are being rapidly broken down by the facilities afforded the natives for travel on steamers and railways, facilities which make a *lingua franca* imperative, it will be many years before the existing conditions have so changed the style of native life, and so affected the tribal languages as to demand the adoption of other methods than those the Baptists have been carrying on hitherto and are pledged to carry through to-day.

This story is purely local. It is concerned with a single station of the Baptist Missionary Society. It carries the reader at once to the farthest point of navigation on the middle Congo, to the district immediately west of Stanley Falls. It looks over no walls but directs your attention<sup>ly</sup> to the Lokele world and the Lokele folk. If we lose much in information regarding other places, we shall gain, I hope, in interest by concentration and in thoroughness by limitation. It will soon be found that the Lokele world

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## Preface

is a complex one, not purely Lokele. As one soul cannot be cut off from every other soul in its journey through life, but influences and is influenced by many another way-farer, so we shall find our interest extending to many with whom the Lokele is on friendly terms, and to whom his house is always open.

The peculiar customs and habits of the people who figure here are not referred to in detail, the desire being rather to give a general impression of their life. Such customs as are mentioned are introduced to illustrate the story rather than to satisfy the curious or inform the scientific reader.

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### NOTE.

The author is much indebted to the Rev. J. W. Ewing, M.A., of Peckham, for his very kind help in reading through the proofs of this work, and for suggestions which have made it more perfect; also to the Revs. C. E. Wilson, B.A., and Lawson Forfeitt, and Mr. W. E. Cule, at the Mission House, Furnival Street, for encouragement and valuable suggestions in the earlier stages. He also acknowledges gratefully the inspiration received during a time of physical weakness, when the MS. was in preparation, from the ministry of Rev. M. Lister Gaunt of Sandown, I.W., to all of whom he tenders hearty thanks.

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## INTRODUCTION

IT is to me a peculiar pleasure to write a prefatory note to Mr. Sutton Smith's book on Yakusu, for Yakusu has long had a special place in the affections of my church and myself. Two of its gallant missionary band, S. O. Kempton and C. E. Pugh, have been members of our church, and we count all the staff among our personal friends. Yakusu in the field and Rye Lane at home are as sister churches.

But apart from this personal interest in Yakusu and its workers, I welcome this book as an interesting and pathetic record of missionary struggles and triumphs. I do not know where to look for a more photographic presentation of missionary life than is here given. The "Lokele world" is made to live before us in its nobility and its meanness, its fine impulses and its disheartening limitations. We see its typical characters, we laugh over their oddities, we see ourselves reflected in their human weaknesses. We watch the winning to Christ of individuals—the lad drawn to the missionary's side by the desire of progress, gradually discovering the secret of the missionary's life, and at length becoming a Christian leader among his own people. We feel the terror which darkens a heathen community, we prove the grip of the ancestral customs that hold men in the ways in which a hundred generations walked, and then we watch the triumph of the emancipating Gospel breaking the bonds of fear, and lifting the people into the dawn of God's pure day. It is an intensely real book, stating the first hand facts of missions, but setting them in a light which reveals their inner significance.

## Introduction

The chronicle of Yakusu mission life brings out the all-round value of missionary work. Here are no dreamers ; but men in touch with the practical aspects of our modern civilisation—brickmakers, builders, schoolmasters, doctors, store-keepers—yet all subjected to the grand, central purpose of the missionary, the exhibition of the Cross of Christ as the only hope of sinful men. And it is touching to see how largely the spirit of the Cross enters into the work of the true missionary. The success at Yakusu was not won without cost. We are permitted to see the moment of discouragement, the gathering cloud, the falling tear ; we watch the little band of toilers thinned as one after another falls before the fever, and the line of river-side graves is lengthened. And we realise anew how truly the corn of wheat that falls into the ground, and dies, bears fruit.

This book makes a strong appeal to the Christian heart. By a simple statement of poignant realities, it puts to shame the lethargy that would let things drift, and wakens the spirit that is ready to do and dare all for Christ. As we Christians at home think of such lonely outposts as Yakusu in dark realms of heathenism, can we refrain from an endeavour to render more worthy support to our brothers who are gathering in from the wild the "other sheep," whom also our Lord died to bring ?

J. W. EWING.

## ENVIRONMENT

*"A melancholy gravity, a tragic sadness runs through animistic religion, and all frivolity and enjoyment of life are far from it."*

WARNECK.

THE fringe of the great gloomy forest, of which so vivid a picture is drawn for us by the late H. M. Stanley in "Darkest Africa," extends on the west almost to the B.M.S. Station of Yalamba and the embouchure of the Aruwimi River. From the oppressive solitude and the lurking dangers of its unwholesome depths he and his followers emerged, after weary weeks of travel, with shouts of exuberant joy and thanksgiving. They rejoiced in the face of the fair open country again as they saw it around the Albert Edward Lake. With no beaten track to follow, no mark to guide them, the slow painful progress of five or six miles a day, or less, hewing a rough pathway with axe and knife, was enough to wear down the endurance of the strongest. What verve was needed to overcome the feeling of depression, which the intense gloom and the many misfortunes of the journey all tended to enhance. In spite of every obstacle it was accomplished; but not without perseverance, resource, patience, determination, self-confidence and unflinching courage. He who would achieve anything in Central Africa must set his face like a flint.

Intent on winning the world for Christ, there are some who, boldly shouldering their tools, say, as they enter the dim twilight depths of the forest of heathenism, "A highway shall be there—and it shall be called the way of holiness." But no one reckons with all the difficulties beforehand; it is scarcely possible. To know at the start the many thwarted purposes and baffled designs which

## Environment

the magnitude of the task undertaken invites, would needlessly discourage the worker. Let him make sure that he knows where to draw fresh supplies of courage and strength, that he has that behind him in his training which will make him resourceful and inventive, above all that he has a whole-souled confidence in the weapons he is using, and there will be no fear of his emerging into the sunlight ere long with a band of joyous followers.

The pictures of native life are not inviting to the fresh eyes of the new resident. Senses of vision and of smell are unpleasantly affected. My late colleague, S. O. Kempton, wrote of his earliest impressions as follows : " When you come face to face with African heathenism, with all its accompanying degradation—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—the phrase, 'the romance of missions,' seems an idle mockery. I felt, and I confess it with humility and sorrow, such a loathing and disgust that the thought of patiently working among these people was abhorrent. A few hours later, however, I asked myself : ' Who am I that I should esteem myself better than the Congolese ? By the grace of God I am what I am. My environment was not of my choosing. My Christian home-training, my knowledge of Christ and His gospel are the gifts of a God who has wrought in mercy and love throughout my life. If Christ had not died, would the fact of my being an Englishman avail me more ? ' "

It takes some little time for the missionary to shake down in his environment. As the weeks pass and he begins to grasp the conditions of things, he is impressed with the tragedy far more than with the comedy of life. There is abundant promise in the young and little fulfilment of it. The male adult is, generally speaking, a melancholy man, though happily in the case of the Lokele we are able to modify this statement somewhat ; the female adult at an early age is a wizened, worn-out specimen of her kind, too often over-worked.

## Environment

Some concrete example was doubtless before the mind of the author of the following words :

“ The native child, black but comely, and as chubby as a cupid, looks like a statue of the boy Apollo painted black ; but when he passes middle life he bears the most monstrous traces of care and fear. His face is like corrugated iron, and his wrinkles seem to obliterate the features and to be graven down to the very skull.”

The most casual observer will call to mind scores of typical cases in support of these words, but as a general impression the description needs to be softened down somewhat if it is meant to describe the Central African native. Nevertheless, such words afford us a striking example of the “ arrested development,” which is the condition of the black race. Heathenism is for ever approaching the fresh young life of the people and blighting them with its touch, crushing out the bright aspirations of youth, blasting with its breath the latent possibilities, the inventive genius which we may suppose exist in children the most curious, imitative and observant of any race on earth.

There is no star to guide the pagan. Very literally he is born in the sunlight and nurtured in the open air, a child of nature ; but with no faith to lead him upward toward the Light, to the God who made him, his footsteps follow the beaten track that countless feet have trodden before him into the twilight glades. Having no hope, he wanders on, subject to fears, victimised by deceptions which a child in the open would laugh at. With the most limited aim in life, fettered by custom from realising any ambition he may have begun to cherish, he gets into the groove, and, unquestioningly accepting the limitations of his lot, places the most absolute faith in fetish and charm to get him through his daily harassments.

The native is always a child mentally, though he often becomes a very cunning child as he grows older. His

## Environment

memory is good. He possesses no originality of thought, and hence is lacking in invention, and generally in the power of creative imagination. He has no sense of the beautiful except in so far as it is wedded to utility. The harmony of colours is nothing to him ; his colour vocabulary is very limited. In the ordinary domestic arrangements of life, the entanglements that foster hatred and strife and preclude any possibility of happiness as we understand it, are inconceivable. Add to this that he lives in terror of other peoples' medicine on every journey he takes, and learns to be hyper-sensitive as to what he approaches and what he avoids in any half-hour's jaunt, and some idea can be formed by the faith-freed European of the sombre pall that heathenism casts over its victims.

No wonder there is no growth, no ascent, but a constant withering away and descent into the grave.

How strongly the missionary is tempted to lift the children out of such a soul-deadening environment, to remove them from the forest so dense, and their feet from this undergrowth so tangled, to some open hill where there is hope, or to some glorious plain where there is freedom ! There are many who say that only so can they be permanently influenced, and there is much to support the view. One is tempted to think that the older folk have gone too far in ever to find the way out, and have lost all love for a freer existence ; then bend all your energies to the young and give them the chance of a lifetime, if they want it.

To do this on a large scale would be little short of a revolution, and would, most naturally incite the bitter hostility of the older people. Moreover, the Christian missionary has scarcely authority to ruthlessly break up homes, and destroy what natural affection exists. He must go to work quietly, introducing the leaven of the truth that makes us free, and with unwearied patience winning the confidence of the older folk. Though he may

## Environment

not for long years gain the allegiance of a single adult—they are so slow to change—he will have crowds of young folk round him at their most impressionable age. They are keen to excel, and this fact helps to explain the extraordinary progress made by some of them. At first they are shy of certain work, but time and tact break down these youthful prejudices, and I have found them never hesitate to follow me when I have shown them that I am not ashamed to do what I ask of them.

The older folk are a problem, and our hearts yearn over them. We are all the slaves of habit, and it is not perhaps just to speak of the African in particular as such; but he appears to be so soon irretrievably enslaved. With us it may be more true to say that we are much less the slaves of habit because we can more easily change our mental outlook and bodily environment, whereas the native lives in a very circumscribed world, and soon finds his form of existence mapped out for him inexorably, so that to live any other life he must literally run away and brave the unknown dangers of a new world. This is what every enterprising boy does. He makes the white man his father and becomes a domestic. Many of their mothers have all the horror of the white man that our mothers had of the sea, when they turned the picture to the wall lest the continual sight of it should create the desire to run away and be a sailor. It all means, of course, that they cannot grasp the value of the larger opportunity that is opening up before them. They cling pathetically to their little huts, their fragile pots, their unsteady canoes, their unprofitable mode of fishing, their clumsy money, their unhappy marriages, their insanitary ways, and their endless palavering. Again and again we point out to them changes the value of which appear so obvious. They acquiesce and say it is good, but with none of their number strong enough to brave adverse opinion and take the initiative, no change is made unless

## Environment

coercion takes place in the shape of the visit of a white man and some soldiers.

It is a long way to the back of the black man's mind, and how to get there is the most serious problem the European missionary has to face. Upon just what kind of a world does the black man look out? To really help him I must see the world with his eyes. Looking, then, at truth from his point of view, I may be able to present it acceptably to him.

The superficial observer laughs at his oddities, and condemns him as puerile for his low ideals. But there is nobleness in his race, or we should not find such characters as Samuel Crowther and Khama, who, at a single bound from savagery, present to the world a strength of mind, a loftiness of aim, a purity of life and a devotion to goodness which have won and held the respect of the most enlightened. If there were not hope of the race we should not find the crowned and uncrowned kings of men to-day counting it an honour to confer with and entertain one who is proud of his negro blood.

How can they find release from this state? Is not their very environment largely responsible for their arrested development? It is certainly contributory to it, though not in itself the exciting cause. Their fortune is so soon made that there is little incentive to go on to greater things. Climate and food are adverse to continued prolonged effort. In five years the savage may be a rich man, and he sits down to enjoy the fruit of his toil unless you take him from his environment to one in which his needs are always increasing.

There is a way out of the gloom for the young, and in their thousands they are coming into the light. We scan the eyes of the fathers and mothers we know, whose bright boys bear the impress of their features, to see if there is any sign, any hopeful gleam of awakening understanding that shall lead them into their spiritual inheritance.



“ To see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and the blindness of the world’s heart to that glory ; to see unveiled the beauty that should be, and unveiled, too, the shame that is ; to have a spiritual nature that thrills at the touch of the perfect love and life, and responds to every note of pain borne in upon it from the murmurous trouble of the world—this is to have inward fitness for the high work of the Kingdom.”

AINSWORTH.

## CHAPTER I

### The Lokele World

THE Lokele world is a section of river seventy-five miles long, called by them "liyande," called by us the Congo. It is unusual to find a Lokele who has travelled twenty-five miles inland from the river on the north or south bank, or beyond Stanley Falls on the east or Basoko on the west. We have frequently taken our boys to places in the immediate neighbourhood that they had never visited before. On my first journey to Chopa Falls, Lindi River, I was surprised to find that several of my Lokele boys had never seen them.

In the unrecorded past there was a split in the tribe which accounts for a slight variation in dialect to-day, and for the division of districts. The Yawembe district centring in Isangi at the embouchure of the Lomami tributary, and reaching almost to Yalamba, is the most western. It has some thirteen villages, with a minimum population of 10,000. The Yaokanja district is next in importance, stretching from the Lomami to the Ile Bertha with its sixteen villages and a minimum population of 13,000; and then there is the "liyande likolo" (upper reach of the river) which includes the three parts of Yakusu and the broken village of Yatumbu, in all perhaps 2,500 souls.

Until the white man's road was made, the only means of communication between village and village was by canoe, and the river is still the favoured route of the natives. The Lokele have finely-formed, muscular legs, but they are not good walkers. An English boy could soon tire the most stalwart Lokele on the road.

## Yakusu

Put him in his canoe, however, with his loved paddle, and he will astonish you with his feats of endurance. So the highway for long years has been the river, and will be yet while there are trees to be carved out for canoes.

This little world of riverine villages is a world without a history. Stanley was the first man to write of it, and the first white man the Lokele saw. Now and then we come across an old native who remembers seeing him.

After Mr. Stanley had negotiated the fifty-six miles of broken water, which constitute the Stanley Falls, he had a most trying and difficult passage for 150 miles. Multitudes of the people flocked down to the beach as he passed, and each mile of the journey his party were in constant jeopardy of their lives from the excited savages, who paddled out in their huge canoes to obstruct their passage with menace of spear and arrow. It was a marvel that they escaped. The tribes were undoubtedly numerous, active and hostile. This was in the year 1877.

Six years later Mr. Stanley passed up river again on the journey which resulted in the founding of the Congo Free State, and the assumption of authority over it by King Leopold II. of the Belgians. I give the words of Mr. Stanley descriptive of the condition in which he found this same district after passing the mouth of the Aruwimi: "The next morning we continued our journey. Two hours later we saw a break in the solid wall of forest trees along which we had travelled, and I remembered its position very clearly. On my old map it is marked Mawembi, and was strongly palisaded; but now, though I looked closely through my glass, I could detect no sign of palisade or hut. The clearing was there, it was true, the site of the palisaded village was also there, and, notwithstanding its emptiness, it was recognised. As we advanced we could see poor remnants of banana groves, we could also trace the whitened paths

## The Lokele World

from the water's edge leading up the steep bank, but not a house nor a living thing could be seen. When we came abreast of the locality we perceived that there had been a late fire. The heat had scorched the foliage of the tallest trees, and their silver stems had been browned by it. The banana plants looked meagre, their ragged fronds waved mournfully their tatters as if imploring pity. We slackened the speed to contemplate the scene.

“Six years before we had rushed by this very place without stopping, endeavouring by our haste to thwart the intentions of our foes, since which time the history of this land had been a blank to us. Surely there had been a great change. As we moved up the stream slowly another singular sight attracted our gaze. This was two or three long canoes standing on their ends like split hollow columns, upright on the verge of the bank. What freak was this, and what did the sight signify? Each canoe must have weighed at least a ton. This could not have been done by a herd of chattering savages. As they stand they are a tacit revelation of the effect of energy and cohesion. They are Arabs who have done this.”

Later he came upon the Arab camp and described its gruesome details: “Line upon line of dark nakedness, relieved here and there by the white dresses of their captors. Rows or groups of naked forms, upright, standing or moving about listlessly, naked bodies stretched under the sheds in all positions; naked legs innumerable are seen in the perspective of prostrate sleepers; there are countless naked children, many mere infants. Mostly all are fettered.”

“I walked about,” continues Mr. Stanley, “as in a kind of dream, wherein I saw through the darkness of the night the stealthy forms of the murderers creeping towards the doomed town, its inmates all asleep, and no sounds issuing from the gloom but the drowsy hum of chirping insects or distant frogs, when suddenly flash

## Yakusu

the light of brandished torches, the sleeping town is involved in flames, while volleys of musketry lay low the frightened and astonished people, sending many through a short minute of agony to their soundless sleep. I wished to be alone somewhere where I could reflect upon the doom that has overtaken Bandu, Yomburri, Yangambi, Yaporo, Yakusu, Ukanga, Yangonde, Ituka, Yaryembe, Yaloche, populous Isanghi and probably thirty score of other villages and towns."

The state of things was, happily, not so bad as Mr. Stanley had imagined. The Arabs had not had time to do their worst in that district; and as but a few months elapsed before their power was for ever broken, the natives came out of their hiding-places and rapidly reformed their towns and villages. Had he visited it again ten years later, Mr. Stanley would hardly have recognised it, so populous had it once more become.

The point must remain in doubt as to whether there was ever one chief over all the Lokele. It seems extremely probable that the paramount authority was in the hands of one family perhaps not more than a century and a half ago. As a people they are exceedingly clannish, and in our thirteen years' experience of them we have not known a serious fight between two Lokele villages. Jealousies there are, of course; and these have led to splits. Various forces have been at work breaking up the village chief's authority and alienating his people from him. But this disintegrating process has been going on longer than the presence of the white man in his district. It is the Arab, I think, who is primarily responsible for beginning it. It is certainly true that the corporate life of the tribe has not gained by this waning authority of her chiefs. The villages where the chief's voice is still a power contain young people who are much more amenable to discipline than the average Lokele.

## The Lokele World

There is no other section of the river that has so successfully withstood the effect of the many changes that the advent of the white man has introduced as the Lokele world has done. To-day the tribal influence is almost as strong as ever over seventy-five miles of river. Native industries are maintained almost as they were thirty years ago before the blue flag with its yellow star was seen. Most fortunate of all the wide districts of the Congo basin, it has hitherto escaped the scourge of sleeping sickness, and probably the official census would show little, if any, diminution of the population during the last decade. But there are signs that this will not long remain the case unless very strict measures of segregation are enforced.

The freely-moving, freedom-loving Lokele can have regarded with very little pleasure the assumption of supreme authority by the white man ; but he soon learned that he had no need to fear it as he feared the Arab. He stood in awe, and had the wisdom to make obeisance. That act secured him his continued freedom amid the conditions he loved so well, and he has not known trouble so long as he has paid his taxes in fish or iron (the currency of the district) to the central authority. While not well-off, he has generally found the Government demands not above his means to pay. In any case, whatever taxes he had to pay he knew that he was a hundred times better off than under the Arab.

A Lokele village is self-contained. Each man is a member of a little community called a " bokulu " or square ; there will be from eight to fifteen or more squares in a village. Each " bokulu " has its headman, who maintains order in the square, arranges the work of the members, and settles the disputes, except such as are of more general importance, when the chief's presence is requested, or the matter comes up before a gathering of the general council of headmen that meets from time

## Yakusu

to time with the chief. Perchance the parties are too cantankerous for the chief to manage them, or the matter in dispute is too involved for them to come to a conclusion, and they then seek some outside authority, as that of the nearest white man.

Each square has its name, and when the missionary knows these he can describe exactly the part of the village he wishes to send to. Or if he knows the name of the headman of the square, it answers the same purpose as knowing the name of the street to which you wish to post a letter.

The chief's square is the centre of the village, the "liso lia bokenge"—"the eye of the town," and usually contains the neatest huts, the most cleanly exteriors, and the largest "ngwaka," or council-house. But the ngwaka is oftenest built on the cliff front, and the chief's drum placed on a platform at one end of it. This building is of the simplest construction, being like a long, low shed, with open ends. Purposely built in this fashion, and placed parallel with the river, the deep notes of the drum are carried far over the water in both directions. The range of communication possible with such a drum can be scarcely less than ten miles, for villages at four and five miles distance east and west easily catch and interpret the notes in the dead of night. Its range in the daytime is obviously more restricted owing to the persistent hum of village life.

By it the chief communicates his wishes, calls a town council, or announces a market. With it he vents his wrath in a harmless way on a neighbouring village that has given him cause for offence. Cursing is liberally indulged in at such times, and while it may appear harmless enough, its aftermath of bitterness and open hostility make it a dangerous weapon. It is a wireless telephone which can only be operated by a few. The chief and his near relatives hold this privilege almost exclusively.



*Photo by the Author.*

"BASOKO" of the milk-white battlements. Built in the mouth of the Aruwimi to check the westward advance of the Arabs.



*Photo by the Author.*

A Government Vessel, S.S. "FLANDRE," at the beach, Yakusu Village. To left of the funnel is seen the island that divides the Lindt embouchure. The bend of the river to the right leads to Stanley Falls.

## The Lokele World

Those who can interpret the drum are a much larger number.

Late in the evening, when the meal and the fireside talk are over, and the smouldering sticks have been gathered up and taken into the hut; when the little children are asleep, and the murmur of their elders' voices is dying down, a voice startles the night air. Distinctly every word comes to the ears of the listening villagers, and the drowsy ones rouse themselves, as the chief or one of his headmen imparts some news or tells his wishes in regard to some event of the day. Sometimes the chief will leave his bamboo couch in the very dim light of earliest morning, and, standing in the town, raise his voice to awaken the sleepers and make known to them his intentions for the day. Something of importance is to take place when this happens. I shall never forget lying in my tent one morning in one of the largest Lokele villages and hearing my name again and again repeated by the chief in a long harangue.

There are many drums in a village. Several of the headmen will have one of their own. They almost venerate them, and would as soon think of parting with them as of selling their hut. The village drum would never be put on the market for sale; it is a village institution.

To communicate with the forest villages a smaller drum of a much shriller *timbre* is used. This can, as a rule, be well heard over two or three miles of intervening bush.

In the Lokele institutions there is all the organisation necessary for good government, for the exercise of justice, and for the freedom and happiness of the individual, if the moral integrity of the people could be assumed as even partially existing. That is the weak spot. On the whole, the verdicts of the chief may be said to be impartial when his own interests are not at stake.

The Lokele world has wider boundaries than we may

## Yakusu

have thought from the above descriptions. There are four tribes on its borders, with whom the Lokele live on most intimate terms, encouraged by daily commercial and domestic relations. A description of the interesting peoples who are privileged to be on intermarrying terms with the Lokele must be reserved for another page. Let it suffice here to say that the south bank Lokele villages have frequent intercourse with the very numerous Tovokey, or Foma, people of the bush villages, running parallel with the river, and at only short distances from its banks; the Ba-Olumbu bush people of the north bank are likewise in constant touch with their nearest Lokele neighbours; at Stanley Falls exist 3,000 Ba-Genya folk, who also have been looked upon and chosen by the Lokele as close friends; lastly, and least, the Lindi tribe of Bamanga people have sometimes intermarried, but more often squabbled, with Lokele traders. However, their ingenuity at wood-carving is seen in every Lokele village in the shape of drums, canoes, wood-salvers, spoons, stools, water-scoops, &c. The language of each of these tribes is distinct, but among the two most numerous the Lokele language is well understood.

Into this world of five tribes a semi-nomadic race of people has entered who have scarcely any points in common with any one of their neighbours. Wild and wiry, the Bakumu are great hunters and agriculturists. With the same cool daring they attack the elephant's swaying mass with spears and poisoned arrows, or two pigmy-sized men will look up the towering hundred feet of a giant tree, and with their tiny axes lay it level with the ground in a few hours. Such forest levellers are they that they supply the world with plantain from their extensive plantations. But intercourse with them is purely commercial. The Lokele is shy of their wildness, their medicine, their fierce moods and treacherous ways. Their code of morals is looser than that of any of

## The Lokele World

their neighbours ; their dances more frequently obscene.

Into this Lokele world the Arab came to stay, not as the ruthless destroyer he intended to be, but as a peaceful cultivator and unrivalled trader. The power that changed his purpose is firmly established at Stanley Falls, at Romée, twenty miles down river, at Yanongi, at Isangi, and at Basoko. Every Lokele knows these, and many other places, too, as the towns of Bula Matale.

The Arabs and their miscellaneous following of domestic slaves, gathered from many tribes in past raids, congregate round Romée and the Falls. Rice, tobacco and vegetables are raised in great quantities, while the ever-increasing demand for ducks, fowls, eggs, sheep, and goats is probably better supplied round Stanley Falls than anywhere else between that place and Matadi. A moderate estimate of the number of the Arabs is, I believe, that there are 10,000 at Romée and 3,000 at Stanley Falls.

Protestant missions are represented solely by the Yakusu staff of the Baptist Missionary Society.

The Roman Catholic Church is represented by "La Mission du Sacre Cœur de Jesus" with their headquarters at Ste. Gabrielle, about three miles west of the Falls, and more recently at the Falls itself. At the latter place a large cathedral has been built and recently dedicated. This mission has several outposts throughout the district. Under the devoted and able direction of Msgr. G. Grisson it has made remarkable progress. Amongst the Lokele the Catholics have never gained much ground, but at the Falls, and amongst the Bakumu tribe their efforts have apparently been more successful. I cannot say whether they have gained any Mohammedan converts.

The Congo Free State Government has been fortunate on the whole in the choice of its officers who have held high authority at the Falls. In consequence the district has suffered much less from the Belgian *regime* imposed upon the Congolese than other places in the vast water-shed.

## CHAPTER II

### On Adult Life

#### The Man and his Ways

*"We moderns of the West place our reliance upon institutions; we go forward upon ideas. In the East it is personal influence that tells, persons, who are expected, followed and fought for. The history of the West is the history of the advance of thought, of the rise and decay of institutions, to which the greatest individuals are more or less subordinate. The history of the East is the annals of personalities: justice and energy in a ruler, not political principles, are what impress the Oriental imagination."*

G. A. SMITH.

THE Lokele man stands up to you and does not cringe. He is below the average height, thick set, with large limbs, well developed muscles, a bullet head, and square, massive jaws. His forehead, eyebrows, bridge of nose, and chin are freely scored with the Lokele pattern of tribal marking. His shoulders, arms, and abdomen have also a few cuts. His upper incisor teeth are invariably filed to a point, his body smeared with a mixture of charcoal and palm oil, or else, and more frequently, with the choicer ointment of palm oil and camwood powder. He wears a cheap white twill towel suspended from a handsome belt of okapi or antelope skin. This loin cloth is his sole covering. Sometimes, however, he will wear two or three yards of blue drill or unbleached calico suspended from the belt and hanging in folds, tucked through the legs and attached to the belt again at the back. In the case of one of princely descent, the costume will include a necklace of beads and leopards' teeth, some brass or iron coils as a wristlet, and a strap of antelope skin round the shoulder supporting a knife-sheath

## On Adult Life

under the arm, from which the heavy-worked iron handle can be seen protruding. A Lokele warrior's look is sometimes supercilious, but his glance is generally not unkindly.

When dressed as I have described him, he struts about conscious that he is an ornament to the village and the cynosure of many admiring eyes. The spear in his hand is the equivalent of a sword, which is the pride of a soldier. To a sporting character at home he would probably appear less worthy of notice than a well-groomed horse.

You may well look surprised when you are told that the Lokele people are vain. In a dozen ways you will see it exemplified every time you walk through a village. On what strange fare does vanity feed! It was one of the first things that struck me. Before I had been at Yakusu three weeks I wrote: "One young dandy comes in nearly every morning to look at himself in the glass. At first he will pretend to be most unconcerned, but when I am not looking he casts furtive glances at the mirror hanging up on the other side of the room, and will turn from side to side to get the best view. He generally has a fine lot of beads hanging round his neck. It is rumoured that he is in search of a wife, but that his banking account is not sufficiently good. Alas! for him in this country, good looks, a well-proportioned figure, and fine ornaments count for little if the one thing needful is lacking."

But there is character behind his crudities, and as for his love of ostentatious display, well, it has its parallel in places nearer home and better known to us.

There is a certain easy confidence in his bearing which denotes courage. He has that quality which is best described as "cheek," and seldom admits of a respectful demeanour. This is most likely the outcome of long years of conscious superiority over neighbouring tribes, and helps to account for his sometime supercilious glance. While he is obstinately tenacious in regard to the habits he loves, he is quick to acknowledge himself beaten. He

## Yakusu

will try by bluff to retain the power he knows he must yield, but soon gives ground when hard pressed.

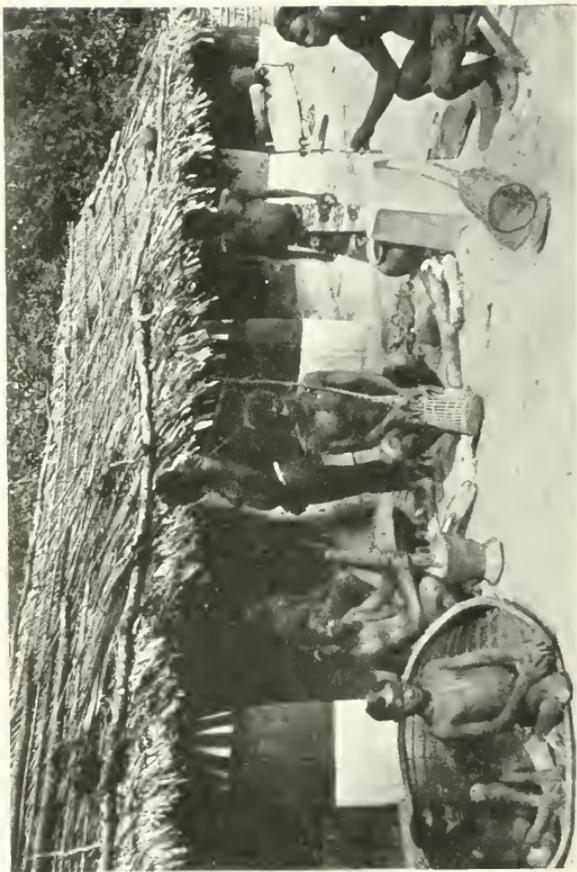
He is easy-going, and makes a good companion. He is quick to make an acquaintance with an eye to business, and as a rule is slow to hate. The young Lokele man is impetuous, generous if there is any hope of reward, fickle and gay, with a tendency to that instability of character which too often precludes the possibility of excelling. He can do well what he wants to do, but makes a poor workman for the white man. I am speaking now of the young adult. Some are beginning to break away from their allotted life-task in the village, and, having chosen their work and their master, are giving better results than we imagined them capable of at first.

He has a fluent tongue, and is usually in command of a fine vocabulary. The experiences of the village offer him more incentive to think than we should at first surmise from the primitive manner of his life. He has an active and fertile mind, Eastern in its proclivities though not Eastern in its subtleties. Thought in the abstract is not easy to him. He loves the concrete, the practical. Æsthetically he is dead, materially he is very much alive. The same word suffices to describe the gorgeously hued butterfly and the loathly, dun-coloured cockroach. A flower has no name, for it has no use.

In marriage he rarely loves passionately. He sometimes makes a good husband, and generally a kind, over-indulgent father. Parents make no attempt to properly discipline their children; they do not punish them for breaking things, however chagrined they may be and disappointed at the loss of something they treasured. A chief once brought me some glazed vases that he had bought some seventy miles away, and taken great care of through many days of journeying. He was carrying his five-year-old son, and while he was talking to me his boy picked up one of the vases and dropped it. The



*Photo by Rev. C. E. Pugh.*  
A LOKELE YOUTH. as you may see him any day.



*Photo by H. Stutton-Smith.*

"THE LOKELE AT HOME." Open-air kitchen. Fish-baskets. Fish-traps.

## On Adult Life

father made some remark, but did not in the least chide his son for meddling. It is all of a piece with their treatment of their children, and the strain of waywardness in the character of the young folk may doubtless be correctly attributed to this lack of the restraining hand in childhood.

This *négligé* manner of life does not lead specially to licence in the matter of morals. Lust is in the heart, and is little affected by dress or the lack of it. As a rule the laws of the tribe are strictly obeyed.

The Lokele hold their women in some degree of honour, comparing more than favourably with that of many of the tribes we have to do with on the Congo. While there are invariably some who kick over the traces, the standard of the tribe is high. Any lapse from this standard creates a furor. How far this indignation has its source in virtue it is difficult to judge. The financial side of the question is frankly discussed in the chapter on Lokele marriages.

The Lokele man is not lazy as we understand laziness. He does as much as he need do and no more. With no clocks to worry him, he takes his time, and with no competition to strive against he sees no need to hurry or to excel. If the household retired in good time to rest he rises before the dawn. Living near the Equator, and having a day of almost exactly twelve hours all the year round, he makes full use of the hours of sunlight, and has no need of a "daylight saving Bill." Between eight and nine he seeks his couch and leaves it about 5 a.m. Making or mending nets, for which every yard of string has been laboriously prepared from banana fibre; constructing fish-traps; building a hut with upright poles and long shutters made of bamboos and leaves securely tied together; cutting poles or scraping cane string; sitting with others at a village council listening for hours to the long rigmarole of defendant and plaintiff; evolving some scheme for the benefit of the community—with one

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or more of these occupations the hours pass, and the time of the evening meal draws nigh. Often till nearly midday he has nothing to break his fast. The principal meal is at 7 p.m., when he eats to repletion. He has trained himself to fast for long hours. The regular three meals a day of the white man, with tea thrown in, are an astonishment to him. I have often fancied him saying "What! eating again?" as he passes the house and sees us at table.

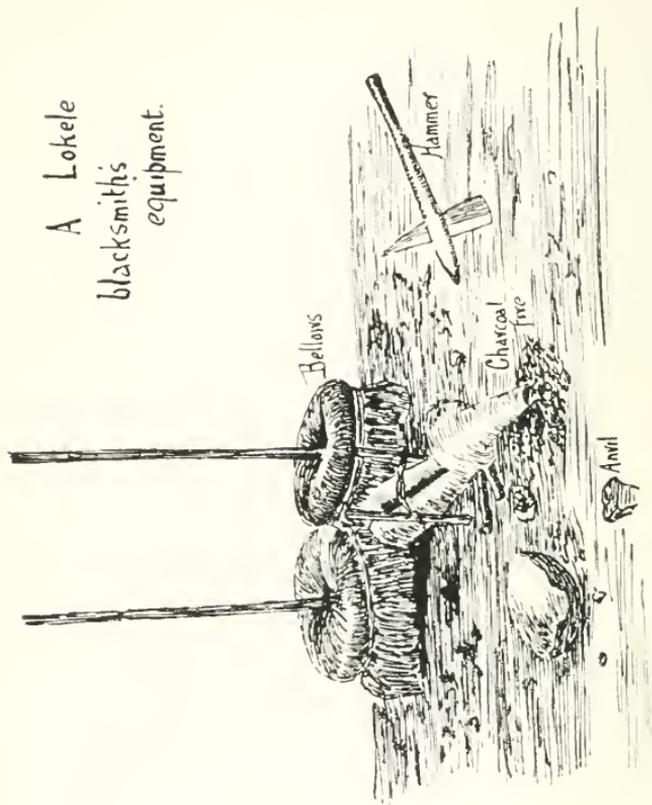
The Lokele are not devoid of humour. When a man, being greatly provoked, is very anxious to fight, his friends come round him and gently persuade him to calm his temper; they "limbese inde bokongo" (make his back weak) assuaging his anger by bringing a leopard's skin cap and belt and putting them on him, patting him the while and saying, "Now you can sit quiet." Presumably it ill becomes the dignity of a chief to fash himself about little things, therefore the insignia of chieftainship should help him to act in a dignified way.

Away from the village sometimes for days and weeks together he leads a scarcely less busy life. Two interests prompt him to make frequent journeys, that of trading and that of fishing. Floats of cotton wood, and weights of burnt clay pierced so that the string of the net can pass through them, are thrown into the canoe; pots and stools, pestle and mortar for pounding the plantain and bread-root, a pot of palm-oil, the smoke-begrimed box for curing the fish caught, punting-pole and paddles, fish-net, and fish-basket complete the outfit. Over all a "losambo," or roof, is placed, held in position by its own weight. In such a gipsy caravan, twenty or more feet long, and seldom more than two feet wide, a man and his wife, with perhaps two or three children, will live for best part of a month. They like it.

Fixing their nets by floats in deep water, but more often standing for hours up to their waists or armpits



A Lokele  
blacksmith's  
equipment.



From a sketch made by the Author.

## On Adult Life

in water, damming up the mouth of some creek, the men pursue their hazardous but unprofitable, because unskillfully followed, calling. The river teems with fish, and would yield far more plentifully were the native methods less clumsy and they themselves less conservative in practice of them. An intelligent use of the line and hook, combined with their present methods, ought to give excellent results. The market price of fish is exorbitant. Yet high as the price is some of the larger varieties are such a delicacy that we gladly pay it to vary the monotony of the ubiquitous Congo chicken, which never has time to grow fat. We have the satisfaction of knowing that we never pay above the market rate.

Salt-burning and canoe-making are the two chief industries in the Yawembe district. I saw many canoes being chiselled out. It is, of course, a laborious process. Watch two natives at work for an hour and the chips that fly will astonish you. They will have passed down the canoe, forty feet long, on either side from end to end, in that time, completely altering its appearance.

Salt-making is a lucrative business with the Yawembe folk. Among the reeds on the low-lying islands at certain seasons you will find scores of canoes. A couple of women have a canoe, laden with the roots of these reeds, which they have gathered during hours of labour up to their armpits in water. In the town when you arrive, you will find from a dozen to a score of heaps burning. It is a lengthy process and the result is a hard, dark-coloured cake of very unpalatable potash salt. But it is greatly in demand and fetches a high price. Owing to this we can do a great deal with rocksalt from Europe, in the way of purchasing things, as the natives much prefer it to their own poor stuff.

In some Lokele towns blacksmithing is the chief industry. There are scarcely less than two dozen forges in the large village of Yangambi.

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If the Lokele is ever scrupulous as to his conduct it is not when he is trading. Every commodity in general use has its market value ; but let him get beyond the pale of the market-known price and he will demand anything. If he thinks you are ignorant of the market price, it is the same thing. His patience in carrying through a transaction is remarkable. The white man's impatience at the seemingly needless prolongation of a small negotiation may possibly suggest to him an intent to deceive. He loves a bargain as he loves his life, and he counts no time wasted that will gain it.

With no book to note down his gains and losses, a Lokele is nevertheless a good financier. There are three grades of money : the small shoka (iron), the long " ngbele " (iron), and the living woman. Brass and copper ornaments are also valuables, but iron holds the chief place of value amongst his inanimate possessions. It is more correct to speak of women as " possessions " than as money, for though there seems to be no rule against their being transferred, we cannot say that it is a regular practice of the Lokele.

His bank is in the bush, and many a tree bears silent witness to the hidden treasure at its roots. A man sometimes dies and forgets to divulge where his pile is hid. I remember once a whole village coming to me frantic with disappointment because they did not know where to look for the deceased man's treasure. They wanted me to find it for them. Surely my strong medicine would avail.

The Lokele is not fond of lending. Quick to accept a loan, and ever ready to acknowledge having eaten it, he will not admit his obligation to pay it back until extreme measures have been resorted to. It is no libel to say they are mean and stingy. Unpaid debts are a source with them of never-ending strife. In common with most of his race, he demands a very heavy percentage





*Photo by the Author.*

A LOKELE CHIEF.

Imperturbable, stalwart, implacable in resentment of violation of customs his fathers loved.

## On Adult Life

on any money lent. The Official Report for Uganda 1909 states that the Government Savings Bank had not been patronised so much as was expected by the natives because they wanted 100% interest, thinking they were lending money to the Government. The Report adds that they frequently ask from one another as much as 1,200% for a loan.

To die with a hoard of money is never the ambition of a Lokele. The power and influence which wealth makes possible is rather his goal. Translated into the language of the tribe, this means first of all, wives and children, and then such possessions as will enable him to maintain a more or less princely display of his power. Apart from his canoes, the whole lot of ornaments, domestic utensils, spears, knives, necklaces, leopard-skin cap, &c., of the wealthiest Lokele chief would be covered by a £20 note. None are so well off as to be exempt from work. There are no idle rich, and there are no hungry poor. A poor man remains poor to the end of the chapter. Individual effort with its incentive in individual ambition to rise is severely censured. Woe betide the man who goes out of the beaten track to make money by means other than the usual. A chief may start a plantation to supply the many demands made upon his hospitality, but the average man would bring down upon himself persecution of a very distressing kind by such action.

The adult has few pleasures, and what he has he takes seriously. He indulges in drink sometimes more than is good for him. Of ardent spirits he has none, and he has to swill a lot of banana wine or palm-wine before it takes much effect. You occasionally find a native stupidly drunk, but never jolly drunk or angrily drunk. Except at times of high festival, drunkenness is rare. He is only a moderate tobacco smoker, for he does not sit and puff alone for hours; one pipeful will meet the immediate

## Yakusu

needs of a dozen, and is passed round from mouth to mouth. Hemp-smoking he has certainly of late years taken to as a pleasant habit, and it is unfortunately rapidly degenerating into a vice.

A wrestling match is to the Lokele what a football match is to the Lancashire man. A canoe race comes never amiss. The village dances are a great institution, some of them quite innocent ; but in others, working themselves up into a frenzy, they give themselves over to practices which, in their calmer moments, they frankly condemn.

It is saying much for the ex-cannibal Lokele that a missionary's wife could sleep in her tent in the midst of a strange village without fear of molestation, and that through all the years we have known them our lives have seldom been in danger. Harry White's words, " We have come amongst a people of gentler manners," have been abundantly confirmed.

### The Woman and her Work

She invariably begins her married life at a disadvantage. For fully three years she has been petted, pampered and spoiled. When at length the die is cast, and a husband is found for her, often the one she does not want, her serious life begins, and it soon proves no easy one.

She may be one of several, and if she wins the highest place in her lord's affections, her existence will continue to be a favoured one and her tasks light. But jealous eyes are surely cast upon her, and she has no happy time amongst the others. For a while she will hold her own with a *sang froid* which disarms the envious, and, confident in her charms, will hold her compeers at arm's length. Too soon, however, her strong spirit is broken, and she sinks to the level of the other wives.

Much happier is she whose lord is too poor to have



*Photo by Rev. K. Smith.*

LOKELE CURRENCY.

A "shondu" (axe-head), value 5d.  
A "nebele" .. .. 10 6



*Photo by the Author.*

A Yakusu woman busy with her razor, earning the "barber's shoka."

## On Adult Life

more than one hearth. Though she begins at once a strenuous career and performs daily prodigies of strength in fulfilling her duties, there is peace at home, and she will not lack a friend when she needs one. A little tact and display of energy on her part suffices to make ample provision for the simple wants of the household.

To the outward eye there is nothing lovely about Lokele womanhood. A refined taste is offended again and again. The white lady asks herself with increasing perplexity, what ground that is common between them can she find on which to approach her. This is the teasing problem that every missionary, both male and female, has to solve. There is a sympathy that is not born in one, it has to grow, and very certainly the habit of heart and mind which appreciates the native, wins his confidence and retains his friendship, is a delicate and difficult acquirement.

To look at the Lokele woman in her surroundings is at once to find out that there are neat and slovenly women. This applies to habits and not to dress. The woman we shall look at cares to be tidy, and to live up to her standard of cleanliness. Her hut is of two rooms, well swept and tidied by an early hour of the day. Her kitchen is in front of the hut outside, and the range is of the simplest construction. A mound of clay, studded with pebbles and hardened by the fire, holds the heat quite as well as a brick. Against this the pot is rested on two or three burning sticks. If you look in the pot you will find perhaps a score of pared plantain boiling in a little water ; often also it contains some pared white bread root, cut into pieces of a suitable size. When softened by the boiling process these are taken out with the fingers and placed in a wooden mortar. Then with ivory or wooden pestle the bread root and plantain are pounded together and made into a bolus about six ounces in weight. If we form one of the interested hungry party

## Yakusu

we should certainly not have looked in the pot, but we will hope that another pot contains some greenstuff, and, best of all, the bread root tops called "bombolo." When sufficiently boiled these are pounded up in the mortar and served with a little palm-oil sauce. The green water is not thrown away, but drunk. Some fresh boiled fish, or more often some dry smoked fish, grace the meal at different times. Then, spreading two or three clean broad plantain leaves, the men gather round and their humble servitor retires to a distance usually out of sight. Sitting on their stools or squatting on their haunches, they take a plantain bread root bolus and, tearing at it with their fingers, dip it in the palm-oil sauce, and cram large pieces into the mouth. The spinach provided is quite a delicacy, and to moisten the whole some green-water is scooped up from the pot near at hand.

The woman has no great difficulty in meeting the tastes of those whose meal she prepares. Occasionally meat is obtained on the market. If bought uncooked or uncured it is generally high, but that makes little difference. Some land snails are eaten and some kinds of ants; the caterpillar delicacy gives its name to a season, near to July each year. For two or three weeks countless scores are caught and put to roast over the fire. With a little palm-oil sauce they are eaten with great relish. The kernel of the palm-nut laboriously extracted from the hard bean, various kinds of seeds, and numerous fruits of the forest in season help to vary the menu.

The Lokele will not touch an owl nor a snake, nor would he be prevailed upon to eat a lizard, however edible some tribes consider certain species to be. They never think of milking a goat, nor could a Lokele woman ever be prevailed upon to drink milk under any conditions. Any form of invalid diet is unknown to them; when ill they starve, and languidly hope for a day of better things. Their usual food, which they sometimes try to take, being



*Photo by the Author.*

"I cannot tell whence comes the art  
That guides my roughened fingers well;  
Quickly to work, dextrally to shape  
And fashion the clay as my needs dictate."



## On Adult Life

difficult of assimilation in the weakened condition, makes them rather worse than better.

As the Lokele man must make his string from the fibrous material of the forest, so the woman must make her pots in which she cooks her food. It is hard to find a Lokele woman who is not deft at pottery. Such simple utensils as they make have a ready sale on the market, being always needed, for they are very brittle, and do not last long. Four large pots can be purchased at a penny apiece.

Some morning an hour or two before noon, you will hear the lilt of a song by many voices in a high-pitched key, wafted across the water. It is a long canoeful of women who, sitting down along the gunwales on either side, ply their short paddles with quick movement, the while joking with one another or raising their voices in this catching song. It at least strikes the ear pleasantly from a distance, but to write it down would not be easy. The key in which it is sung is somehow unfamiliar, and the European finds it difficult to catch it in the effort of repetition.

The Lokele woman makes a good mother. With religious regularity the little one is carried to the beach and, in spite of much crying and vain struggling, is douched and carefully rubbed down with the palm of the wet hand. No attempt is made to dry the skin. The little one is lifted to the hip again and carried up the cliff, its skin glistening in the light of the morning sun, or if it be dull and cold, the goose-flesh shows the child to be rather miserable after the bath.

Girl children are much desired, but all Lokele children are, as a rule, well-cared for, and are some of the happiest little mortals it is possible to imagine. The women are not ambitious to have a large family. It is a rare thing to find a mother of seven, and scarcely less rare a mother of five; three is the usual number. A mother does not wean her child for two and a half or three years.

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Whatever strength of character the Lokele possesses has its origin in the woman. Countless incidents witnessed occur to remind us that she can hold her own. Patient to endure suffering, she is fierce to resent an injury. Unlike the members of her sex in other tribes, she holds her head high, and is the equal, not the slave, of her husband. This position of women has saved the tribe in the past from moral turpitude. She is cheerful, loquacious, a splendid worker, and of a most determined will. When quarrelling she would present a ludicrous appearance if she were not an object for pity. I should think the worst Billingsgate mild beside the forceful expletives and voluble torrent of language she utters, as, standing with arms akimbo, she launches her vocal venom at another woman a little distance off, who, hardly able to contain herself, watches her chance to make return. It is unholy anger, but it seems to end in smoke. They presently return to their respective fires and duties, trailing mutterings which gradually die out. The woman is little given to the malice which takes thought and secretly prepares its revenge. Her anger while it lasts is almost apoplectic, but it at least has the virtue of being short-lived.

As I have said, she is a prodigious worker, and in many ways a skilful one too. For the purpose of pot-making a couple of journeys must be made by canoe to the spot where the white clay is to be found. The lumps are dumped down outside the hut to weather for weeks. One day she begins to pound it in the broken nose of a canoe, adding sand as she labours it to the right consistency. Then taking the broken fragment of an old pot, she begins deftly to add piece to piece of the new substance, turning it swiftly with her fingers while she shapes it, and pats it with a piece of thin flat wood or bamboo. It is wonderful how soon it takes shape and becomes an object of beauty under her skilful management. You





*Photo by the Author.*

A CORNER OF A LOKELE MARKET, YEFELOMA.

## On Adult Life

watch her as she fashions the top into an almost perfect circle, and rapidly makes a tooth edging with a flat bean that has been similarly edged. Some simple marking round the neck and it rests to dry in the sun a thing complete, beautiful. Thirty to fifty pots will be made before the burning. In the process of burning it is taken from the fire while red hot and daubed with an acid solution, which on the hot clay quickly turns it black. This closes the pores and makes it watertight.

She is the barber of the village, and with her thin, bright, sharp-topped razor will shave any man's head as clean as a ball for a small consideration. She possesses no soap; the razor is whetted on the skin of her left palm, which is slightly moistened. Any pattern desired she will cheerfully execute. She will weave the combed wool into strange designs, or bank it up with wood filings and camwood powder, held together with a pomade made of powdered charcoal and palm-oil, into fantastic shapes.

Her services are also required with her sharp little instrument whenever the facial markings need recutting, or any of the various cuts on the body are to be made. If a man has a pain in any of his limbs it is to a woman he goes, that she may let it out by the flow of blood from a number of incisions.

She is the professional wailer; and then indeed is an object of disgust, as well as of pity. Round the corpse a group of twenty or more women will be seated, blood streaming from their cheeks mingling with some black substance which they rub on. For hours they wail in chorus, or in groups by turn. No more monotonous, more lugubrious sound, can be heard in a Lokele village than this wailing for the dead. It is a severe strain on them, for they do not eat till after the burial.

She is an all-round woman, having many faults and some virtues. Her pleasures are few, and can hardly be dissociated from her work. When the married women

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engage in dances it would seem to be more of compulsion than voluntarily. They make such a business of it that the sweat pours off them, and they generally end up with laryngitis. The married woman has no games, but life has its compensations for her, and she gets a good deal of satisfaction from the simple pleasures that the village life brings her : free and easy intercourse with her kind ; the excitement of the market with its competition and excellent chances of a bargain ; the lazy enjoyment of the canoe journeys, or the exhilarating effect that vigorous exercise with the paddle affords. She gets her full share of pleasure also from a village marriage, and perhaps regards a funeral in the same light, unless it comes too near home.

She is seen at her best in the care of her family.

### A Chief

Who cares for a Lokele chief ? His troubles are unknown to us ; his customs and manner of life are locked up with the many mysteries attending the daily existence of these dark-skinned children of Ethiopia. As for his aspirations, we ask incredulously " Has he any ? "

Fifteen years ago Saidi was a young chief of a prosperous village. Keenly observant, as are all these people, he watched the changes attendant upon the white man's coming. At the request of the white man, with whom he was on friendly terms, he moved his village up quite close to the Falls that he might both obtain protection and more readily afford help in the turbulent times through which they were passing. The Arab was still a terror in the land.

With the ardour of youth he quickly formed a resolution to move with the times, and began to wear more clothing. European cloth was precious in those days, and Saidi added greatly to his prestige in donning it.

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He also built a better house for himself, higher, more commodious and befitting the residence of a chief.

But Saidi had an enemy. In the gate of the ruling white man sat a native who whispered suspicions as to the loyalty of this young Lokele chief. So one day an emissary arrived and Saidi was ordered to pull his house down, to doff his fine clothes, and to assume no greatness which was not warranted by his position. It was a shame. It threw Saidi back years in the march of progress. His loyalty being suspected made him suspicious in his turn, and he has found it hard indeed to trust the goodwill of a Government which permitted such treatment.

He is a fine figure of a man as he stands before you. In many ways one of God's fine creatures. He has his points marking good breeding just as white folk have. Notice the long, tapering fingers, the delicate inflection of the voice when speaking, and the respectful attitude he adopts towards his superiors.

But I have to call him crafty. He has a turn for diplomacy which all the better class natives inherit. He is deep and crooked in his dealings, and to his discomfort he is finding that those who deal crookedly get worse and worse into entanglement. Unhappily, too, for Saidi, he exercises authority over a people who are cantankerous, heady, high-minded, fickle, gay and obstinate to a degree threatening the possibility of order and discipline. So his troubles tend to increase. Within the precincts of his village there are many disturbing elements, and within the little square of huts which comprise his home and domestic quarters there is strife and bitterness. For Saidi has seven wives, and the happiness of the home, which a polygamous state of existence destroys, has long been unknown to this chief.

When I was a young missionary of only two years' standing, Saidi came to me one morning with a long face and a troubled eye. Before he spoke I knew his plea

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was to be " Help me, Kienge." He soon poured his tale of woe into my ear. His wives were all at sixes and sevens, he could get no peace—hardly sleeping, scarcely eating, for their quarrelling and bickering made life intolerable. I suggested that he had too many. He smiled lugubriously, as much as to say, " How can I help that ? " Then he blurted out, " Shall I use the stick ? " To this I could only shake my head, surprised that a Lokele man should think that Lokele women would ever stand that sort of thing, and Saidi went away little comforted.

Yet how much a child is this native chief. In the early days of my residence at Yakusu I had a circular shaving-glass which considerably magnified the features of the observer. Saidi was never tired of bringing his friends in to look at this. One day he brought in a big chief who has a village about a day's journey down river. They both sat down and were very silent for a time. Presently Saidi turned to me and said, " Kienge," and pointed to his face as he said it. When we had finished chop, I went into my bedroom and brought out the magical glass. That big, blustering, red-painted chief looked into it for a moment, then uttered a roar and turned away laughing.

One evening we had Saidi in to dine with us. He cut a pretty figure at the table, sitting on the same side as Mrs. Kenred Smith, with Millman and myself opposite. He managed with his knife and fork very well, and behaved himself most becomingly. After dinner he came into the sitting-room and sat looking at some pictures for about an hour, sipping a cup of tea like the rest of us. There was no self-consciousness nor embarrassment manifest ; he sat near the centre of the room, his huge bare limbs presenting a striking contrast to everything else around him, yet his whole deportment was in harmony with his surroundings and there was an easy grace about his attitude and movements that made it a pleasure to watch him.

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I showed him some pictures in one of the numbers of the *Wide World Magazine*. Amongst them was the story of some Arctic adventurers with accompanying photographs. I told him about the intense cold and described the sufferings of the men, but when I showed him the picture of one of them with two wooden stumps for legs, he slapped his thighs and clapped his hands, and repeated to himself several times, "He would sooner have his legs cut off than die." I sat down and went on reading. When I looked up, some minutes afterwards, he was still gazing at it, and turning to me he said, "The man didn't want to die and so he said, 'Cut off my legs,' eh?" I assured him that that was the case.

He has often thrown obstacles in the way of his young men, and done many things which have roused our hot indignation. He has openly and secretly opposed, and sometimes succeeded in thwarting, our best efforts for the spiritual well-being of his people.

But he has not been free from chastisement, and by this he may be saved. I have seen him, like a hunted deer, afraid of his enemy, whom he could not openly attack and overcome as a brave man should. He has come to me in great distress fearing that his village would be taken from him, that he would be forced to become subservient to another chief, and lose for ever the prestige so dear to the eyes of a well-born native.

I told Saidi of my great Friend; and that loving and trusting Him I did not fear what man could do to me. I took him into my bedroom and we kneeled down beside the chair, and there I poured out my heart to God for this wily, sinful, misled creature of His. But there seemed no response, and Saidi was not then on the road to peace and calm confidence.

During the year 1908, the following words were written about Saidi by my colleague, Mr. Millman. "We are having some strange experiences just now. The chief

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and two of his sub-chiefs—out of eight—have taken to come in, whenever they can find me at home for an hour, and sit and talk over matters. They have joined the C. E. They are greatly disturbed in their minds about their many wives and about the state of the people, and the filthy, tumbledown grass huts. Last week the chief insisted that all the women should cover their bodies. But the women here have a secret society and can defy the chief, especially as the other sub-chiefs counted it as an unworthy innovation, and young women were told by the old that, whatever might be right for white folks, they must not leave the way of their ancestors.

“ Then the chief forbade hemp smoking in the Yakusu group of towns, and seems for a time to have managed this; also that a man shall not drink palm wine outside his house.

“ Then he got folks to agree to put up a row of better houses along the front of the town. This required the removal of some ant-hills—no light task for the earth is as tough and compact as some rocks. There grew up some jealousy about the apportioning of this work, and a fight arose from which grew a battle. It ended in my having to collect spears and shields and send them to the State officer at Stanley Falls. Some think it an opportune time for shaking off the yoke of the chief, which they say is of the white man; and Sunday service is suffering. I hope the chief will not grow weary—that is all.”

During this time Saidi was one of the most regular attendants at the services. For months he did much to stem the tide of evil habits.

Meantime the web of fate was being woven for him and drawn closer. Alleged treasonable dealings with other chiefs in the recent past were made the ground for serious charges against his reputation and loyalty. For some months he lay in prison, and when his trial at length came



*Photo by the Author.*

SAIDI AND FAMILY—as he sometimes appears.



*Photo by the Author.*

YALUFI BOYS WITH WIND-MOTORS.

## On Adult Life

off he was not present to answer the charges. His escape and his absence all told adversely, and he was sentenced to a heavy term of imprisonment. A price was offered for his capture, but without success. Only after weary months in hiding was he induced to give himself up and serve out his term. We firmly believe that in this whole matter Saidi was more the sinned against than the sinning. He was the victim of long-standing hatred.

Saidi's path toward holiness is beset with difficulties and the opposing forces are enough to break down any man's resolution. The supreme testing time for him has come. We pray that his manhood may be formed anew and not broken, that he may go forward and not backward, that he may be led into the light and liberty of the Gospel, not drawn into the outer darkness.

Since the above account was written, the writer has received news of Saidi's release from prison. He is back again amongst his people, having suffered sufficient punishment for any indiscretions he may have committed in the past. One fervently hopes that, having become subject to his earthly ruler through painful experience, he may learn to submit himself gladly to the keeping of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

## The Pleasure of the Dance

Lokele dances take place in moonlight and sunlight, whenever youths and girls are preparing for some festival or enjoying the experience of fêting some renowned visitor. Some dances are innocent enough; but three well known Lokele dances are an offence to pure eyes. The awakened conscience at once condemned them, and we had no need to witness them in order to ban them to our young Christians.

One day I found a fine audience of Yakusu folk watching intently, and with evident delight, the performance of some visitors. Dressed in whatever ornaments of brass or iron they happened to possess, with the ubiquitous necklace of beads, their bodies smeared over with a red powder, or a mixture of charcoal and palm oil, they were shuffling round one behind the other, keeping every part of their bodies in seemingly perpetual motion (as only an African can), producing a very funny effect on the observer. The chanting continued monotonously all the time. Suddenly two broke the line, crossed the ring and performed before two others, to the great interest of all the onlookers, and after they had fallen into line again two others performed in the centre of the ring most dramatically. They were either engaged in killing some beast, or in fighting and killing some opponent; and when they had signified their victory by the final thrust, the singing suddenly ceased and there was prolonged applause.

As a rule the dances of the young folk are pleasant forms of exercise, but when the older folk join them they too often change to the basest kind of enjoyment, and it then becomes "emphatically a fallen sport—a something once innocent delivered over to devilry—a healthy pastime changed into a means of angering the blood, bewildering the senses and steeling the heart." However it is rare that the Lokele gives himself up to so wild an orgy as the "Carmagnole" described by Dickens in "A Tale of Two Cities."

Opinions differ as to the advisability of cutting the native Christian off altogether from an exercise which may with startling rapidity change from innocent enjoyment to the worst kind of sport. It is a question of motive, and again it is a question of power of control. A child must often be refused permission to do what it wants to do because the age of discretion has not been reached, the self is not under full control.

## CHAPTER III

### On Young Life

#### Boys and their Toys

*“ The animistic notions of the soul being easily wounded forbid all attempts to exercise an educative influence on the child.”*

*“ When a naughty child gets its way the parents justify themselves by saying, ‘ What can I do? he wants it.’ ”*

WARNECK.

THE little three-year-old is a sturdy fellow. Having managed a full meal of plantain pudding, he staggers about in a distended condition for all the world like a big plum-pudding on legs. That he has enjoyed himself, and is not in the least inconvenienced, is evident from the broad smile with which he greets you.

Already the day has passed when the soft skin of his forehead felt the cold touch of the razor. About a dozen cuts, the beginning of a series, have been made in the centre of the forehead, and they cover a space some one and a half inches square. He will live to be proud of it. Happily the pain and anguish of that dark day were short-lived: the smarting due to the saltish substance rubbed into the open cuts, prevented festering and promoted healing. He will want the scars of nearly 100 cicatrisations on his face before he is a full-grown Lokele.

Naked as the day he was born, he scampers round with his friends, shouting gleefully. Still he has not yet got used to being away from mother, and may be seen pretending to help her round the fire, or asleep across her knees amid all the bustle of the market, or firmly astride

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her hip as she carries her burden of plantain or firewood from the bush.

He has battled through much to have reached three years, but having got so far he is well on his way to a happy, healthful childhood. Inherited weakness or acquired disease, too early exposure, improper and sometimes insufficient food, and lack of intelligent care when that is most needed, combine to raise to an alarming height the child mortality of Africa. Happily among the Lokele, though many perish, plenty survive, and hence the villages teem with scores of boys and girls.

At five years of age the boy begins to be a very interesting little mortal. He has many games. With fingers and string he learns the cat's cradle from other boys. "So and so and so, one, two, three, and I cut off my head." Or round the thigh it is as easy a matter, "see with a twist and a turn of the string the leg is severed." A Lokele boy will know more than thirty different forms of cat's cradle where an English boy will know only six.

Off to the blacksmith's shed one morning, he coaxes from him a little iron pin, and, bending this on a sharp stone, he attaches it to his line and rod; and then will spend a happy day with a dozen others fishing for sticklebacks. Of course, being rather impatient little fishers, they are up to all sorts of pranks to liven the sport. Eight of them have got hold of a small broken canoe; two or three little broken paddles are found from somewhere, and off they push. Vigorously propelling their rotten craft they get some fifty yards from the beach before it begins to sink; then with a shout they leap into the water and swim lustily to the shore. When they have rescued the canoe, they repeat the jolly experiment. Some little fellows spied my canoe coming down river one day, and hastening out to meet me in a borrowed craft they quickly capsized it, and, treading water, saluted me

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as I passed with "*Bon jour, Kienge; bon jour, Monsieur.*" Laved by the Congo flood their faces shone and eyes sparkled. It was a pretty sight.

One day, Mr. Millman was walking in the town when he saw some little fellows about six years of age sitting round a good heap of boiled plantain. They had just shut their eyes and begun to repeat the Lord's Prayer, not knowing a proper grace. They all knew it wonderfully well. Mokili shut his eyes too, but long before he had got to the end of the prayer they had finished and were tucking in.

Seasons have their games, and though there are no shops windows to tell them when peg-tops are in, or pop-guns, or marbles, they know when the time comes. Round some quiet corner where there is a smooth bit of ground, six or eight boys are seated, three or four aside, about ten yards apart. Some brown, rather flat beans, about the size of a large glass marble, have been found in the forest. Each boy places one or more in front of him pressed firmly into the ground. Then the game begins in earnest, and beans whizz to and fro in bewildering frequency as the fun heightens.

A boy makes his pop-gun very easily. A thin piece of stick, from which the pith can be extracted, is soon found. One small pith pellet is jammed well in, and others are made for ammunition. Now a foot of cane, and he is ready to take his place in the sham fight. Pop and pop; how they duck as they whizz past. Fast and furious, mid shouts of laughter, they aim and they hit again and again.

The forest is rich in beans, and there is an almost circular bean which, when carefully pierced and speared with a very thin piece of cane, can be sent spinning from the fingers on to a plantain-leaf table. Gathered round the green board, the edges of which are easily made to slope upwards, two or three boys will spin their tops in quick succession. A point is gained by the owner of the top

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which knocks the other out as they clash in the middle. The uncertainty as to the winner in this game leads to its being often used as a means of gambling, but seldom for money.

The faculty of observation is well developed in the child. He has to make all his own toys, and for that very reason I think gets the more enjoyment out of them. With a self-confidence which is charming, he does not hesitate to copy the white man's marvels. How often he has cried "Boleli, boleli," as the whistle announces the approach of a mail steamer. He hears the "tookoo-tookoo" (tuku-tuku) of the stern wheels as they lash the water, and has a name at once for the strange thing he sees. So one day he sets to work to make his toy "tuku-tuku." There is an abundance of soft workable material in the plantain stem and the pith of the bamboo. He fashions the hull and makes his cane stanchions to support the upper deck; a roof over that; a captain's cabin with a small deck chair and a dummy clay man. These all appear in due time with the flag, and a stern wheel, not fixed, but revolving. Proudly he holds it up to his admiring friends, and perhaps brings it along for Mokili and Mama to see.

Or it is a canoe he will make with its "losambo" (covering) in the middle, raised so that the chief's, or white man's, chair can be placed underneath. Fifty to sixty clay figures rubbed red with camwood, each with its paddle, crowd the sides; and the flag, of course, is over the canoe house. I have seen toy canoes with sails. Older boys will make a wind motor, as you see in the photo. With a light breeze, and on a bit of smooth ground, away it goes, followed by the youngsters shrieking with delight.

These tokens of ingenuity, this outburst of the inventive faculty in the boys, to what does it lead? If sails for toy canoes, why not a wind-propelled craft? They never get to that. The powers of the quick young life are pushed

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into the appointed groove and withered by the frown of a stunted unimaginative adult life. It is the palsying touch of heathenism again, seen in a thousand thousand broken, undeveloped lives all over the dark continent.

The boy of seven or eight is ripe to join a little club. Unlike his little sister, he lives a very much freer, more independent existence. Over and over again has he played at making his little hut, with its bamboo bed, its "tindu" and "kuku" (outer and inner room). If he has leaves enough to thatch it, he calls a companion like-minded with himself to help him, and then one night they bring their plantain pudding and little bit of fish, and, sitting down outside the tiny door, they eat and chatter to their hearts' content. Then, crawling in, they tightly fasten the door for fear of the leopard, and curling themselves up, enjoy their first night away from home. This is the origin of the boys' club. Half a dozen or more boys will leave the parental roof and the hated African equivalent for apron strings, and live together, eating in common. They are generally wise enough, though, to continue getting their food from home. He has long ere this become a trader. He has begun to collect odds and ends of no great value, but by careful bartering and exchange with other boys, he gains enough to buy a hen. This is the first goal of his ambition. A hen has chicks, chicks grow to fowls, and the white man is always wanting fowls. He at once sees endless possibilities in this most lucrative of businesses. Nor is it in any way beyond his ability or his means to pursue. Fowls live on nothing, at least there is plenty of food on the dust heap of every hut. They share his bed, or a corner of his hut at night, or find room in the family pen. As often as not this is the broken end of a canoe turned over and embedded a few inches in the ground. With the earth hollowed out underneath, a flooring of short sticks and a small grating for a door, a pen is made which will successfully resist

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any effort of a leopard to overturn it. When the little chicks arrive how carefully he chases them round at night, to see them properly housed, for bush cats abound. Equally solicitous is he on the approach of a tornado, for half an hour's tropical deluge is enough to quench the tiny spark of chicken life if it be exposed to the fury of the elements.

By eight or nine, the Lokele boy has seen enough of life to be ambitious. He begins now to attend the big markets, and to accompany his father or big brothers on their fishing or trading excursions. He hears of the Bee-Em-Esi (B.M.S.) at Yakusu, and of the boys no bigger than himself in the brick-yard or the tile-yard, or in the houses of the "Basungu" (white men) who are taught every day to read and write. He may be twenty-five miles away or only across river; somehow he finds a means of getting there and literally begins a new existence.

### Girls and their Games

The advent of a baby girl is hailed with joy. It is an omen for good. If she be a chief's daughter, her coming will mean increased respect for the family she adorns, and the prospect of an alliance with some powerful neighbour. This means the maintenance of pleasant relations, and advances from the wealthy suitor of a substantial kind. Whether she be rich or poor, the mother's pleasure, therefore, is intense and her care unflinching. In indulgence she is foolish. The girls feel far too seldom the restraining hand, and grow up to be wilful and giddy. As little girls they are frolicsome, shrill-voiced, out-spoken, and fairly even-tempered. Quite early in life they become very muscular. Before the frontal bone has hardened and properly joined, a strong band is tied round the upper part of the forehead to force the bone backward. This

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gives it a flat appearance in adult females, and enables them the better to support by a strong forehead band the very heavy bundles of plantain and firewood which they carry long distances. At the tender age of eight or nine they may often be seen helping mother by bending beneath their own little burden of food or fuel as they trudge at her side.

Unlike the boys, they have very little initiative. Their life is so much more restricted, there are so many things they must not do, so many things they must not eat, so many things they must not say, that they often strike one as being rather stupid. This is partly due to their upbringing; they are in no way encouraged to undertake for themselves. As helpers in the house, no one would prefer them for a moment if boys are forthcoming.

At our Christmas feast in 1899, when we but partially knew their customs and the restrictions put upon them, we made arrangements for boys and girls to eat of the food prepared in the same pots, and we made no difference in the kind of fare we provided. Of course, the girls held off and would have nothing to do with our "Irish stew" of goat and plantain, or with our rice pudding. I thought them very stupid; and, if I remember rightly, it took a good deal of explanation to make us see their point of view. To-day we should no more think of offering them a feast under such conditions than of flying. In that case, the difficulty was solved by giving them some money, and allowing them to go into the village and purchase some fish and plantain and bread-root on their own. I think the only food we gave them direct was ground rock-salt, which they had no objection to receiving. In this way they escaped the penalties which would surely have been visited upon them had they dared to break their "bokili" (taboo).

They are lithe and active. Being fond of the ornaments permitted them, they gladly submit to the piercing

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of the upper lip and the cartilage of the nose. Through the latter a porcupine quill is fixed on some occasions, and it would appear to have a special significance. In the hole of the upper lip a little piece of cane is kept. Owing to this we quickly found the girls were very slovenly in their pronunciation of the labials, and one of the preliminary exercises in school, when classes began, was for the girls to remove these little bits of cane. It was funny to see them, and the grimaces they made in getting them out. The small incisor tooth of some animal, or even a feather, is used as an ornament.

As the years go on the Lokele girl becomes a much-cut-about creature. The facial cuts are as numerous as those of the boys, and the body markings are almost countless. Again and again, as the months pass, she bears the recutting of the old marks that the cicatrisations may become prominent enough. Across the shoulders there is an elaborate embossed pattern, which feels like raised fingers of flesh to the touch. She laughs at the pain and bears with stoical equanimity the irritation which the substance rubbed in causes for days. She well knows that no young man will look at her unless she has these signs of beauty, these hall-marks of a Lokele belle, at the time of life when above all others she wishes to be admired. Some of the strong opposition to the wearing of clothing is to be traced to the objection to hide what they have been at so much pain to obtain.

The little girl early learns to be very clever with her fingers. With straw she plaits and weaves armlets and kneelets; with bass she deftly creates a pretty necklace, alternating the design with glass beads strung between. She watches her mother at pottery and quickly emulates her parent's skill.

In her games she is very nimble. They have a game not unlike our shove-half-penny. A marked square on the ground is divided into four or five divisions; some pebbles

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are handy and a ball of congealed india-rubber. With the left hand she tosses the ball on to her head, and while it is rolling down into the hand again will place some of the pebbles with the right. When each division has some pebbles she begins rearranging them between each toss of the ball.

Another game is played with four pieces of flat bamboo, which have a rough and a smooth surface.

It is called the game of "yese" or "country." The first and second results—all four up one way—are lucky throws and wins, you have the "yese." The third and fourth are unlucky throws, and the caster cries, "I'm dead." If two come up one way and two the other, the thrower casts again. They sometimes increase the fun by giving names to each bit of bamboo, such as "head, neck, and two hands."

Their shrill little voices can be heard from a great distance as they dance in company, making much of the movement of the feet. Skipping is much enjoyed, but is not very skilfully performed. Single skipping I have never seen amongst them, and their general skipping is clumsy.

My experiences with the girls in school during 1900 were very lively. We were meeting then boys and girls together for the opening exercises. New to my work, and with the scantiest knowledge of the language, my task was a difficult one in the best of circumstances. Of course the girls tried it on to see how far they could go with me. Being stronger voiced than the boys, they easily spoiled our hymn-singing. It was no uncommon thing for them to end up a verse a line in front or a couple of lines behind the rest. This sort of thing was always accompanied with giggles, sly glances all round, and resulted in general disorder. It was not long before I put my foot down. Unable to remonstrate verbally with sufficient force, I took the far more effective course of

## Yakusu

threatened corporal punishment. Picking up my cane from the table, I quickly made my way to the back row, having fixed my eye on a big girl, who was the ring-leader. Hey, presto! with a whoop they all bounded over the low wall of the school building and went off yelling into the village.

After school, when I went along to my house, I found their slates and pencils and books in a row on my verandah. They spoke eloquently of the offended dignity of the young ladies. "If Kienge can treat us like that, he shall no longer have the pleasure of teaching us."

I took no notice, and the days passed happily enough. At length they began to wonder if they had not gone too far. There were some eager enough to be keen to keep up with the boys. Raising my head one day when busy in the school, I saw a face or two that I recognised peering over the low wall. Still not a word. At the end of a week one of them approached me and asked if my anger was finished. I said "Yes." "Can we come back?" I replied, "I did not send you away. If you can behave yourselves I am quite willing to have you back." In a fortnight two or three had returned, and by the end of three weeks they were all back, much the better for the experience; at least I thought so.

In diligence they compared very unfavourably with the boys; but, when they tried, could do as well as most of them. In the matter of singing, however, they gave then, and still give, little pleasure; and, I think I may say, no satisfaction.

Meant to have a good time, the girl usually gets it, but gets spoiled as well. The good-tempered little thing becomes an uncertain-tempered maiden, and inclines to grow into a sour-tempered woman.

## CHAPTER IV

### On Marriage

**A** LOVE-MATCH among the Lokele is very rare. There is too much bargaining in connection with marriage. All that leads up to it is a serious business, and to the palaver-loving native is a source of keen delight. Suitors for the hand of a maiden are never lacking. The Lokele have not enough women to supply the demand. Any number from two to six per husband is the proper thing. There is no limit to the number a chief will have. His rectangle of huts grows with his growing wealth, and each new hut means a new hearth and a new wife. Hence they have had to look over their own garden wall upon the daughters of other tribes. If the financial guarantees are duly forthcoming no difficulty is ever experienced, for it is an honour to marry a Lokele.

The cupidity of the older men makes it difficult for the rising youth to marry one of their own tribe. The required advances are so substantial as to be usually quite beyond his slender means to provide. Happy is the young fellow who has a father to heavily back him in his pursuit of matrimony. The poor man must take what he can get, and very often cannot marry within the tribe.

Custom forbids that he should contract too close a liaison with his own people. He must obey the unwritten laws of his primitive society. Twenty years or so ago there was a big Lokele town called Balako ruled over by one chief named Bome. It contained probably from 7,000 to 8,000 people. Bome's son has only held a section of the people who acknowledged his father's sway, and

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although he still has one of the largest of the Lokele villages, there are now three others that have broken away. To this day the people of these four, separated but once united, townships do not intermarry.

Dire is the wrath of the elders should a young fellow dishonour the code of morals which exists in the tribe. Instinct has kept them through long centuries from violating the laws of nature in respect to the dangers of consanguinity. Marriage between members of the same community, *i.e.* the same village, is strongly discouraged, and only permitted when the family relationship is distant.

Around the rite of marriage there has grown up with the Lokele a most elaborate, burdensome system of guarantees. It is not purchase-money, it is a financial advance as a *bona fide* in claiming the privilege of marriage. It is no fixed amount; the parents of the girl get as much as they possibly can, and make the most of it while they can hold it.

This is the sort of thing that happens. A chief has a son whom he wishes to marry well. Before the boy is old enough to know anything about it, and often while he is still in his infancy, the father looks on the young daughter of a neighbouring friendly chief. One day a splendid "njai" caught in the river changes hands. Two of these would be equal to the price of a goat. It is a fish whose twenty-five to thirty pounds of firm white flesh, sweet to the taste, make it a most welcome addition to the larder of one who is always entertaining passing friends. If not needed for consumption, it always fetches a good price on the market. Another day a young male goat is sent along, and when the market is over a canoeful of plantain finds its way to the friendly chief's beach. Hard up for cash one day, the friendly chief intimates that a little money would be acceptable. Iron is the currency, and the boy's father unties his bundles

## On Marriage

of "ngbele," and, selecting six of the best, hands them over. By the time the boy is ten years of age quite a small fortune has found its way into the hands of the friendly chief, simply because he has a daughter. In another four or five years all would have ended happily to the entire satisfaction of the two families concerned. Time frequently falsifies marriages arranged so deliberately without the goodwill and consent of the two parties most chiefly interested.

A rival chief has seen the growing beauty of the friendly chief's daughter. He is more powerful than the boy's father, who has paid already so heavily for his son's future happiness. Moreover, he is ambitious and unscrupulous. Looking around his square one night, lit up by the glowing fires from a score of hearths, this swarthy savage paces the ground in his wrath and swears that he will outshine and outbid his rival at the eleventh hour, snatch away the girl he covets, who, by all the laws of the tribe is already betrothed to his enemy's son, win renown among his people for his daring prowess and bring a blushing young beauty to adorn his empty twenty-first hearth. Still more to his satisfaction, he will witness the chagrin and discomfiture of his enemy.

Hot on the trail he strikes at once, fast and furiously. Neighbouring villages watch it with intense interest. The very air is vibrant with noise, for the big drums are beaten by day and by night. Did we white men but know the code our tympanums would register the hurtling sounds and transmit them instantaneously to our consciousness as we walked the paths by day or lay awake in bed at night.

What lavish expenditure, ostentatious display, subtle cajolery and sinister threatening can accomplish, is done. High feasting, eating and drinking, goes on for days. The friendly chief's consent to a connection with so powerful a neighbour is soon won, but his daughter's

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will is against it. In nothing doubting that he will override her will, he receives all that is offered him, and immediately rises in importance with his rising fortune. Still the daughter's determination is unbroken. She has been baptised and will not marry a polygamist. Everything is done that can be thought of by her powerful wooer to win her over. For days he meets with no success. At length, by means that we can only guess at, her strong will is broken, and she is carried off.

How great the stake has been is witnessed by the deputation that waits upon me, headed by the chief whose boy's marriage and marriage portion have been despoiled.

Two or three bundles of short pieces of bamboo, some sticks and a small bag of stones are carefully spread out on the verandah. I recognise it as a native account book, and listen patiently while the items are gone over with frequent repetitions and as frequent corrections from interested bystanders. Taking a piece of paper I begin to jot them down. Dates are somewhat uncertain, but by careful questioning I can generally fix the year. It takes us one and a half hours to approximate to the following list :

1900—Two big "njai." One small canoe.

1901—Five times a big "njai." Ten times some plantain. Twenty small shokas, a knife.

1902—A male goat, three spears, a fishing net.

1903—Six large "ngbele," two "njai," one large canoe.

1904—Ten "njai," two goats, a fishing net.

1905—Fifteen "ngbele," fifty small shokas.

1906—Six "njai," twenty "ngbele."

In the old days this would have meant a stiff fight, with accompanying bloodshed between the two rival chiefs and their followers, for it is a quarrel between Lokele titans.

The discomfited chief is sent with a covering letter

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to the judge at the Falls station. Soon the "friendly chief" is called to book and forced to make pecuniary amends for his unfaithful conduct. He literally has to disgorge the wealth he had eaten. When a native says that he has eaten some money, he means that he has taken it and made use of it.

In their eyes there is nothing dishonourable in this sort of thing. In a less aggravated form it is a matter of every-day occurrence. Every one recognises the utility of the law to get as much as possible and hold it as long as he can.

A marriageable girl often has three "liala(s)," or betrothals, and none of them of her own choice. Infatuated youths have come up with their money and insisted on paying to the ever-willing parents some guarantee for the young lady's hand by whose charms they have been smitten. We blame the parents when our advice is sought to help unravel the tangle. At whose-ever door the fault lies for having initiated so pernicious a system, one often feels to-day unable to decide who is most to blame. The silly young swains who can part so readily with their money on such a wild-goose chase, seem to be as culpable as the fond parents, who cannot resist the ring of the iron and the influence which money brings. That the trembling maiden is not an indifferent onlooker hardly need be stated; but in most cases it would be unjust to fasten blame on her, excepting in as far as she is responsible for enjoying the excitement of it all, and encouraging more than one of her gay young admirers by her shy glances, engaging looks, and coy behaviour.

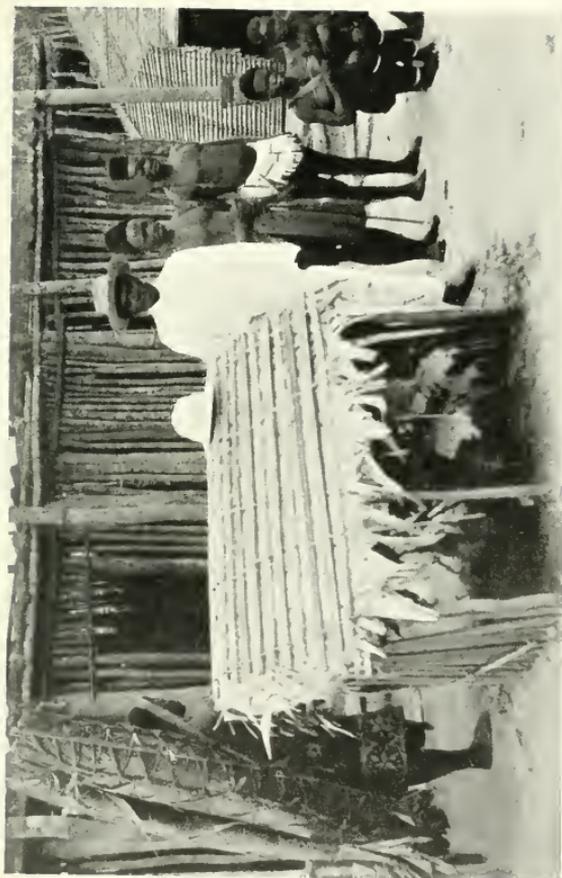
Objectionable as this system is, it is not all evil. To some extent it has safeguarded the womanhood of the tribe. In effect it would seem to impose a fine, and that a very heavy one, on certain forms of immorality. It is a deterrent to some, and has certainly helped to keep the

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reputation of the tribe high amongst surrounding peoples. To strike at the root of such a custom immediately and break it would appear an easy way out of the difficulty; but it would permit a liberty which would quickly run to licence, and worse things would be committed than those it was sought to prevent. To introduce the leaven of Christianity and patiently work towards the high ideal, insisting from the start that its standard of monogamy shall be strictly obeyed, is the method that will bring its own aftermath of curbed passions, and quiet, lawful enjoyment of the privileges and happiness of matrimony.

To the Lokele girl the preparations for marriage must be very interesting. A walk through the village one afternoon will find her sitting in front of her parent's hut behind a high semi-circular enclosure. Almost entirely screened from the gaze of the casual observer, she can yet be easily seen by the curious, for there is no attempt made to render the temporary screen opaque. Indeed, she is "on show." Many a present of food or trifle of ornament finds its way over the barrier, and is duly registered in the young lady's book hanging over her head; for from two of the poles on opposite sides of the enclosure is stretched a string from which dangle a number of small objects. This is the tale of presents. The children never tire of peeping through the interstices of the bamboos and discussing the presents. "Two fishes to-day; three bunches of plantain yesterday," &c., &c.

Carefully groomed is an expression which almost exactly describes her state. Her skin glistens with the palm-oil that has been rubbed in, and all her markings are distinctly visible; with stripes of white chalk down both legs, and sometimes a design of the same on the body or the face, she sits with as little movement of the head as possible for hours together. The back of the neck, the forehead and the temples have been carefully shaved,



*Photo by the Author.*

**A LOKELE CHIEF'S FETISH TREE:** religiously watered every day that it may thrive and protect him. Years ago he followed the white men, and learnt a little English. Though somewhat civilised, he has been in no way delivered from his fears,



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and an elaborate coiffure super-imposed on the remainder of the head. The pomade is black and very oily. The head-dress is worked up with sawdust and camwood powder to the required height. She will wear it thus for a fortnight or longer, using at night a small wooden neck-support which obviates the necessity of resting her head against anything, and, contrary to expectation, appears to afford her some chance of repose.

The young bridegroom may not enter this enclosure. He is permitted to sit at a distance and look at his fiancée. Very little opportunity has been given him of any intercourse with her. He sees her at rare intervals, and the first payment of a guarantee admits him to none of the privileges which would be allowed to an engaged couple at home. Some months later he makes another payment, and is still held at arm's length, and knows little about his fate. At length, if he considers that things are favourable enough, he makes the journey a third time with his "lisele" (final payment). If business is meant this time by the parents he will find the lady of his choice in her enclosure adorned for her husband. Unhappily, even at such an hour, the parents may have worked things so secretly and skilfully that two young fellows have been deluded into coming, and each considers himself the only suitor for the maiden's hand. Then there are flashing glances and high words, if nothing worse. Sometimes the eager pursuit by two young fellows continues unabated to the very last, but oftener one withdraws and puts in his claim for the return of his goods.

Supposing that it is happily fixed up without such disturbing elements as a rival claim would introduce, there comes a moment when the blushing maiden is taken down to the canoe and formally handed over to the happy bridegroom and his friends; then, though there be no rice and confetti, the bridal procession takes place with ridiculous solemnity on the part of the two lovers.

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As soon as the canoe is boarded the bride and bridegroom take their places, standing at one side of the canoe in full view of the village folk, while their friends, gaily bedecked for the occasion, fill the canoe and parade them up and down from end to end of the village with much shouting and laughter. With some bundles of long "ngbele" and other things from the marriage money returned to them, the bride and bridegroom stand throughout the whole performance, looking for all the world as though they were going to be hanged. They seem heartily glad when it is over.

Elopements are not of frequent occurrence and, of course, are not encouraged. They create a good deal of uproar on the part of those who suffer pecuniary loss by the headstrong action of the young couple. If their standing in the tribe is such as to raise no doubt about the post-payment of the guarantees no more is heard of it, except by the young friends of the couple who make joking references to it in their canoe songs.

### A Letter concerning a Station Romance

B. M. S., Yakusu,  
24th April, 1904.

MY DEAR —,

Of all the interesting questions that engage our attention, the question "matrimonial" is yielding its quota of interest just now. With such a people our presence is a terror to the evil-doer, and a blessing to him who does well, or to her, for the matter of that. The love-stories that are poured into Mrs. Stapleton's ears by anxious young ladies are, she assures us, becoming a nuisance. Whilst we are most gratified to think that several of them are seriously enough inclined and changed enough in character to be fit for baptism, the mere consideration of that question at once involves them in difficulties. And for this reason: a young fellow from another town takes a fancy to a girl in Yakusu, and his people promptly come up and pay a sum of money over to the father of the young lady. This is not really binding, as in the last event the girl, if she is strong-minded enough generally has her choice. Some other young fellow is equally infatuated with the same "sweet dear," and his people want to pay money over ;

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and perhaps a third, as not infrequently happens, will do the same. They are foolish enough to do this in the hope that the girl will decide in their favour, and meanwhile the father is nothing loth to receive all that comes, although it probably means trouble ahead, unless he can pay back at the right time to the disappointed parties. Now we say, and I think you will agree with our decision, that no girl can enter the baptism class whose affairs are in this state, nor ought she to allow any further money to be received by her father from another suitor. In fact, instead of letting the matter go on until the town or the interested parties bring the question to a decision, she ought herself to decide whether she will accept one suitor before she allows a second to make a bid for her affections.

Again, many a suitor appears who is already married, and has probably considerable influence. This means trouble and persecution for our girls who are being taught to insist that they must only marry an unmarried man or a widower. Of course, their difficulties are poured into the same willing ear. I really do not know what we should do if Mrs. Stapleton were not here. We certainly should not become aware of half of the pitfalls that the fairer sex amongst our people have to run the gauntlet of, in trying to walk in the narrow way.

The difficulty of getting a good station goat-herd came up again a few weeks ago. The work is despised; no one is particularly anxious to undertake it. Six weeks ago a short, stubby, Lokele fellow presented himself here. He wanted work; he wanted God's palaver; he wanted to learn in the school. I said that I did not want any more workmen, and he could not stay unless he could support himself in the town. Talk about the importunate widow; he persisted, he tried every means to get round us. One Sunday he came to know if he could join the Christian Endeavour, and I told him to wait a few months until he knew something about it. Then Mokili told him he could take on the goat job. Such zeal, such interest in the work, I never saw from a goat-herd before. Every goat and sheep got personal attention, and personal running after at night to get it home. Then it transpired that he was in love with one of the girls that waits on Mrs. Stapleton. She reads and writes, and is courted by one of the teachers who is down river in charge of a school at Yangambi. He was the butt of many jibes from the girl and her companions on account of the nature of the work he had taken on. At first he tried to speak to her on several occasions, but met, I am told, with many rebuffs. Now he seems content to go on the even tenor of his way, comforting himself that he is here, where she is; that he can get a peep at her generally when he wants to, that he must certainly know if any rival comes on the scene, and this to him seems to be

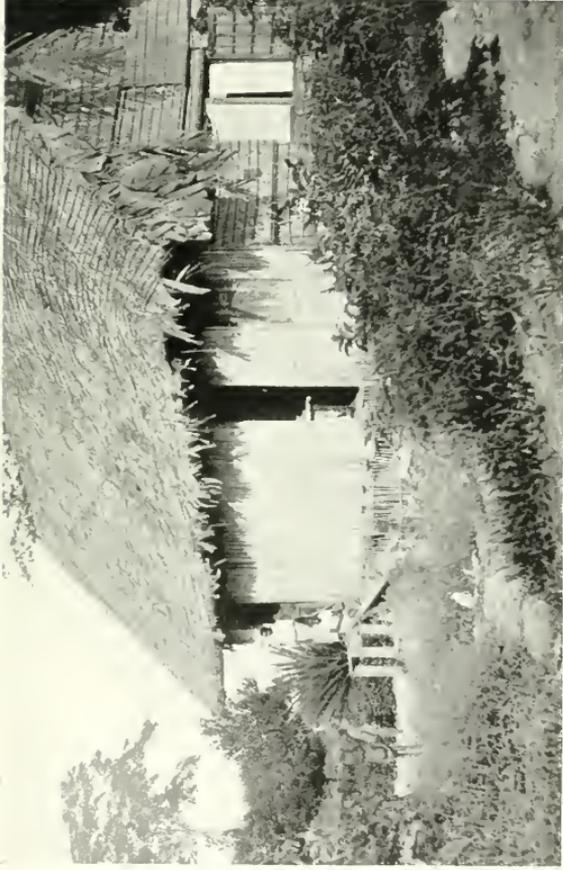
“Heaven begun below, and glory in the bud.”

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He struggled on nobly for many a week. In the school he was put back to a lower class, and his courage nearly snuffed out. However, a happy thought seized him. He found a shoka and went and bought a copy-book, so he is now qualifying in another direction for the hand of the girl he loves. But alas! she looks not toward him, and his heart is very heavy. He sat on the threshold of the door the other evening for a long while, his face covered with his hands as though praying. Every now and again a half-suppressed groan escaped his lips, and we knew where his thoughts were. The next day he confided in Mrs. Stapleton, pouring his tale of woe into her ears: "Isn't she silly (mad) not to look at me when my father has paid so much money to her family, and her father is quite willing that I should become his son-in-law? And who is this teacher fellow? His people haven't paid any money, and can't pay. I can learn to read and write and so make myself worthy of her."

I expect Mrs. Stapleton gave him such a smile as sent him away comforted for the nonce. It is all so very funny to us. It tickles me hugely every time I see him running after the goats. Verily "he stoops to conquer."

I cannot quote correctly here, for alas! it is not true, as he knows to his cost, that "she stoops to conquer," for "she is the maid in the castle, while he is the thief in the barn."



*Photo by the author.*

AN EARLY MISSIONARY DWELLING. B. M. S. YAKUSA.



## “Lest we should Waddle.”

“ What are they doing there ? ”

“ Buying meat, white man.”

“ What meat, Saili ? ”

“ Crocodile’s meat.”

“ Where did they get it from ? ”

“ Oh, the owner of the hut there caught it in the night up the Lindi.”

“ Oh, let me see the head, Saili ? ”

“ No, you can’t see that.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because it is all covered up.”

“ Well, you can uncover it to show it to me.”

“ No, we daren’t do that, for if its eye sees us we are afraid that our legs will get like the crocodile’s, and we shall all waddle.”

“ Well, what will you do with it ? ”

“ Oh, when all the flesh is sold the man who found it will call all his friends round and he will provide plantain and fish, and we shall have a feast.”

“ But what about the crocodile’s head ? ”

“ Oh, that is put in a big pot and boiled, and boiled ; then it is ground into a powder, and when a man is caught stealing or doing anything of that kind, he has to take some of this medicine to prove by the result whether he is the culprit or not.”

“ And does nothing happen to those who eat the flesh ? ”

“ No, because during the feast the man who found it goes round with a twig in his hand, and strikes with it the arms and legs of his friends so that they may not get bandy-legged.”

## CHAPTER V

### My Mother-in-law and other Matters

**S**HE reigns in the Lokele world, as in many another, supreme. I urged a young fellow one Sunday afternoon to come out of hiding and turn up at the open-air service near by. He was full of easily detected excuses. I wondered, and enquired elsewhere about him, for I knew him as an earnest young follower in his own village, some distance down river. I learnt that he was about to be married, and must be very discreet in his movements. Being in the town, his future mother-in-law could practically keep him a prisoner all the time if she liked. Except when she is in the house, he cannot walk abroad for fear of meeting her. I found that he could not make any promise to come and talk over things at the times I mentioned I should be at home, as he had no idea when he would be free. My colleague, Mr. Millman, tells of an amusing case that came to his notice. "A man on a long journey arrived at a river village late in the evening, and failed to find a canoe to take him across the water. As it happened, the only acquaintance he could find there was his mother-in-law. He was very hungry, and she cooked him some food. In order to conform with the requirements of the 'bokili,' the man put an empty rice bag over his head, and, putting out his hand, took piece after piece of the food from the wooden plate at his side, and put it up inside the bag to his mouth, so that his mother-in-law might not see him eating."

This is one of the curious uses of the taboo amongst African peoples. There is even a mother-in-law vocabulary. To her nothing must be spoken of by its common

## My Mother-in-law and other Matters

name when she is being addressed by her son-in-law or daughter-in-law. A list of the names of 200 common objects could be quickly got from any married youth. When occasion demands his speaking to her he must be quick to satisfy his esteemed relative's preference for the, shall we say, more delicate term.

The taboo is usually applied amongst savage peoples when anything is to be revered as sacred, or to be avoided as conveying pollution. Both ideas are seen in the taboo as it is found existing amongst the Lokele. Articles of general use have been subjected to a discriminating survey as to their suitability or otherwise for the use of man or woman. There are taboos of privilege and taboos of disability, taboos that affect only an individual and taboos that concern a whole class.

In 1899 I came face to face with the effects of the taboo. A little girl had been for some weeks helping in the house of the missionary. Soon after returning to the village she was found in a most emaciated condition, and on my enquiring the cause was told that she had broken her taboo. Her mother had inflicted this vigorous herbal treatment because her child had eaten of food that had been cooked in the same utensil as a fowl and goat flesh. We had to learn by experience. At Christmas time of that year we provided a feast for the school children. Goat flesh and soup, plantain, rice and the native bread root, with plenty of salt, seemed sufficiently varied to satisfy all tastes. The boys and men set to with a will as the steaming portions were served out. Not so the girls, however. It was not a question of what they wanted to eat, but of what they were permitted to eat. Some of the things were forbidden food, and all of it was taboo because of the uncertainty as to the manner of cooking. Moreover, promiscuous eating could never be approved. So at length the girls had to be sent off to the market with their own shokas, to buy fish, plantain

## Yakusu

and pots, some palm oil and other dainties, that they might cook them apart. This they were nothing loth to do, and in their noisy way enjoyed their exclusion from the main body of feasters.

Two young men stood on the verandah of my new house. I did not recognise them, so I asked them whence they hailed. They told me, and also that they were fishing. I asked them what I could do for them. They said they were only looking at the house. I said, "Wouldn't you like to see the inside as well?" They replied, "Bokili, angokokolo" (it is taboo, we are not able). I made an imaginary mark on either side of the door with my finger, and said, "Bokili bososila" (the taboo is ended); and turning said to them, "Now you can enter." They immediately believed me and came into the house.

I told Litofi, the young man who is helping me with translation work, about this. "Yes," he said, "the people from the towns on that side of the river have a number of customs with regard to fishing that we of Yakusu haven't got. They will not sit on a native stool while out on a fishing jaunt; though they may be away a whole month, they always sit on the ground. Also, they will not enter another man's house; only their own. They really fear that the fish see them and that their haul will suffer in consequence."

The taboo reaches its highest point of influence in the Lokele ceremony of "likbeli." Here the cleavage between the men and the women reaches its climax. The late Rev. S. O. Kempton made humorous reference to this after the 1902 ceremony.

"Now the meetings in the forest are finished, yet the men and boys cherish the same aversion to the gentler sex in general, as Mr. Tony Weller did to 'widders' in particular. According to their superstitious belief, until a certain time is ended the approach of a woman or girl is supposed to bring physical defilement and

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suffering. When Mr. Sutton Smith left us last week, it was laughable, though pathetic, to see the lads standing in a group on the beach, anxious to say good-bye to him, yet afraid to come near the s. s. "Goodwill" lest Mrs. Stapleton, Mrs. Grenfell, or Mrs. Williams should contaminate them by a touch. Equally absurd is it to see stalwart men terrified at the approach of a maiden of nine summers."

The aim of the tribe is undoubtedly to include all males, and to make of them priests of the cult. The secrets are most obstinately kept. No woman dare ever utter the sacred word "lilwa," and for boys, who have not been initiated, it is taboo. So nearly alike in pronunciation is the numeral nine ("libwa") that girls and women substitute another word for it. How closely this ceremony is bound up with the knowledge of the spirit world, and the desire to penetrate its secrets, is shown at length on a subsequent page.

"Fetishism is the result of the efforts of the savage intelligence seeking after a theory which will account for the apparent hostility of nature to man. It is the first feeble striving of ignorance to ascertain the position of humanity in the universal scheme, and the endeavour by a hundred tentative experiments to discover what power man may possess over his own life and destiny in the face of all this seeming antagonism. The African can find no note of sympathy in the world immediately surrounding him. Life is to him no free gift, but rather something to be desperately snatched from the hand of adverse circumstances. Everything in earth or sky seems to threaten his existence."

These words, written by Mr. Glave in the *Century Magazine* some years back, so well depict the state of the people these pages have made us familiar with, that I can find no better introduction to this article on the use of fetish and charm than to quote them.

My colleague, Mr. Millman, wrote an interesting article

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on this subject in the *Missionary Herald*, some three years back. "By nature man easily perceives a principle of suitability that is to be desired and worked towards, and the pitfalls a man meets while living this life early teach him that there is also a principle of mischief that is to be guarded against. Lacking guidance, it is not surprising that every force that appears to work in accordance with either of these principles is made into a sort of divinity, and given a shadowy kind of personality, that coincidences are counted as proofs, and that the easy mobile mind of the native has rushed off on tracks of wildest superstition. But the trained inquisitiveness of the foreigner delights to spend itself in endeavouring to retrace the steps by which primitive souls have travelled, and so we have book after book on naturism, animism, fetishism, totemism and idolatry. Some of these ascribe to the natives a philosophy of their animism, but among the Lokele I have not found it very obvious. By animism, I mean the tacit belief that every natural object has its proper resident spirit. When a thing breaks up or wears out, it is said to be dead, the assumption being that its spirit has departed. A girl, not growing so fast as she desires, learns from the older women of the tribe that her development may be hastened by weeping at the foot of a thorn tree at night. She seeks out a thorn tree, and there one evening, beating her breast, she sobs until tears run down on to the ground, and, in due time, she grows as she has desired. The natives at Yakusu do not say that there is a spirit presiding over the thorn tree, that can only be approached through thorn trees, neither do they assert that the tears are a gift to the tree or to its supposed resident spirit. But while our people do not declare the presence of an indwelling spirit in their charms and amulets, they nevertheless assert the advantage of wearing them because of the spirits. It seems as if the primitive, fearsome soul of man is content with his

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phylactery, without troubling over much with the mystery of its working. However, this is not to say that they deny the existence of spirits and spiritual influences, though, as far as appears to me at present, the spirits most generally recognised are those of their own people, living or dead.

“A man in trouble will call on the name of some known ancestor or deceased friend, and ask him to help him, but makes no specific sacrifice or offering. Any man may do it without the help of a priest. A man in declining health may be permitted by such a spirit to see the shade of the man responsible for his sickness. It is generally believed that such a vision portends the death of the sufferer, failing the intervention of this responsible person. It seems strange, but it may have no real significance, that on the first appearance the shade generally shows only its back, and is not always recognised. On a second or third appearance it shows its face. A message is immediately sent to the inimical individual, informing him that the malevolent state of his heart is known, and that he must come and pour water over the head of the sick person. I have known a man to paddle himself over thirty miles against stream to respond to such a summons. To come instantly would obviously lend some support to the charge which, doubtless, often has some foundation in fact, and such bewitchery is punishable with fine. The offender generally declines the invitation unless he is promised exemption, when he at once puts in an appearance. The sick man is carried down to the nearest running water, and the alleged bewitcher takes a piece of a broken pot, scoops up some water and pours it over the invalid's head. Such is the faith in this operation, that of a dozen cases noted not one failed to restore health, for a time.

“The bewitching may be brought about by simply wishing evil to come to a person, or by abusive expressions,

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curses, or even by motions. Sometimes a priest is required to work very effective magic by means of secret signs and concoctions; but there are many wonder-working herbs, philtres, and malignant phrases well known to the general public, and believed to be infallible in their effect on an unprepared native."

"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious" might well be said of the Lokele. It is only fair to say that some are much more addicted to superstition than others. A boy passes you having a straight yellow line down the centre of the forehead and along the ridge of the nose. It will cure disease or remove headache. When a smallpox epidemic was raging at the Government camp at the Falls, the girls turned up at school one day with heads shaven as clean as billiard balls. Just a whisp of hair was left on the crown to which was attached a small bob or tassel called a "likenge," made by a native doctor. It will protect from the leopard or from disease.

Nets are protected and luck is sought by tying little bits of wood on to them. Some believe in them and use them, but others do not use them, and apparently do not lose by it.

A native of our district always fears the "losose." It is a bit of native creeper laid across a path with medicine on it. A man is named who, crossing it, will die in two days. Knowing him to have crossed it the doctor comes on the second day and breaks the string. The man then dies. In 1900 a lad from one of our down river stations was working at Yakusu and fell sick. I treated him for several days, but failed to satisfy myself that I had correctly diagnosed his ailment. He got more and more emaciated, and when I paid my visits to him I frequently found him suffering from painful sweats which I could not account for. It transpired that he was obsessed with fear, for he declared that some malevolent-minded native from the village had drawn a line across the path leading to

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his house, in the desire that the occupant should die. He fortunately recovered, but it was a startling lesson to me of the power of fear. In his case it certainly had torment.

The native "bofilenge," or whistle, has the power to kill in the following way. If a man has lost a canoe or anything else, he makes known his loss asking each man in his square, and says that if the man who has taken it does not own up and restore the stolen things he will blow his whistle and the culprit will die. When I questioned my informant if this ever happened, he replied, "Well a man may die a day or two afterwards in another square, when the man who blew the whistle says 'Ah, he's the culprit.' But he doesn't try and get his things back, he is satisfied with the result of his act." He must not swallow his spittle whilst blowing his whistle.

The "liseke lia bilimba" is another method by which when a man has died they try to discover the bewitcher. A little of the skin is cut away from the heel of the dead man, or else from the eyebrow. Then a native doctor puts the skin or piece of eyebrow in a small horn, and calls out the names of many towns and districts, and peoples, until he sees the face of the bewitcher in the horn. Even then the people interested may bribe him to pour out his medicine and declare his inability to solve the difficulty. The people really believe that if the doctor sees the face of a man in the "bilimba" and declares it, the man so discovered will surely die though by no overt act.

A man died in one of the Lokele villages. Yafelete was found to be the bewitching village. A man was accused who took a small piece of bark which he scraped and soaked in hot water, afterwards applying the water to his eye. The eye became inflamed and swollen, which proved his guilt. Because the deceased was a relative of a chief, a price of three women was paid and forty big shokas and two guns.

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Sometimes the " fengo " worn round the neck are used to guide them as to their course of action, or to give them certain knowledge as to what has happened. A woman went across river to buy plantain. While she was buying in the village of an alien tribe, she left the canoe with a child in it on the beach. She returned the first time and found all right. But on her return, the second time, the child was not there. Her first thought was that it had been kidnapped, and she went all over the place and through neighbouring villages enquiring for her child. Her efforts were fruitless, and she then began to think the child was drowned. When the father heard he, too, made many enquiries, but at last decided the child was dead. That night, however, he had a dream and he was led to believe the child was still alive. The uncertainty greatly distressed him, and taking a pot of water he unstrung two of the little bits of wood that hung round his neck. These he floated on the water and began stirring gently with a stick. This is done to see what relative position the pieces of wood will take up towards one another. If they came with their ends together the answer was favourable, the child is alive ; but if they came together side by side, the answer was contrary, the child is dead. He dreamed that night that the child was alive, and when he had tried the " fengo " the answer was favourable. Hence he came to me in great distress to help him in his difficulty.



*Photo by the Author.*  
A "LIBELI" DANCE IN A FOMA VILLAGE; not less than thirty acolytes engaged.



## CHAPTER VI

### On Magic ; "Lilwa"

*"Ancestor worship presupposes that the happiness of the dead is dependent on the offerings of their living descendants, and that all those departed souls who are not provided with offerings become hungry spirits, who cause all kinds of misfortune to the living. Ancestor worship is not a mere remembrance of the departed, but an intentional intercourse with the spirit world, with the powers of Hades and of darkness."*

D. FABER.

*"The root of the filial piety which is practised by the Chinese must be a mixture of the two mightiest motives of the human soul, fear and self-love. The spirits must be honoured because of their power to injure. If the offerings are neglected the spirit is enraged, and meditates revenge. Hence it is safer to worship the spirits."*

WARNECK.

SAY it distinctly, with emphasis on the last syllable, and end up with a jerk. "Lee-lwah." Partially close your left fist and place your right palm over the aperture with a slam, pronouncing the magic word as you do so. Do this in front of a woman or a girl and she will quail before you and flee in terror. You who have visited the charmed circle in the forest may do it with impunity and always with effect. It is your right, for have you not submitted to the ordeal which opened for you the mysteries of the spirit world.

But let the uninitiated bring it into contempt by using it and dire is the wrath of the elders. Nothing will stir up commotion more effectively. We have seen their anger and witnessed, too, the power which they can exercise over the rising generation through fear of the curse of "lilwa."

In 1900 we had around us crowds of Lokele boys from

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various villages. They had linked themselves on to the new power, the white man's power, and doubtless thought they were free from the domination of the village elders. The year was not far advanced when we found that something was astir. The prolonged fine weather afforded the opportunity waited for by the priests of the cult. The place in the forest was chosen, temporary booths erected, and everything got ready. The youngsters knew of these preparations ; some grew restive and many grew cheeky. They mocked at the idea that they could now be coerced. They took the sacred word freely on their lips. Feeling ran high, and trouble was brewing. Deputations of the old men waited on us to see what our attitude would be. It was inimical. " Then do you encourage the boys to bring these things into derision ? " was their next question. " No," was Mr. Millman's reply. For, as far as we could see, it was equivalent to blasphemy ; and we argued that if they do not begin by reverencing something they will end by reverencing nothing.

It was then the turn of the boys to come to us, for the elders seemed satisfied that they had gained their point. " Aren't you going to stand by us and refuse us permission to go ? " " Yes," was the reply. " We see no reason why you should obey. Every one is so close about it, that we are bound to conclude that they are ashamed to disclose the nature of the things done by them. They work in secret because their deeds are evil."

Still, the influence was too strong for them, and many went ; village followed the example of village, the whole tribe was possessed. We more than once thought of visiting them in the bush, but they, being afraid of the consequences to ourselves should we attempt it, used their strongest arguments to dissuade us from it. We were not then wholly convinced that the whole thing had not the taint of immorality.

Strange stories reached our ears of things that happened

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to wayfarers in the bush who wandered too near the sacred enclosure. One of our own workmen was badly mauled. Several women were lightened of their market burden and dared not protest. The villages were practically deserted of the men for six or eight weeks. The women were always busy preparing huge quantities of food. If I remember rightly, the Yakusu folk held aloof and did not participate on that occasion in the ceremonies held by the tribe.

Though the acolytes from time to time appeared in the villages, great care was taken that there should not be any communication by glance or speech with women or the uninitiated.

Drizzling crowns of verdure, which completely covered the eyes, were worn by all the acolytes whom I saw once marching in single file through a village, guided and guarded by their instructors, who frequently popped the "lilwa" at supposed hostile observers. Slowly, with mincing steps, they passed from square to square, their bodies fantastically marked with many stripes of clay. Very obvious was the pleasure of the old men at this brave show.

Dances of hours' duration were got up, and every boy would be rigged out in the complete regalia of the "libeli." A loin covering of bark cloth, imitation leopard's-skin caps and plume of parrot's tail feathers, imitation leopard's-skin belt and band to support the knife-sheath, imitation leopard-tooth necklace made of white-wood, imitation charms made of the same, imitation knife of white-wood. Some shells round the knee to jingle in the dance, with the liberal and skilful use of chalk or yellow or brown clay, made up a unique and certainly very striking costume.

Not a word is understandable of all they say during these weeks. So the making of these ornaments, and the learning of a vocabulary of possibly 250 or 300 words,

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ensure that their time is not all passed in the idleness that encourages sin.

Two years passed, and again the desire was strong upon them. The old men saw with alarm how eagerly the young folk were sitting at our feet to learn ; they knew of the promise that a number of the young men had given Mokili before he returned to England in 1901. They at least were determined to hold firmly to the truths they had heard from his lips.

We had advanced a stage since the last " libeli." It is true we had not yet baptised any Christians. Mangwete had come into touch with a similar " secret " society amongst the Bangala in mid-Congo, and we had all read of the " nkimba " among the people of the lower Congo. The pertinent question " Was there any more in this Lokele institution than in the Masonic Brotherhood, and might not the charmed circle be little more than a Masonic Temple ? " was difficult to answer. Secrecy did not necessarily mean corrupt practices, and the obviously farcical character of it deceived us as to its real significance.

The danger of opposing unreasoningly was to elevate into importance an institution that seemed to us to contain probably none of the elements of permanence. Let the leaven of Christianity, then, kill it, as we believed it surely would do in due time.

This seemed sound reasoning, and was perhaps as far as we could go with a church yet unformed. Scores of our young followers wanted to stand behind us, and make us the buffer between them and the old men. We said in effect, " You know more about it than we do ; stand on your own legs and we will help you. If you know it to be wrong, hold aloof." This was not enough, and the old men scored again ; but this time at the expense of our apparent weakness, not, as before, at the expense of our apparent strength.

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Both positions were justified by the circumstances. In the light of after events the second was deemed the weaker, we think, by the multitude of our native critics, for the Bantu loves the exhibition of power, and has little sympathy even for a discriminating decision which indicates hesitancy.

Eight eventful years passed, years which witnessed the growth of a strong Lokele church. Again, in the early weeks of 1910, the tribe is astir. As I wrote of this 1910 "libeli" and its consequences in the *Missionary Herald*, I quote at length from my article.

"It has been said of Hudson Taylor that he erred in leading his followers to make war on Ancestral worship, instead of seeking to reform it; and one cannot help wondering if this is a just criticism. It is the deliberate opinion of a missionary of long standing in China (Rev. W. A. P. Martin, in 'A Cycle of Cathay,' p. 214); but, notwithstanding that, one wants to criticise the critic. What would he say were he here in Central Africa?

"We have no form of worship based on the veneration of a family for its forbears, from a desire to continue the filial relationship enjoyed during a long life. But worship does not always spring from veneration—at least as often it springs from fear. In this land the spirits of the departed are to be feared. In this immediate district the belief is strong that they can, and do, at stated intervals, communicate with the living. It is the living who make the opportunity by creating the charmed circle in the forest. It is made for the purpose of introducing a number of acolytes, who are usually quite young boys, into the mysteries of the rite. A select coterie of the older men in each town keep the secret well, and succeed in deeply impressing the belief in the supernatural nature of the ceremonies in which they engage upon the hearts of the younger generation.

"We missionaries have found it hard to take it seriously

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before, there being so much of what seemed to be childish buffoonery in the practices permitted to the acolytes. Information, so tardily and charily given, has not helped us hitherto to think that it could have any very great influence on the young people, and our native church has never really come into collision with it. Indeed, the last time the tribe was aroused by the magic-workers of each town to provide a "place" in the forest within the meaning of the rite where these alleged supernatural performances could take place, was eight years ago, when our infant church was unborn.

"But to-day it is different. Within the past three months, church members have been involved in practices which, while not directly immoral or obscene, nor accompanied by drunken orgies, are yet, we believe, so inspired by the element of fear on minds credulous enough to be easily dominated by the cunning of a few, and curious enough to be readily led astray, in the hope of learning the secret ostentatiously held by a little coterie of old men, that deception and lying have been resorted to; and the charmed circle has been visited with offerings in food and money to appease the spirit of some departed relative. All who have entered this 'place' have authority to use the magic word; and though the use of this oath is often abused, it can always be, and is as often as not, enforced to extort blackmail from some victim, generally a woman.

"The young acolytes' first experience, as they are led trembling into the forest, is so startling as to leave an indelible impression on their minds, and much after-confusion of thought as to what really took place. The first contact with the spirits is of the nature of an attack, which bewilders and overcomes the youngsters. They remember no more until they awake as from a sort of trance, several hours later, to the belief that some change has come over them. Each one finds a small wound in the abdomen or in the small of the back, from which

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that which is his essential self has been taken, and by which the attacking spirit has effected its entrance. They now think they are possessed each by a spirit, and for a period varying from six to ten weeks they act as though possessed. Though they return to their ordinary life and usual occupations after this, the majority of them, we find, believe that life was restored to them by the spirit possessing them, and that in consequence they have really changed their identity.

“ In or near to most of the Lokele villages there is a sacred grove. During a recent itineration with my wife, we twice pitched our tent on the borders of one. Seeking the shelter of some trees one very hot day for Mrs. Smith, I entered the grove and cleared a space where we could put our chairs and enjoy a cup of tea. There were loud protestations, of course, but it ended at that, except for the fact that some of our crew dared not bring us the things we called for. The seclusion was a distinct gain, in a town full of noisy children.

“ In the recent ceremonies, we hear, that grove has played a prominent part. Many an offering was presented and quickly appropriated by the spirits of the glade. Missiles hurled from the leafy depths warned off any too curious and unwelcome visitor, while strange voices issued thence from time to time, making request for one thing and another. These demands were always liberally met ; indeed it is part of the tyrannous cult of this society that no demand, however exorbitant, can be refused. If anyone has the temerity to refuse, he or she is heavily mulcted for damages.

“ In another village I saw a man nearly scare the life out of a little boy for some supposed act of sacrilege. He took him by the arm, and ran him close up to the entrance to the grove, threatening to leave him to the tender mercies of the spirits. I have never before seen such a look of terror on a child’s face, and, running up behind

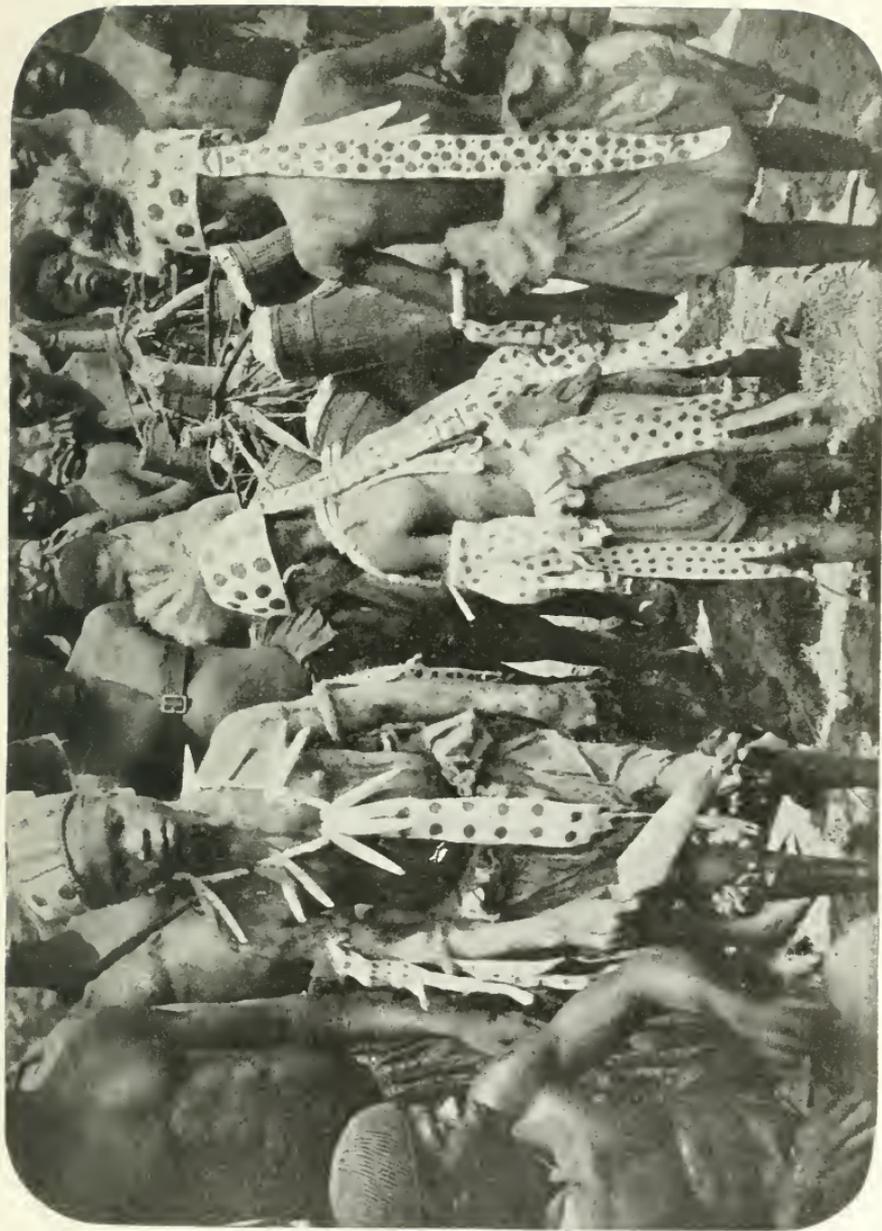
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the man unperceived, I made him drop the arm of his victim, and he suddenly found that he was wanted at the far end of the town.

“ In the Gabun (Congo Française), as Mr. Nassau tells us, the infant church came into violent collision with the secret society and the extraordinary pretensions of the all-powerful witch-doctor, so that the issue was a clear one for all who purposed following Christ. Here, however, their methods are not so murderous, though there is murderous intent when the curse of leprosy is invoked. It has, therefore, been more difficult to take our stand.

“ Eight years ago we could give no definite advice to the serious-minded young people among us, except to strongly urge them to keep away from anything they knew to be evil. To a race whose moral upbringing does not help them to make a stand each for himself, such advice was not sufficient. To-day, instead of saying ‘ Don’t do it if you ought not,’ we have clearer knowledge and can say ‘ You must not do it ; it is having fellowship with the works of darkness ; it will certainly hinder the growth of the new faith in your hearts.’

“ Nearly all our Lokele Christians are involved ; and, after several prolonged discussions and earnest prayer, we decided to help them to the clear issue by disbanding our membership, and asking each one before re-admission to definitely put this thing away and walk in the light of a pure faith.”



THREE "LIBELI" ACOLYTES DURING THE "LILWA" CEREMONIES. Showing imitation ornaments worn. *Photo by the Author.*



*Photo by the Author.*

SENGA AND HIS BROTHER MELE. A group of those who broke away and formed a community on the other side of the river.

## CHAPTER VII

### On Clothing

**I**N every village there are to be found dignified men to whom the question of being clothed after the European fashion does not appeal. It is inconvenient and unfamiliar. In his own eyes he is clothed when he wears what the custom of the tribe demands. In our eyes it is not enough; in the eyes of the prudish it is indecently scanty.

Let it be quite clear that the question is not one of encouraging immorality by acquiescing in their continuance in the state in which we found them. It is incontrovertible that this affects the question of morals but little, if at all. Our people do not go entirely nude as some do. The Kavirondo are of this number, on the eastern shores of the Victoria Lake, yet it is admitted that they stand higher in the scale than some of their more-clothed neighbours. Amongst the girls of our tribe a strong argument at first against the use of the simple frock was, that it made them too much like the Arab women of notoriously evil character, and the riff-raff that haunt the camps of the soldiers. It was for a time unanswerable.

The old idea that every convert to be worth anything must be clothed as nearly as possible after our fashion, has surely lost ground. It made the adoption of some form of European clothing a *sine quâ non* of adherence to Christianity, and to the native mind has probably sometimes seemed to be as the Wicket Gate admitting him into the kingdom.

We have been pleased to think that a Lokele fisherman

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could attend school, learn his letters, read his Gospel, come to the class for baptismal candidates, and through that ordinance later enter the church, without being approached on the matter of clothing and the advisability of altering his style of costume. He stands no less a man because he has only the garb of a savage.

Before we dare make a change which involves so much, it is worth while to reflect how much is involved. Are you suggesting that the native is sometimes not warm enough? He will not admit it. The oil he rubs into his skin makes him proof against such changes of temperature as occur, and it is a skin that is used to being exposed, so do not feel timid for him. If you give him a flowing loin cloth, and a neat cotton shirt, he will be much colder at the end of a fortnight when the next storm comes, for he will most likely have forgotten to attend to his skin, and the thin garment is no sufficient substitute. We used to give our workmen a blanket until we found that they did not use them, except for trading purposes. There are some very cold nights at Yakusu for two or three months of the year, but the people enjoy themselves stewing in their huts.

Are you suggesting, then, that you think he is poor when you offer him clothing? That is strange, for you will find that the aristocracy of the tribe will be the very last to desire it, and certainly the last to adopt it.

You will not, after what has been said, insinuate that he cannot be a decent man and remain as he is. To make him see that he ought to be ashamed by bluntly telling him to go and get clothed before he comes to you, would be to alienate large numbers of the adult folk. He will come into your presence and into the presence of your wife with not the slightest consciousness of shame, nor, as far as his appearance goes, has he any reason to be ashamed. He could stand thus unabashed in the presence of his Maker.

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Physicians have made us acquainted with the value of a healthy skin. How many dangers from disease are warded off by its free action, and how greatly the system is menaced when that action is impaired? If you take any dozen of mission boys who have but recently acquired the habit of wearing clothing and examine the chest and shoulders, comparing them with any dozen of the village boys, the difference will be at once apparent, and unfavourable. The mission boys have got to be taught yet the duties that must accompany the wearing of cloth over the whole body. Soap-drill—and if they be not riverine boys, bath-drill—must be a daily routine. Every mission station, I suppose, has its boy, or boys, whose clothes are filthy, and who are forbidden the house under many pains and penalties, because their near presence is insupportable. It is not a question of the peculiar odour of a native which one has to get used to; this is a question of dirt, inexcusable dirt.

If clothing is a protection in ideal conditions of weather, surely it is more so in the rain. Not so with the kind of clothing which the African wears. When out with my boys in a canoe, and overtaken by a storm where no shelter was possible, I always insisted on their removing their shirts and girding their loins. The result was, that when the rain gave over, or we reached a village, their skins quickly dried, and they donned their clothes again with comfort. Without your suggestion, and seeing that you did not doff your own clothes, they would have remained as they were—got wet through, shivered in every limb, and with chattering teeth sat round the fire when we reached it, wondering why they could not get warm. A crop of colds or coughs, and perhaps one or two down with pneumonia, would be the inevitable and not surprising result.

Therefore, when we attempt to clothe we must take the whole responsibility upon our shoulders of teaching them the right use of cloth, and where this cannot be

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done it is well not to press the matter. Quite naturally the natives are taking to clothing in many places, particularly round our mission stations and the large Government posts. The neat uniform of the soldiers is a splendid example, and the general standard of good health among the members of the Force Publique is a sign that, accompanied by discipline, it is a salutary change. In our neighbourhood, too, we have the incomparably neat attire of the Arabs.

The fact is obvious that if the white man is to live on anything like terms of respect and close friendship, and have constant dealing with the native, the latter must be a clothed individual. He has been quick to recognise this, and to respond. Particularly is this the case on a mission station, where the presence of white ladies would make the coming and going of boys and girls in scanty tropical attire most undesirable and unpleasant. Alas! the feeling of indelicacy is not in the savage but in us. A girl who has been in the house with the lady missionary several months, and worn her simple frock all through most becomingly, will, within a couple of months of her return to village life, turn up one day on the verandah to greet us in all the bare simplicity of her native costume without a blush.

The hearts of our lady missionaries must often ache when tribal influence is strong, and reforms of the most innocent kind, suggested again and again, meet with so reluctant a response and so fickle an adoption. The Lokele tribal influence is still almost unbroken. Modified, doubtless, by the Belgian régime, it has not been subjected to that drastic treatment which results in broken homes, scattered villages, harassed families and the irretrievable loss of the morale of a tribe. The natives who survive such a treatment may be more quickly amenable to the demands of civilisation and the claims of religion, but who would wish to see them undergo such an experience in





LOKELE GIRL TEACHERS WITH MR. MILLMAN.

As they would wish to be, and as we would have them attired. Tribal custom unrocks them as soon as they leave the Mission premises.

*Photo by the Author.*

## On Clothing

order that some of the difficulties in Christianising them might be minimised. No, though it mean slower progress, expenditure of more energy of spirit and mind, in stern conflict with the powers of darkness, we would ask to be set amongst a virile race, a people untamed, who have not much to unlearn of the many evils which abound on the outskirts of civilisation. The less-blessed of European influences will follow soon enough ; let religion come first.

The black man, more especially in the south of the continent, has brought himself into much disrepute by his childish love of finery, his ludicrous adoption of every kind of covering, from the battered top hat to the stockings with many holes, and his gutter language, picked up only too readily from the low down specimens of our white race. Happily, though much in evidence in some places, such flotsam and jetsam of the young African civilisation are not very numerous. Our esteem for the black race suffers no set back because some who see no further point the finger of scorn at such poor victims, the easily deluded imitators of the worst they see and hear.

We are fortunately saved from meeting many specimens of this kind of native on the upper Congo. Still we sometimes waken in our sleep and laugh again at some of the things we have seen. The foreman who parades on Sunday mornings in an old dressing gown, as though it were a robe of state ! The raw savage who will appear on special occasions in a peaked cap and an old red soldier's jacket with gilt buttons, nothing more except his own modest covering ! If you look him down the inclination is hardly to be overcome to tell him to go and put his trousers on. It is wise to destroy old clothing, especially underclothing, lest it should suddenly appear in a new light. To let a boy purchase, or begin yourself to pass on, articles of wear that you have discarded is to lay a trap for yourself, which some day may cause

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you a blush of stinging shame, or so strongly affect your risibles at some solemn moment that you find it impossible to save your face and must flee for safety.

During the opening hymn of a Sunday morning service, a boy will stride down the aisle wearing his little sister's frock, which comes far short of reaching his knees. Another will swagger in wearing a pair of old pyjamas that are very familiar. A pair of wedding trousers once went the round of more than a score of workmen, until the first happy possessor (a missionary) quite failed to recognise in the frayed, tattered, holey pair of knickerbockers, the garments he had so proudly stepped forth in to meet his bride.

How pleasing, however, is the contrast in the services between the neatly clad boys and workpeople of the station and the opposite benches filled with the women and men from the village in native attire. We look upon the faces of so many youths who for months wore what we term "suitable clothing," and have since gone back to their fishing and their village ways. We often say to one another that we can't afford this drift backward, and while we are perhaps inclined to exaggerate its significance, we offer many a prayer that a change may come.

While ever anxious to keep an open door to our chapel for all, we have felt obliged to frown upon natives who, knowing better from their long acquaintance with us, have yet frequently come into the house of God in all their finery of red camwood powder ointment. We cannot trace any distinctly evil meaning in this custom as obtains among other tribes lower down river, but the Lokele generally adopt it at times of special gaiety and festival, and there is a strong disinclination, if not inability, to reverently worship. At Communion we will not countenance it, and at other times we have let them know it were better to stay away, unless they can come in

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a spirit of worship. This opinion is now widely known and respected even by visitors.

A change is coming. The Sunday parade of black folk at Stanley Falls Government post is a sight. Exclusive of Arabs, soldiers and coast people, there are hundreds of respectably dressed natives. Also in every Lokele village, in spite of the strength of public opinion, there are some who are neatly clothed.

If there is room for complaint it is surely the lady missionary, who has laboured so long and devotedly at Yakusu, who has a grievance. Ever since 1897, she has persistently and quietly sought to influence the girls and women, striving to win their adherence to a simple frock. Workmen's wives were easily won. House girls recognised it as a *sine qua non* of work for a lady missionary. It was made compulsory for girl teachers in the school, but the old folk strenuously opposed it, and in their anxiety to keep in with both parties, the girls would leave the village with their frocks in a bundle under their arms, and robe in them before they reached the door of the school.

One girl, who was an excellent teacher, and wore clothes almost continuously for four years in the village and in the school, we thought would surely be able to resist the drift. Though she married a teacher who had built himself a decent house and was living a little differently, both he and she returned to the old style, doubtless coerced by the elders of their village.

But here also a change is coming. The heart of Mama Mokili was greatly cheered recently on a visit to one of our villages near the mouth of the Lomami, to find a score or two of neatly dressed young women church members frocked of their own accord and at their own expense.

The desire of a lot of young people to wear clothes received a curious set back in one of our large villages some

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five years ago. The chief has always been strongly antagonistic to the encroaching influence of civilisation. A score or more of headstrong lads who had been mission boys for several months returned to their village and refused again and again to obey their elders and take their place as paddlers in the passing government canoes. It was then part of the work of each village to meet the call for paddlers whenever it came and thus expedite the means of communication between Stanley Falls, Isangi and Basoko. The chief, of course, heard of these clothed young rebels and unfrocked them all. It will be many a day before the clothing question makes much headway amongst his 2,000 odd people. What is worse, the spiritual outlook which at one time looked very promising in that place is now, and has been for many months, at the lowest ebb. He would be rash indeed who said there was no connection between the two things.



YOUNG CHRISTIANS: Lokela and Turumbu.

*Photo by the Author.*



## CHAPTER VIII

### Bee-Em-Esí

**W**E have been well served by the rising Lokele youth. One morning in the brickyard I had just given the boys their work, and turning round saw three little fellows standing together. Catching my glance they saluted. When they told me they wanted "likua" (work) I laughed, and said they were scarcely yet old enough to be away from their mothers. Thereat I distinctly caught sight of the deepening tinge of red on neck and cheek as they cast down their eyes for a moment. Then, with a quick little toss of the head, they gave me the names of the towns from which they had come, more than twenty miles distant.

"But my work is hard," I said, "and you are not strong enough; you will soon tire of carrying these bulky lumps of clay, of putting these heavy bricks in the sun, and loading the kiln day after day; you had better go back to your mothers for a few months yet." Tears sprang to the eyes of one of them at this rebuff, and they all protested that they could do it.

No more willing little workers had I than those three, and they were typical of scores who have come to that brickyard during the past ten years. I have never begrudged the hours spent there, and I think my colleagues will admit the same, for we have all had a turn at it. It has helped us to train character.

Often and often I have had to admonish them to carry a smaller number of bricks, and as I have looked at the line of brick-carriers filing along the path, I have thought many a time what a picture the

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unfriendly critic could draw of the nigger-driving missionary.

Young enough to lark over their work they would often get up to mischief, and coming unexpectedly upon them sometimes I would find two boys hard at it scratching and pulling at one another (I can't say punching), surrounded by a small bevy of excited onlookers. Another day, well-aimed pellets of clay would fly from shed to shed, amid defiant cries, as they reached their mark or otherwise. Being but youngsters, this generally ended up by someone weeping and coming to me with a cut over the eye, or on the chin, made by a fragment of brick.

I still recall with pleasure the day I staggered on to my feet again after a sharp attack of fever, and went down to the brickyard under an umbrella. It was my first absence of a day or two from my post, and I was cheered by the look of pleasure on the kiddies' faces and the kindly enquiry from one and another, "Fafa, ole la bosaso louse?" (Papa, are you well to-day?)

Those were the days when nearly all our brickyard boys were Lokele. For some four years now, Lokele boys have rather scorned the brickyard. It is the first rung of the ladder and they prefer to begin higher up if there is any chance. But perhaps it is, that being served mostly now in that department by Turumbu boys from the bush, the Lokele boy feels rather out of it. He is, of course, a cut above the bush boy.

We aimed in those days at carrying a boy from grade to grade if he had any "fote" (skill) or "weli" (wisdom), and after some eighteen months or two years of service placing him as helper to a bricklayer. Later on this meant the charge of a trowel if he was diligent and could show us that he had an eye for his work. So it would mean—1. A brickyard boy, carrying and covering bricks and clearing up. 2. A shed-worker, bringing the bulky lumps of clay from the nearest clay pit and cutting them

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into lumps for the boy-brickmaker, afterwards receiving the newly-made brick on a small piece of board to carry it to its allotted place down the long line of drying bricks. On occasion he would handle the box himself and try his hand with a brick or two. 3. A brickmaker. One day his senior falls ill and he is promoted to his work during his absence. Now he has a chance to show his worth. 4. Taken over to where a building is going up, he has to carry bricks for the bricklayer and prepare mortar in a pit close by. 5. Here again his chance comes some day to try the trowel, and when need arises he is promoted to the daily use of one.

The best bricklayer we ever had went through this routine, and was with us altogether for more than six years; but alas, he is a lad with a receding chin, who, having gained a most commendable degree of excellence, has since drifted back and we fear will never realise the high hopes we entertained of him. He is cursed with the weakness of Reuben.

This system worked very well for a time, but various circumstances have made it difficult to carry out of late. We have produced bricks and tiles by scores of thousands annually for years together, but for three years past the output of bricks has not needed to be so rapid, and for quite that length of time we have desisted from tile-making, having no immediate call for them except for repairs.

A high Government official was so pleased with the utility of the tile we turned out, that he sent boys down from the Falls to learn of our makers, and had boxes constructed similar to ours.

For the rest, the many brick buildings which adorn the station testify to the quality of the brick and tile manufactured, not less than to the degree of skill attained by the boys, who have made the materials and done so much to erect the buildings.

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Nothing could have served better to give us a good insight into the Lokele character than that afforded by the daily intercourse with the boys at work on the station. They are of uncertain temper and need a good deal of tact in managing. They are, happily, quickly amenable to discipline and easily overawed. But it is dangerous to generalise, and we will adopt the safer course of seeking some concrete examples.

In the house I have been splendidly served, and I think all Yakusu missionaries can say the same. With so strong a tribal influence at work we get many disappointments, and some of our brightest boys have left us at most inconvenient times and for quite insufficient reasons. In sickness and in health they have stood by us, showing such eagerness to learn whatever we were willing to teach them as made instruction a delight. Seldom grumbling, they have taken pride in trying to do what they saw us doing. Adopting one of us as a "Fafa," the happy missionary so favoured has found himself shadowed by a willing servant. Nor is this explainable from a pecuniary point of view. They are looked after, of course, and paid a fair wage, and respectably clothed; but apart from this they come for the experience, for the love of change, for the novelty of it all perhaps as much as for the pleasure of the feeling of pride in being able to say, "I am Mokili's boy," or "I work the paka-paka (typewriter) of Kienge," or "I cook the food for Mama Ebongo."

The year of missionary work which is just behind me has been my best in these experiences. For a newcomer my wife very soon got to know the boys she managed, and quickly gained their affection. Perhaps this fact, added to a nine years' experience of my own of their ways, combined to make the latest experience the pleasantest. Within a day or two of reaching my station, in July 1909, Foli presented himself, and being out of employment, asked me to take him on. He had worked previously

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for Mokili, and had been with me in the dispensary for some months. His record was good. A long-legged, loosely-jointed lad with quietly attractive, patient face, and a somewhat shy glance, he carried no evidence in outward feature of his honesty, his faithfulness, his genial disposition, his even temper, or his capacity for steady work. Though not strong, and often feeling "under the weather," he never shirked one of the many unpleasant duties he had to fulfil. In the house he was my head boy, in the dispensary my head assistant. He managed the other boys very well, without "side," and with sufficient authority to greatly assist in the smooth working of the household. He obeyed my wife as readily as he obeyed me. Rolling bandages or cleaning windows, washing the floor or laying table, making up packages in the dispensary or attending to some of the routine cases of ulcer, he turned up cheerfully to all his duties. And he was not yet sixteen.

Not exactly a bright boy, he has given us the best service of which he is capable. In return he has been taught to read and write, to keep regular hours for meals and for sleeping and working, as well as to become used to the wearing of clothes. Best of all, he has become a Christian. But will he continue? In the way of salvation, we hope, yes; in the work he has been following, we think, no. Why? Very naturally his father wants him to help in the fishing. He is not strong enough to resist his parents' wishes. That is all, but that means much. It means the village life and village ways again, and soon the village state of undress. A boy who has been wearing clothes for five years can hardly, we think, discard them again for good, without suffering some loss of moral respect. This is a white man's view and the subject is worth discussing at greater length, so I will leave it here.

A career of much usefulness might have opened out to

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Foli. Dr. Grossule, who attended me in my recent illness, has some native lads under training as assistants in the lazarette for sleeping-sickness patients at Stanley Falls. He offered to train two of our boys in general hospital work if we would send them to him. Foli's name at once occurred to us as the best boy we could send. But he was already hankering after the fishing nets and the free and easy life of the river. To that he will doubtless return.

Let us look at another lad, much younger, who did us excellent service. Shingili was Mama's boy, the cook. We fortunately decided to dismiss the awkward-tempered boy we first employed as cook, before unpleasantness arose between us, and to promote Shingili from being his understudy to the wearing of the cook's apron. Never once did we regret it. He was young and small, but alert, and brightness itself. A will of his own he certainly had, and now and again showed an almost demonic temper, and the concentrated passion at such a time on the face of one so young made me shudder. But that was not the boy any more than the angry clouds, fierce lightning and rolling thunder, are an indication of the fair face of the sky. It was a glimpse of what he might easily become under sinful influences. He had his own ideas about his work, and had the sense to know that the more he watched Mama the better he would do it. Saturday morning he would have everything out of the kitchen and pantry, and what water and energy with the brush would accomplish, that he did. Then he would watch for the smile on Mama's face when she inspected it. That was reward enough for him. Now and again he would have the chimney down and cleaned, because he knew the fire would draw better.

With book and pencil he wrote down quantities of flour, sugar, milk, currants, &c., &c., for different puddings and cakes, distinguishing them by names of his own.





*Photo by the Author.*

THE AUTHOR and ITINDI.

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When told to make a pudding on his own, or some cakes, he would beam with delight. This was the boy who saw that Mama had something to eat when I was so ill. Finding that she was too busy to tell him what to prepare, and too worried to want to eat it, he would put his head inside the bedroom door when the time came and beckon her out. There she found a good dinner, nicely arranged, awaiting her, and Shingili standing behind her chair. Sitting wearily down she would nod to him that he could leave. He remained, however, at his post ; and, when asked why he did not go, replied that Kienge had told him to see that she ate her food. Faithful till the last crumb was consumed, he would then clear up the things with satisfaction and know he could look me in the face.

When occasion demanded, he himself prepared my invalid meals and brought them to me on a tray with a neat white cloth. Sometimes he sat beside my bed for an hour or two at a time, and attended to my wants as skilfully, quietly and gravely as an adult might do.

Into his day's work, which began at 5.45 a.m., he would always manage to squeeze an hour's schooling without allowing it to interfere with the dinner, and an hour in the afternoon for the French lesson, in the study of which, under Monsieur Lambotte, he made very fair progress. His knowledge of English consisted almost exclusively of the following: "Half-a-mo. Good-morning. Indeed, you astonish me," and one or two other expressions. We do not attempt to teach them English, as French is the official language. When we found that his many requests to be taught English were of no avail, he one day quite seriously offered to teach my wife French if she would return the compliment and give him some of her own tongue.

He always cut out and made his own clothes with remarkable success. If anything needed to be ironed nicely my wife could entrust it to him with perfect confidence.

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They chummed up very quickly, and he did much to overcome for her the early difficulties of the pronunciation of the language. Anticipating her request or the gist of a remark, he would correct it, if wrongly expressed, with never a smile. One morning he heard the astonishing statement from her lips, "We will make the steamer now"; but he quietly said, "You must mean the pudding." Another day the equally surprising request, "Bring the flour and currants and sugar, I will make the milk now," and he guessed at once that it was "boila," and not "baele," that she meant. A penny spoon got lost one day and, catching my wife's look of annoyance, he moved heaven and earth to find it, making such a hubbub and threatening his little assistant so much that Jolojolo was in tears, almost in fear of his life, and certainly of his post. At last peace was restored by the finding of the spoon behind a brick in the kitchen wall.

He could not keep away from his work. The Sunday and week-day round in the cook-house was, we thought, too much for such young boys, at any rate we arranged a holiday for them all, one after the other. But when his turn came round Shingili just could not keep away. Every hour he would pop in to see how Jolojolo was getting on. So he endeared himself to us, and showed what a Congo boy can do.

Jolojolo got his name from a missionary, and I must not tell the secret of its meaning except to say that it was a nickname given to him by the natives. We all get our nicknames out there, and they generally hit the mark. This little fellow happened to be born soon after that missionary's advent into the district. That fact, when I recently learnt it, enabled me to decide his age with a certainty which gave him a good deal of pleasure. It was also a fact that saved his mother the trouble of thought as to his name. What a happy idea. How often they say to us by their looks and their manner, "Ye are gods."



*Photo by the Author.*

A CHRISTMAS FEAST, 1909. Hostess: Mrs. Sutton Smith. Waiters: Messrs. Sutton Smith and Pueh. Chief articles of menu: stewed monkey and boiled rice.



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He was quite as old as the cook-boy whom he served, but being smaller, we put him in, and they worked capitally in harness. If Shingili was sometimes domineering, Jolojolo never resented it. I have to thank him for the cup of tea or hot milk which was always at the bedroom door for me sharp at six. We thought him a little good-for-nothing at first, and he nearly proved the truth of our opinion. For a fortnight he was bedroom boy, but miserably failed to give any satisfaction or promise of it in that office, so I put him in the garden until I had a place for him to fill. Having once been in the house, this was so *infra dig.* that he at once refused. An elder brother came along to protest. I had a few quiet words with the boy. He took it sensibly and dug up weeds and carried water for three weeks. Then the change that I have mentioned occurred in the cook-house, and Jolojolo was called to assist Shingili. He was the round boy in the round hole, a perfect fit. My wife laughs still when she thinks of his attempt to make himself presentable for the job. By cajolery, or more probably by threats, he had borrowed knickers from a smaller boy and struggled into them, his legs protesting almost audibly against such infringing of their liberty. Down to the river and then up to the house, with a shining face and a beaming smile, and legs that showed how they ached with the strain. He was taken on, and he literally worked like a nigger. Sharp as a needle and fond of a joke, he was the life of the back verandah ; but keep clean he could not. He shamed us openly round the station with his dirty clothes and the garments he was not ashamed to wear. Incurable, we were always making war on him for this. He loved the river, but he never got there at the right time for us. The soot always came afterwards.

Still, through all this grime he shone brightly. He was the best at arithmetic out of a large class at school ; and, what was best of all, was keen to keep top in that and

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in other things. Often his teacher (Lilemu) would meet him on the path and long to tip him head first into the nearest tank.

Just a few words about a very different kind of boy. Kayumba, the matter-of-fact boy, slow to see a joke, quick to resent one against himself. A little chip of the old block; a bit sly; honest because it payed him to be honest; faithful because it payed him to be faithful; careful because it payed him to be careful. Sharp to see anything that was to his own advantage. An old-mannish little boy. The way he came to us revealed the family failing. "What shall I get for my services?" When told, he of course objected; but worked the first week. Saturday came and he refused his money, it was not enough. "All right, Kayumba, your duties are to wash up plates, cups, saucers, spoons and forks, and clean the knives after every meal, also to take charge of the fowl-run, let them out and pen them up every day and see that they are properly fed. If you don't like the work and the pay we offer, we will seek another boy." His family came to see what they could do. At length, finding us obdurate, they quickly capitulated. A splendid little fellow he proved; but, oh, so wooden—wooden in his feeble attempts at jokes, wooden in his movements, and slow and wooden in his thinking.

We offered him an extra shoka for every month that passed without a breakage. He only lost two out of twelve. In his sleeping and waking moments, I think the possibility of earning that extra twelveshokas never left him.

Though a little sly, he was truthful. My wife recalls with amusement the look that came over his face when one day a plate, placed carefully on the verandah railing, was carried off and broken by a gust of wind. Oh! the horror and despair of it. "My shoka gone." He came later. "Has mama seen that a plate is broken?" "Yes." "Does she know I didn't break it?" "Yes."

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“ Did she see ? ” eagerly came from his lips. “ Yes.”  
“ And I shan't lose my shoka ? ” “ No.” He went away literally rejoicing. The plates were always clean, but my wife always said, “ You mustn't look at the water.”

This chapter has properly no end. What stories my colleagues could tell of similar experiences to that which our late colleague Bokanda narrated. He was out itinerating with his boys among the Bamanga villages on the Lindi. He was being faithfully shadowed by a wee chappie named Bengamissa, whom he left one day in charge of the tent while he visited a village at some distance. Lunch time passed and his master had not returned ; tea time arrived and still he was absent. So Bengamissa filled the kettle and boiled some water, then he found the teapot and made some tea, next the loaf and some butter for a slice of bread. So he went to meet his white man along the forest path carrying a cup of tea in one hand, and a plate with the slice of bread and butter in the other.

Do you wonder that we love them ? We owe our lives over and over again to these boys. Not that they have ever defended us from open attack, nor have needed to ; but in their faithful attention to our needs when thronging duties pressed they have proved themselves our best helpers. After many long and crowded years of service in India, Lord Roberts could not forget an incident that happened during one of the terrible sieges of the Indian Mutiny. In the very thick of a sharp engagement, when the bullets and shells were carrying destruction in all directions, he found his servant standing beside him, and heard him say, “ Sahib, your bath is ready.” Equally have we been touched when such things have happened to us in Africa.

Time and space fail me to tell of Mpeya, Bolamba, Likwoso, Baluti, Kaambo, Bonyitoi, Shuwa, Bosongo of Yalocha, Alaila and scores of others. Of two only, Itindi and Salamu, I may have something to say.

## A Lokele Story

A woman went into the forest to seek for fish in the streams. Seeing a stream with plenty of fish, she stopped, put her child down on the ground, took her flat basket, went down into the stream, and baled the water out of the stream. When it was dry she picked up the fish. As she was stooping down to pick up the fish the child cried. An ape, hearing the cry of the child, came and carried it and crooned to it. When the woman came to take up the child, she saw the animal carrying it, and wondered.

The ape spoke to the mother, saying, "Don't be afraid, I felt pity for your child because it was crying." And he said to the mother "Take your child." She took the child and went with it back to the town, and said to her husband, "I fished for fish in the stream, and an ape came and nursed the child and crooned to it."

Her husband said to her, "That is untrue." But the wife said, "Truly, it is no lie." In the morning the woman took the child, and said to her husband, "Come along, let us go." The husband took his spear. They went until they reached the stream. The wife put the child down and went into the stream while the husband hid himself. The ape, hearing the child cry, came again, carried it and crooned to it. When the husband saw this, he threw the spear, the ape held out the child, and the spear entered the body of the child. The ape said, "I felt pity for your child, and you have not killed me but your own offspring."

## CHAPTER IX

### Itindi

**I**N 1900 I was at the village of Yafelete, then known as Yangonde, about twenty-five miles down river from Yakusu, the first of a long row of villages that line the shore for several miles. Crowds of naked little fellows had greeted me as I jumped out of the canoe; indeed, they had espied me coming when far across river. Running hither and thither in their excitement, they had cried to one another :

“Tene, bonanga wa bosongo owale” (Behold the white man’s flotilla far out).

As the canoe drew near they rushed down to the water’s edge to get the first glimpse.

“Ende to ndai?” (Who is it then?) And one would reply, “Ende Mokili” (It is Mr. Millman), at which another would scornfully remark, “Mba, otilue mbo Mokili ale la baiso banei?” (No! don’t you know that Mokili has spectacles?) Then a shout goes up from a score of little throats, “Ende Kienge, yauku tolamoleke Kienge” (It is Kienge; come, let us salute Kienge).

They peer into the canoe and find boxes and pans, poles and tent cloth, some fowls and bags of rice, a chair and a gun. To them it seemed full of things, and they knew that the “sanduku” of the white man would contain many strange and wonderful articles. They seized hold of some of them and then stopped to catch my eye. A nod from me, and a busy, amusing scene at once arises. Two little black gnomes seize hold of a heavy box and begin to stagger under its weight up the low cliff. Before they get it up five or six are at it shouting and perspiring.

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The tent canvas is another burden which takes quite a troop of them to negotiate. The smaller articles are carried in triumph by single urchins, and the whole dumped down in a heap. The little fellows stand by in growing astonishment as I mark out a suitable site with the heel of my boot. In ten minutes they are crying the news about the village.

“Tene ndako ya bosongo esoswomo lisasaya, esoke-lomo la bisinda.” (See the white man’s house is built in a trice, it is made of cloth.)

As soon as the evening meal is over, I send my boy along to tell the chief I am ready for the magic-lantern service. Immediately he dispatches a youth to beat the big drum. Standing on a little platform under the roof of the council-house, he seizes the drum-sticks and thunders away. His message may be interpreted, “Come quick, come quick, come quick; the white man Kienge is here from Yakusu; he will show us light-shadows (pictures) under the big fig tree on the cliff front. Come quick, come quick, come quick.” Every one in Yangonde hears; some of the people who have gone across the river catch the meaningful beats of the drum, and hastily return. Some with their stools under their arms, and many without, steal by in the darkness and gather up for the exhibition. Scores of little children occupy the foreground.

Presently the chief has come along with his deck-chair and taken his seat, and some late-comers hurry up from villages farther along the shore, within listening range of the drum.

A hymn first, in which to-day most of the Yangonde folk could join, but which then was quite strange to them, and I led off in prayer. At length the pictures, some miscellaneous ones, both ludicrous and informing, then one dozen picked slides from the Life of Christ. Thus an hour passes almost breathlessly, and a splendid opportunity

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of preaching the Gospel is taken full advantage of. At the close I tell them that we cannot hope to come very often to their villages because we have so much to do at Yakusu ; but we are keen on teaching their boys and girls to learn to read for themselves of these things. So my final word was, " Send us some boys that they may learn of us at Yakusu, and later come back to teach you themselves."

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1903. He stood at the door of my house, a bright-eyed, clean-limbed boy of ten.

" Who are you ? " I said.

" I'm Itindi."

" And who is Itindi ? " I asked ; " where do you come from ? "

" From Yafelete," he replied.

" Yafelete, why that's Yangonde, isn't it ? It's a long way off ; when did you come, and how did you get here ? "

" I've been here a long time, staying with my aunt in the village."

" Oh ! why are you doing that ? "

" You ought to know," he replied.

" How so ? I don't think I have met you before."

" Well, I came because you told me you wanted me. You told me one night in the dark, when you couldn't see my face."

He smiled, as he noticed my mystified look, and in his turn began to question me.

" Don't you remember my village, Kienge ? "

" Yes, perfectly ; I visited it before I went to England."

" And don't you remember showing us the light-shadows under the big fig tree, and when you had come to an end you said you wanted boys to come to Yakusu and learn ? "

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“ I do.”

“ Well, I was there and heard you, and made up my mind I'd go. So when Fafa got ready for his next trading journey up river, I jumped into the canoe and said I wanted to go too. He did not refuse me, and when we got to Yakusu I persuaded my aunt to let me stay with her. Fafa, again, didn't refuse me ; and so all the moons you have been in England I have been coming to school every morning.”

“ Can you read, then ? ” I interjected.

“ Try me,” he said.

Picking up a Gospel of Mark from the table, I opened it at random and offered him the book. He read it fluently.

“ Can you write, too ? ” I then asked.

“ Try me,” he laconically replied. Giving him pencil and paper, I told him to write his name, and the name of his village, and some words that I read out. I quickly saw that he could write clearly and with considerable ease.

“ That is good,” I said, and his eyes brightened at my praise.

A canoe journey of some days' duration, and a prolonged sojourn away from home, is nothing very extraordinary to an enterprising Lokele boy ; but add to this the accomplishment of learning to read and write, and I think we must say this little fellow of ten had done well.

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It was many months before I saw Itindi again, but I soon heard of his doings. Not long after the above mentioned interview he returned to Yafelete. It was in the days when each Lokele village vied with each other Lokele village in maintaining a vigorous school. The young people of Yafelete had started one, but they got on rather poorly with their appointed teacher. He was not very far advanced himself, I fancy, and so had not the weight of authority which scholarship adds. One day their unruliness passed all bounds, and throwing down his

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book he left the school in a huff and said he would not return. With one accord, they turned to Itindi and said, "Teach us." "But I can't," he said; "I'm only a little chap." "Never mind," they replied; "we'll obey you, only come and teach." So this little shrimp of a fellow took on the task in fear and trembling. True to their word, when the drum beat, these hulking lads and lasses, and all the smaller fry, trooped in and took their seats on the logs of wood.

Holding a short piece of cane, Itindi stood at the table; and, having commanded silence, gave out a hymn. To the tune of "Crown the Saviour King of Kings," the verse ran :

Bato angosama Yesu  
Oyo asouwes' iyo,  
Efaka nd'iso loiko,  
Etanesak' iso fee.  
Totwamama la fanjanja,  
Totolilesa Bokota,  
Totowatesa Inde komo  
Yolonga bitoti fe.

Verse by verse it was given out, repeated by the scholars, and then lustily sung. After this Itindi prayed. Then another hymn and the Catechism, each answer of which must be carefully repeated until the answer could be given the moment the question was put. They were doing the first two or three sections in those days. The roll call is followed by a brief description of the coloured scripture picture hanging on the wall. Then to classes; and who are the teachers? Itindi takes the upper class of those who are beginning to read, and for the rest each dozen or more have some boy placed over them who has advanced a little further than those he is set to teach. Our little dominie keeps an eye on them all, and even uses his cane with good effect.

It seems strangely unreal to write about, as though they were playing at school, and could you see them in

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their tropical surroundings, it would seem still more unreal. Not so, however, in reality, they were in dead earnest.

This went on for months, and once, at least, Itindi had the joy of being paddled up to Yakusu to the big "lisongomi" (gathering of teachers and their helpers) to represent his village.

Not long after this, he made a hurried visit to Yakusu, and told us in tears that he could not continue his job; it was too much for him. He described a scene that had taken place in the school one day, when his charges had quite forgotten their promise, and the hubbub had been such that he could not quell it. I seem to remember that we sent a bigger boy; at any rate Itindi dropped out of the teaching work, and I lost sight of him again for a time.

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1905. One day I was going down the steps of my house, when I saw a neatly dressed boy awaiting me. He wore a small clean jacket and pair of trousers, and his wool had been well combed. More than this, his face and hands were clean. As he looked up, I recognised him.

"Well, Itindi, you here?" I said, as I took his hand.

"Eingo, Fafa Kienge."

"And what do you want now?"

"I want a job, Kienge."

"Well, I really don't know that I've got a place for you, " but I want a boy who will follow me round and do whatever I tell him."

His eye lit up. "But," I quickly added, "that sort of thing doesn't seem to suit you Lokele boys, you want one job and one only, and when you've finished it you like to sit down."

"Try me for your work, Kienge."

"Mind you," I said, "I'll have no grumbling; I've got much to do and many people to look after, and the

## Itindi

moment I see a tendency to discontent and grumbling away you to go Yafelete ; I can have no unwilling workers here."

A glance from his bright eye, a nod of his head, and the laconic "Try me," sealed the compact.

Giving him a pointing trowel, I took him into the brick cook-house, which had just been roofed and showed him how I wanted the mortar scraped away from the interstices of the bricks so that he could afterwards point the wall. This I also showed him how to do, when he had finished the first task. Whistling and singing he cheerfully persevered until one day he said he had come to the end. I went to inspect, and seeing that I had often had to leave him alone for hours, I thought he had done it very well. His next job was to wash out the dwelling house, and brighten things up. This, in our bachelor days, we used to do regularly once a week unless we forgot it. Up he tucked his trousers, and for the next hour or so bucket after bucket of water thrown down gave any lurking dirt a fine chance to float away. I had been in Congo long enough to know that not even the strongest willed lady could get a Congo boy to wash the floor to her manner and her liking.

Then one day I had to part with the boy that helped me in the store. It was a tempting position involving only two or three hours' serious work in the day ; a position moreover of some responsibility, because of the many temptations placed in the way of the assistant by reason of the fact that his white man could not be always at his back.

By this time Itindi had become my right hand boy, always ready, always bright ; but I nevertheless hesitated to put him to such a task. Calling him to me, I told him my need and my mind. I could see how he drew back, but he agreed to try. Taking him to the store, I showed him all the things on the shelves, the different

## Yakusu

kinds of cloth, the fez caps, the white canvas shoes, the white drill jackets and trousers, the socks, the beads, the enamel plates, pots, basins and cups, the leather and india-rubber belts, the spoons and buttons, and all the miscellaneous collection of things needed in a store where the currency, the iron shoka, must be bartered for.

"Now, Itindi," I said, "you will have to be in the store some days when I am not here, and there is no eye to see you but God's; you will be tempted to take some of these things and hide them in your box, and say nothing to me about it. Others will come to the store and seeing I am not here, will greatly tempt you to give them this or that article, promising you rich reward. Promise me to be true and faithful." His eye flashed as he answered, "I will."

For twelve months he worked with me and for me to my perfect satisfaction. He kept a book in which he put down all his purchases when I was absent. Sometimes Arabs would be there with scores of bags of rice, and onions, beans, fowls, and ducks. He had to keep a sharp look out that they didn't "best" him.

I nearly lost him, however. One day I found my little man in tears and greatly agitated, as I could see by the throbbing of his neck. With my arm round his shoulder, I took him aside and said, "What's the matter, Itindi?"

"Oh, Kienge," he said, "I can't do it. They stood there, and they cursed my mother and they cursed my father, and they cursed me." Wringing his hands, he cried, "It's too hard, I can't do it; give me another job, Kienge."

Moved at the sight of his very real distress, I comforted him, "You don't stand alone, Itindi; I am behind you. They can't hurt you, nor your mother and father. This cursing is nothing, but they shall not frighten you again."

On being further questioned, I discovered that his tormentors were some bullying lads from Yakusu, who





*Photo by the Author.*

ITINDI AT THE TYPEWRITER, with Shuwa and Akufesa, personal boys of  
H. Sutton Smith.

## Itindi

were chagrined that I should have chosen a Yafelete lad for a post they coveted. I took good care to have a few sharp words with these individuals, and they worried my little manager no more.

Out of store hours, Itindi was always ready for a light task. One day I took him on to my verandah, and showed him my typewriter. "Sometimes you have very easy days at the store," I said, "and when that is so you may come here and begin to work this machine gently, practising with your fingers to spell words." He fairly beamed with pleasure. Other boys soon got to know that Itindi was learning the "pakapaka," and small groups of interested spectators were generally to be found in the neighbourhood of the verandah. It was not long before he was able to ask what he should write, and, in reply, I told him one morning to write about some of his experiences in the store. Later on, I found a neatly typewritten page of Lokele on my desk. It told of his call to be store boy, and how he had dreaded it at first; of the "soni" (shame) he had been made to suffer, and the scornful pointing finger; and the biting, curseful words, "Nyama" (beast) of Yafelete, "what right have you in the white man's store?" "It isn't my business at all, the bosongo has put me here." Then he told of how one afternoon he was walking along the path, and Mama Mangwete put her arm on his shoulder and "said some good words in my ear. She told me to work well, to speak true words, and never to take anything without first speaking to Kienge about it. These words I have not been able to forget, and they have helped me."

This was a seed planted in a sure place, and it bore good fruit. I am convinced that more power goes out by the word spoken quietly in the ear than by all our preaching.

It is not surprising that under such influences the heart of Itindi turned wholly to the Saviour of whom he heard so much. He was baptized.

## Yakusu

1906-7. Towards the end of 1906, I was called upon to go and take charge of our new station of Yalembe, in the company of the Rev. D. Christy Davies. Itindi had recently finished his contract and returned to Yafelete. I called him to go with me to Yalembe, telling him that he could be of much use to me there. He consented, but his people were very averse to the project, and prevented him from coming to Yakusu. The "Goodwill" stopped at Yafelete on the way down, and Itindi came on board and hid away. His father followed and made a great commotion. Seeing that I thought my stay at Yalembe would be a permanency, I decided at the last minute not to take the boy as I could not say when I should let him come back. So the father triumphed, and I lost face considerably in the boy's eyes. He told me afterwards that I gave him great "soni" in the eyes of all his people. It was a *faux pas*, for the boy had pinned his faith to me, and he suddenly felt himself undefended.

During the four months I was at Yalembe, Itindi fell into disgrace by taking to hemp-smoking. As a church-member he was disciplined for a time. On my return from Yalembe, owing to the death of Mangwete in England, I saw him often, and gathered that he had not seriously offended. It seemed to me that, in a boyish pet, finding I was not going to take him with me, he turned and yielded easily to temptation. I have written elsewhere of this characteristic of the Lokele youth.

It needed considerable persuasion to induce him to come back to me, and several weeks passed before he decided to do so. I wanted him for language and translation work. With us he soon got into good ways again, and became as attractive a boy as ever. He did splendid work in helping me to translate the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, Philippians and Ephesians, and some chapters of the "Pilgrim's Progress." Though still quite a boy, he showed uncommon ability

## Itindi

in dealing with the many unusual and totally unfamiliar ideas and phrases that came up on nearly every page for treatment. His questions were sagacious, and his answers shrewd. It was during these months that he type-wrote for me the whole of one of my books on the Old Testament.

In August, 1907, Itindi accompanied me, with a number of other boys, on a prolonged itineration by canoe and tent. The last week was very wet, and I returned to Yakusu with a heavy cold. For three and a half months I was scarcely well for a single week together, and spent many days consecutively in bed. At this time Itindi was the light of my sick room. At all hours of the day he would come in, with his quiet step and cheery smile, to see what he could do. At night, he wrapped his blanket around him and slept under the table in the middle room. Without a murmur he would rise at my tap on the wall, and come in to make me a cup of hot malted milk or some bovril.

Night after night, before he put out the light, he would read me some verses from the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles, and then would kneel by the chair and pray. Only a boy of thirteen, but a younger brother to me in my distress. Do you wonder that I loved him ?

Great was his delight when, in 1908, I told him I should take him down to Matadi with me, to see the big steamer. For them it is a long, long way. I told him that I should take him whether his people objected or not, as he wished it so much himself. Early in March we set forth on the "Endeavour." Soon after daylight one morning, the whistle was blown, farewells were spoken, handkerchiefs waved, the anchor was weighed and the current swept us out into midstream. There were the mission houses and the red tiles of the chapel roof behind ; there the little crowd of workpeople and schoolboys, and the three missionaries ; there the bare cliffs below, and the poor huts of the people huddled together above. We looked

## Yakusu

and wondered under what circumstances we should see it again.

In a day we raced to Yalamba, and in two more days we anchored at Upoto for the week-end. On and on the following week to Lulanga, Nouvelle Anvers and Monsembe, where Captain Longland baptized three converts. Still on under full steam to spend the week-end with the hospitable American missionaries at Bolengi (Equatorville). How Itindi enjoys it all. Keen to observe, he begins to write down some of the things he sees and the places he visits, fearful lest he should forget, in days to come, a single item of the interesting journey.

During the third week before we reach Lukolela, we encounter a stiff tornado across a wide stretch of open water. The waves sweep the lower deck, but the good ship rides it well. Itindi's eyes glisten, half with fear one suspects, for he murmurs with bated breath, "Aina batutu ; aina lumba ' (What waves ! What a storm !)

When we afterwards hear that a State steamer following us turns turtle in the same tornado, and white men are drowned in their saloon like rats in a hole, we give thanks afresh for our stable vessel and its powers.

Lukolela on Wednesday, Bolobo on Thursday, and then a breezy run down the channel, with glorious hills on either bank. On Saturday afternoon we are passing Dover Cliffs on Stanley Pool, and before dark we anchor at Kinshasa within sound of the booming cataracts.

Little Hildreth Dodds is on board, with her father and mother. Itindi has learnt to call her "Beauty," and to say it very prettily, too. On the way down river he has washed and ironed my clothes, cleaned out the cabin, made the bed, and helped me to type-write the Epistle to the Colossians. His bright face and pleasant manner have won him many friends.

As we have to stay at Kinshasa some days before proceeding to Matadi by train, Itindi begins to look round

## Itindi

him and think what he can buy. At length we are off one Tuesday morning to Matadi. Eight and a half wonderful hours for Itindi, before we steam on to the plateau and stop at Thysville. Before light the next morning we are astir, and only just in time to save our poor, bare, open seats from being monopolised by a company of soldiers. At 6.30 the whistle blows, and we settle down to ten sore hours on hard boards in a cramped compartment. Frequent ejaculations, laughter, expressions of wonder and amazement, tell how the two boys are enjoying it in the next carriage. We rattle over a bridge, and far below the torrent madly rushes over its rocky bed. "Aina botandu nda use" (What a bridge in the heavens!), I catch from Itindi's lips. Later, as we wind in and out on the precipitous rocky slopes of the beautiful valley of the Mpozo, sometimes seeming literally to hang high over the leaping, tumbling waters, he looks at me with his hand over his mouth, sign of an emotion that can find no expression in words.

Ere we have left the train at Matadi, he catches sight of the "tukutuku ya likama" (huge steamer) at anchor, and from that moment impatiently awaits the day when he shall go on board.

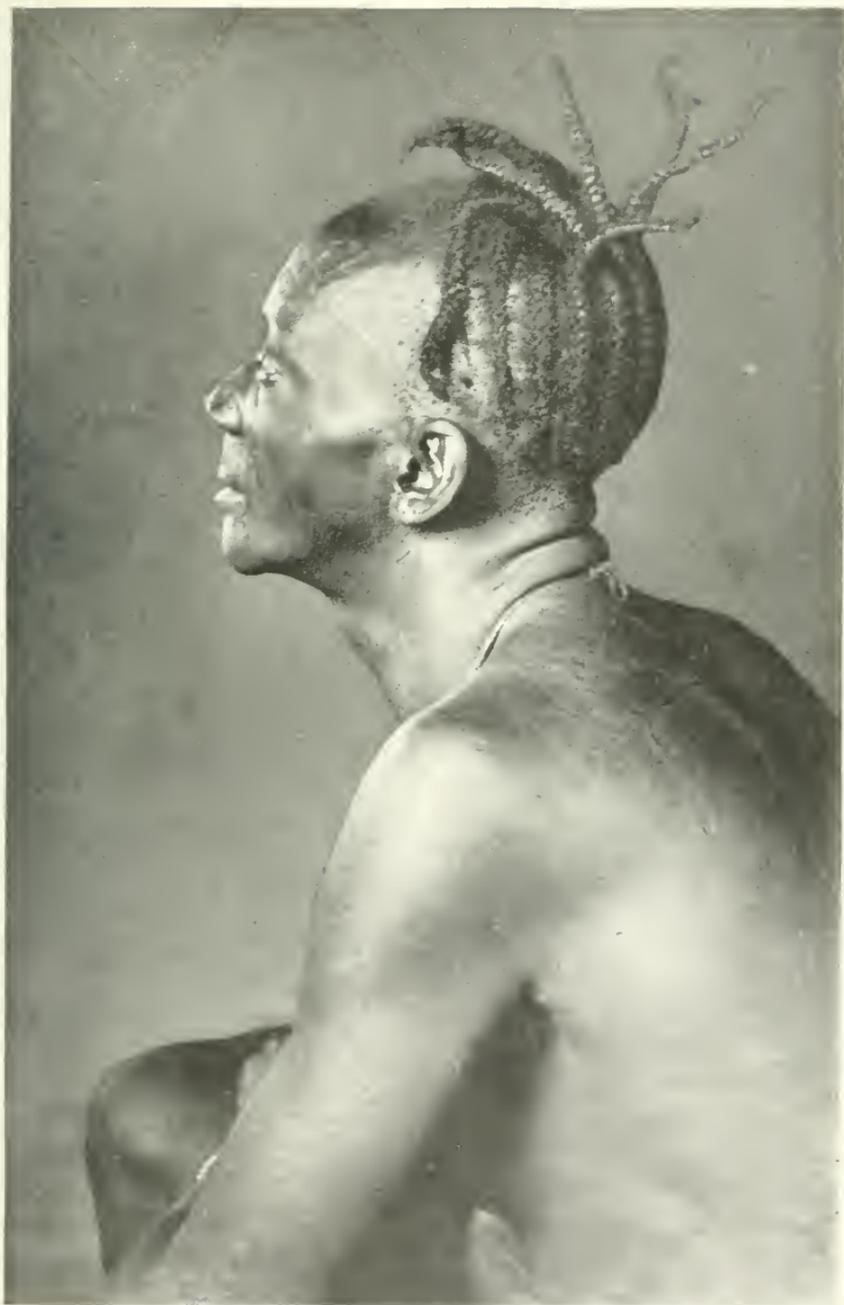
The little boat draws near, and Itindi's eye looks up and up to where the officers and crew are busy receiving cargo, then up and up to the top of the funnel, and yet higher to the top of the masts. Greatly prolonging the last syllable, he murmurs "ilongolongo-o-o; ilongolongo-o." Following me up the gangway, I show him the saloon, the cabins, the bath rooms, the captain's deck and cabins, and the quarters for the crew. When I tell him that all the people of Yafelete and Yakusu could be given room to eat and sleep, he clapped his hands and exclaimed, "Arge, arge; Wende bokenge bofi" (It is a big town). Then to the engine room and I explained how they would go "tuku-tuku-tuku-tuku," for eighteen days and nights

## Yakusu

without stopping before we reached the land of "poto." He laughed half hysterically. At last we stood on the upper deck and looked down the hold, and I tried to tell him how many canoesful of boxes could be stowed away there. Expression failed him once more, and his hand went over his mouth as he looked at me.

The last night came and we went on board to sleep. Itindi accompanied me to the steamer in the mission boat. As we approached it he leant over to me and touched my hand, "Kienge, you are going to your country. You have been with us a long time, and taught us many things, and we love you. We shall always pray that God will keep you and bring you back to us. Kienge, give my love to your mother."

I gave that message to my mother, and it called forth some surprise. But when she heard how much he had done for me, how he had been with me in sickness and in health, and given unstintedly of his devotion, I think she understood why this little African fellow wanted to send his love to his white man's mother.



A TURUMBU MAN.

*Photo by the Author.*

"Having no hope, and without God 'n the 'world."



## “ Tropic Rain ”

As the single pang of the blow when the metal is mingled well,  
Lives and rings and resounds in all the bounds of the bell,  
So the thunder above spoke with a single tongue,  
So in the heart of the mountain the sound of it rumbled and  
clung.

Sudden the thunder was drowned—quenched was the levin light  
And the angel spirit of rain laughed out loud in the night.  
Loud as the maddened river raves in the cloven glen,  
Angel of rain ! you laughed, and leaped on the roofs of men.

And the sleepers sprang in their beds, and joyed and feared as  
you fell.  
You struck, and my cabin quailed : the roof of it roared like a  
bell.  
You spoke, and at once the mountain shouted and shook with  
brooks ;  
You ceased, and the day returned, rosy, with virgin looks.

And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two ;  
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder and  
dew ;  
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air,  
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.  
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain :  
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.

R. L. STEVENSON.

## CHAPTER X

### Impressions of Station Surroundings

**T**HERE are some things the resident never grows weary of. The place is redeemed from any possibility of monotony by the varying charm of the river. It is a poem of life ; a moving picture of surpassing interest. The modern steamer passes frequently, the beat of the stern-wheels being heard often before it is in sight. Once, when three steamers passed in a single day, my late colleague, Bokanda, came running to announce the fact with the remark, " It's like the Thames at London Bridge ; with a ladder and some glasses you could see the Hackney Marshes, if it were not for the forests in between." A little island, nine miles long by one and a half miles wide, breaks the river immediately below the station. The course, being dangerous, is carefully charted and buoyed, and every Government steamer must call for the pilot when it reaches the western end of Ile Bertha. The course is ever changing, and the pilot has to spend much time with the lead, re-buoying and re-charting it. The two largest cargo steamers on the river once spent several days within a few hundred yards of the station, temporarily disabled.

The ancient dug-out, the sole craft for centuries on its broad bosom, is seen meeting the mail steamer. The progress against a rapid current and over a difficult course is naturally slow for the steamer, but when the water is high and the vessel is coming down from the Falls, we frequently but barely catch it, and safely dispatch our letters. In 1900 I wrote, " The steamer returned so quickly from the Falls on Tuesday last, that we scarcely

## Impressions of Station Surroundings

got any letters off at all. I was conducting school at the time, none of my letters were stamped, and Millman had enough to do to look after his own. Meanwhile the steamer was rapidly approaching, aided by a swift current. Pushing another letter into my home-envelope, I rushed down to the beach, while Millman ran across again to his house to see if he could get me a couple of stamps. We had already pushed off when he reached the beach, for the steamer had had to slow down and turn in to meet us, so he gave the stamps to a boy who swam out to us holding them above his head. Fortunately for us the captain is a pleasant fellow, and not likely to make any complaints."

There is still to be heard the catching lilt of the river song from fifty dusky throats, and the entrancing sight of nodding red plumes, glistening bodies and long graceful paddles, which, swiftly plied, gleam as though of glass in the sunlight.

Many silent, forest-begirt channels, seldom visited by man and never by a steamer, are to be found along the reaches of the Congo, but from Basoko eastwards for one hundred miles to Stanley Falls, the river knows no quiet.

Poverty and wealth glide side by side. A woman sitting in the stern of a small canoe, the bow of which is out of the water, plies her paddle with perfect *sang froid*. Leaks abound below the water line, but she knows her business, and will reach her port by many a dexterous stroke. A native chief parades in a huge canoe, with a crowd of painted warriors. A decorous Arab, in long white tunic, reclines under his awning, as his neatly-dressed domestic slaves propel him, to the accompaniment of harsh, discordant cries.

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The day has been unusually hot, the vertical rays of the sun almost insupportable. The "smiting" sun, not

## Yakusu

the oppressive heat, is the most marked feature of our equatorial station. The natives speak of the two hours after noon as the time of "the maddening heat which blisters the feet."

On the day in question, the afternoon witnessed a rapid change. Westward sweeps the wind, and all the eastern horizon of river is dark with ominous portent of storm. It roars through the trees, it lashes the quiet waters to fury of foam-flecked waves. Limbs of the forest giants crack and crash, and flying dust blinds the eyes. How glorious to face and drink in this rush of air from cooler places. After the heat, it comes as a healing messenger to the throbbing brain.

The wind has gone, destroying and purifying with the same breath. There is a hush; all nature waits expectant. Behold an unbroken wall of hissing rain comes, smiting the water to stillness. Far up river the magical line can be seen approaching. It drops like a sheet, and conquers each foot of its path.

Once the storm was suddenly stayed when scarcely five hundred yards away. Athwart the dark wall of falling rain the glorious hues of a magnificent rainbow arch scintillated.

How near the further shore seems when the early morning mist is lifting, cutting its wooded banks into sections and holding them poised, like fairy islets on vapour. At least fifteen hundred yards of water intervene, yet, in the clear air after rain, every tree stem could be counted, and the natives abroad on its banks all but detected with the naked eye.

"When smiles the silent moon in full-orbed splendour," native dance-songs and drums are heard as though on the path outside, so little do the sounds lose in their way over the quiet river. I turn in my bed and fancy the clamour at my door.

Who is sufficient to describe the moonlight nights of

## Impressions of Station Surroundings

Africa? They are dim, cool days. The burden of the heat has lifted and the oppressiveness of the sun has passed. Why sleep when nature has conspired to make gaiety pleasant and every movement a delight? What hide and seek the children play in its deep shadows. The gently beating silver rays seem to cast a spell over all. The missionary with his reading lamp and evening work is in danger of neglecting the quiet enjoyment of those evening hours, through his stern devotion to thronging duties. Still, he will recall in after days with some renewal of the feeling of joyous satisfaction, how much he appreciated those strolls in the cool night air in earnest converse or lightly chatting, a world of beauty around him unblemished, for the soft rays hide the spots. The garden plot looks perfect, which in the hard unsparing rays of the sun is full of blots.

Perhaps one's outlook upon life in Africa tends to become hard and critical, and lacks the tempering shadows, the softer light of compassion and sympathy. We have all entered some lofty temple whose dim, quiet aisles minister silent healing to the fretted spirit. So we give thanks for the light that hides, as well as the light that reveals, for the dim cool nights of tropical Africa.

Dark is the night when the stars are hid and the moon has ceased to rise. Dark but not quiet, nature is wide awake. Man is asleep and the birds are at roost, save for the watchful owl, whose call vies with the many shrill-voiced insects in startling the night air. In his search for food he has no respect for the slumbers of the recumbent missionary. A sudden commotion above the ceiling-boards awakens him from a sound sleep, and the squeaks of a rat in torment, growing fainter and fainter, with patter of scurrying feet, tell of eyes that can see far in the dark, as well as of some long-tailed pests that have escaped.

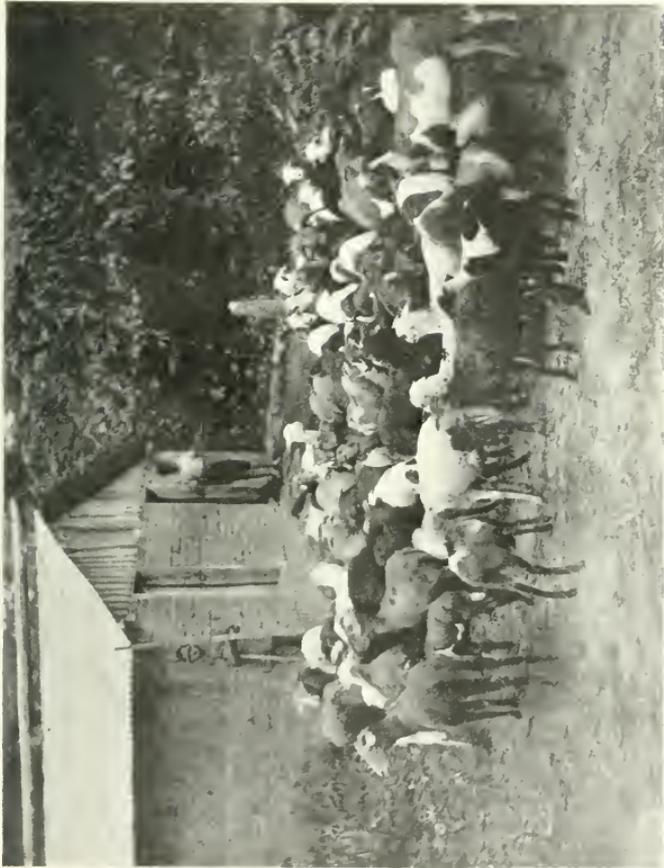
How much we miss by our keenness of daylight vision.

## Yakusu

If for awhile we could be as blind as an owl by day, what wonders the night would reveal before our wide gaze. From some lofty perch we could watch the lightning-like movements of the monster, hairy tarantula on the track of some small animal or bird ; the gliding snake across the path ; the prowling leopard and the quick, lithe steps of the bush-cat after some stray fowl. The advancing swarms of red (driver) ants, which presently will turn us out of bed and out of the house too, could be seen approaching. Long, brown cockroaches that are busily scratching away as they eat the leather off the bookbindings or nibble away at the gum labels of bottles, show instant signs of unrest ere ever an ant has come near them. The spiders nimbly find a safe retreat, and a quietly slumbering lizard will emerge from under the cushion to find a better hiding-place. In countless hordes the drivers come on relentlessly. Through a crack under the door they pour into the house, their serried ranks unbroken until the signal is given. The giant soldier drivers guard and control the rank and file. They are several times larger and more powerful than the working driver. No lust of conquest will induce them to loot and destroy ; they command the actions of the destroying host. Nothing escapes them, every lurking cockroach is found out, stung to death and carried away. Silent signals are quickly obeyed and this perfectly organised host of scavengers splendidly accomplishes its task.

Soon after dawn they may elect to leave. In unbroken array they file out of the house they have cleansed, and you may enter it again in peace. Sometimes by repeated visits they become a nuisance. Seek then their rendezvous, which perhaps will be found at the root of some neighbouring tree, and burn them out with shavings and oil.

Livingstone describes the large spider that makes its nest inside the hut. Often in my bachelor days I saw them



FLOCK OF STATION SHEEP. YAKUSU.

*Photo by the Author.*



## Impressions of Station Surroundings

hanging on the walls of my bedroom. Its nest consists of a piece of pure white paper, an inch and a half broad, suspended from the wall ; under this some forty or fifty eggs are placed and another piece of silky paper fixed on the under side, and the whole made into a little white silk bag. When making the paper the spider moves itself over the surface in wavy lines ; she then sits on it with her legs spread over all for three weeks continuously, catching and eating any insects, as cockroaches, &c., that come near her nest.

Sometimes I have come across one of these silky white nests on the floor, and picking it up, have found some tiny spiders still inside.

In those days when the house was not too often disturbed for spring cleaning, many things went on that were not allowed in my married days. A hen used to lay her eggs regularly in my soiled linen basket, flying in at the open window whilst I was away at school. When that was stopped she found her way round to my paper basket and deposited her treasure there. Another hen laid her eggs behind the wardrobe, and sat on them for a fortnight before she was discovered.

Elizabeth, the owner of the famous German garden, almost exactly describes our station in the words, "Where mosquitoes cease from troubling and the ant-hills are at rest." They (mosquitoes) are rare at Yakusu, and we have taken care to make them rarer by clearing and draining. Sometimes the tsetse fly is caught at night (*glossina palpalis*), and other biting flies abound at different seasons. The people speak with respect of three principal varieties : "Likuku," the large elephant fly ; "wembe," a slim black specimen ; and "shoi," a stout, light-coloured, red-eyed kind.

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The people come and go. The front path is a highway for all. The lime hedges of our front gardens border it,

## Yakusu

and our houses are some thirty feet back. Strange figures are seen on it at times. In full career a crowd of women and girls and little children rush by holding or dragging fish baskets of all sizes. No silent procession is this ; the dust flies and the air is rent with very audible laughter and queer cries. An hour or so later they return from the brook in straggling groups, having caught nothing, but having immensely enjoyed the excitement of it all and the impromptu shower bath under the shady trees.

In the confidence begotten of long acquaintance little kiddies play about on the grass under the trees, or sit on the path at their games, or roll about in the dust. In the season of " wa " they are looking for caterpillars, and at other times catching the grasshoppers from the long blades and stringing them on to a piece of banana cord. Then again, about the time of the rice harvest, two or three will get behind a bush and, having made a queer little conical trap with a door to it, they fix it up in an unfrequented spot and strew rice inside and round about it. Then, holding the string that closes the door, they huddle together in hiding, watching, waiting and whispering. Presently some pretty little crimson and grey rice birds, probably akin to the Java sparrow and just like the popular cage-bird, come hopping around. One very soon hops inside, to find itself suddenly a prisoner. Tied by a leg, it is allowed to flutter around in captivity while others are caught. Then comes the feast.

Noisy enough by day, the path is very still at night. What is that trail we find one morning, from end to end, as of some heavy object dragged along unresisting ? Dark stains mark the path ; it looks like blood. Later in the day the workmen bring us one of our large billy goats that has had its head torn off. It was found a little beyond the station in the tall grass, the poor victim of a leopard. Past the huts of the sleeping natives





*Photo by the Author.*

THE ROYAL BEAST OF THE LOKELE WORLD.

## Impressions of Station Surroundings

that stealthy-treading, ever watchful beast had prowled. Its victim lay outlined against the sky on a little knoll of ground. A crouch, a spring, a low growl, and the cruel fangs have closed on the neck of the unsuspecting goat. The poor thing is helpless in that embrace of death. A few feeble struggles against those powerful, cruelly-rending talons, and, cat-like, the victor seeks to hide its prey. Dragging the now lifeless animal, it makes its way from the town and trails it along, as though mockingly, in front of our houses, from end to end of the station, until it can rest and complete its meal under cover of the thick foliage.

In 1900, twenty-three of our unoffending flock were slaughtered in a single night by a hungry leopard, which broke in through the door. When we suffered again in 1903, a new brick goat-house was all but completed. A leopard, however, got the advantage of us only a week or two beforehand, and twenty were destroyed at one visit. Quite recently, in 1909, we found our flock dwindling, and only trapped the fierce depredator after fifteen had fallen a prey to his fangs.

The goats and the sheep we have ever with us. A fine flock of a hundred and twenty African sheep wander round the station paths, cropping the grass. With a handful of salt you can gather twenty or thirty round you at any moment near the store door. They will lick the salt from your hand, and while your back is turned they crowd into the open door to lick the tin in which it is contained. The goats are more fond of the village rubbish heaps, where plantain skins and bread-root parings are to be found in plenty. They nose everything, and a nice little bit of fish hanging over a fire is considered a dainty; at least, we judge so by the frequency with which women come to us with a grievance. They are interfering busybodies, and a copy of the *Century Magazine* once

## Yakusu

came in for such a mauling as made it fit only for the waste paper basket.

The natives of the village once inadvertently did us a bad turn, though they put themselves about to win our approval. The carcass of an elephant was found by some Yakusites floating past one Saturday. By dint of super-human exertion, its huge mass was dragged to the top of the cliff, at the point nearest to where it was discovered, which happened to be on the boundary of our property next to the native dwellings. The chief forbade them to cut it up till Monday, as he wished to please us by this show of reverence for the Sabbath. The tainted atmosphere is more easily imagined than described, and its full effect was heightened by a slight wind that sprang up and blew it across the station, so that every missionary dwelling benefited by this respect for the Sabbath.

At our first occupation of Yakusu, the "chiggoe," more commonly termed "jigger," was scarcely known. It is one of the benefits which civilization has unconsciously conferred, there being every reason to believe that they were introduced from South America by traders. One thing is certain, this little pest, surely the worst of all burrowing insects that can afflict man, found a home and a climate and surroundings admirably adapted to the propagation of its species, for it has multiplied in myriads, and raced up the Congo valley, claiming its victims more rapidly than the germs of any disease could have done. Many a child's foot has been maimed by it, groups of enlarging egg-germ-peas under the skin quickly accounting for an ulcerous state of the foot, which is most difficult to cleanse, and most loth to heal. Careful, tidy mothers at once grappled with the new trouble, and inspected the children's feet every morning as religiously as other mothers, in colder climes, do their children's necks, but many escaped such a rigorous scrutiny, and not only carried

## Impressions of Station Surroundings

about sore feet with them, but dropped the seeds of trouble for others wherever they went.

Every missionary knows from personal experience what the jigger can do. During dry weather, we have often had to postpone school on account of the impossibility of commanding the attention of the worried flock of children. Of course, this was in the days of the old school building with its mud floor ; but even to-day, with the brick floor of our new school chapel, we have to wash it regularly with some disinfectant.

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The cooing of the " ekuku " (wood-pigeon) from the topmost branches of a high tree in the garden, or on the cliff front, is often heard from the verandah. It is never very long before a boy comes running up with the information, and a hungry look in his eyes. An alighting parrot, or hawk, or flying-fox, will evoke the same beseeching request. Flocks of grey parrots, with red tail feathers, fly over head morning and evening at different times of the year. With widely spread, lordly beat of his wing, the white eagle soars past, watching the shore and the shallow water.

The clear note of the " shokoke " (wagtail) is a welcome sound ; at some seasons they sing as rapturously as a canary. They are as common as the sparrow at home, and being for some reason unmolested by the natives, become quite tame. They will pick up crumbs on the verandah. The bright-plumaged weaver bird, with its dash of brilliant yellow, has come in scores to spoil our trees. With their sharp beaks they tear the graceful palm fronds to ribbons, and carry away the streamers to cleverly weave a nest. Soon a tree has hundreds of these hanging from it. They are noisy workers, but what a clamour arises when a hawk comes near, and, hanging by its talons, callously inserts the beak into nest after nest, and devours the young.

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There are human hawks, too. High up on a slender limb a school boy, who is also a bush boy, will hack away with his hatchet till the branch falls. His companions beneath grab at the nests, and extract the tender morsels that will add relish to their evening meal.

When the midday meal is in progress on the verandah, the eye catches the gorgeous plumage of the tiny sunbird (Nectarinidae) visiting the flowerets of the variegated shrub at the foot of the steps. Timid at first, it gathers courage with each passing moment, and calls cheerfully to its dun-coloured mate. Once a year, at least, we have a snowstorm of white butterflies. For hours they flit across the landscape like wind-driven flakes of snow. Damp towels or sheets hung on a line are quickly covered, but it makes no appreciable difference; they are as the sand without number.

During the all too short twilight, between 6 and 6.45 p.m., we have sometimes caught sight of a bird whose peculiar, tumbling manner of flight alone would have arrested attention. Unsuccessful in catching or shooting it, we have had to be content with such hurried glimpses as its rapid passage in the dusk afforded us. It has double wings, apparently but slightly connected with each other. In size it is, perhaps, a little smaller than a wild duck, but the double expansion of its wings makes it appear much larger. It may prove to be an argus-pheasant.

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The all-conquering wilderness is all round us, and will scarce be repressed. The words of an American settler of 150 years ago seem so *ad rem* that I quote them. "From every direction the forest appeared to be rushing in upon that perilous little reef of a clearing." This exactly describes Yakusu Station. Six months untended would see grass higher than your knees on all the paths and round the buildings, and in a year it would be the wilderness again, the roofs of the buildings alone visible above the tall saplings.



*Photo by the Author*

THE NEW HOUSE OF GOD. Opened 1903. Old building on the left



“ In the path itself there had not been one thing to catch his notice ; only brown dust, little stones—a twig—some blades of withered grass. Then all at once out of this dull dead motley of harmonious nothingness, a single, gorgeous spot had revealed itself, swelled out and disappeared ; a butterfly, had opened its wings, laid bare their inside splendours, and closed them again, presenting to the eye only the adaptive, protective, exterior of those marvellous swinging doors of its life. He had wondered then that nature could so paint the two sides of this thinnest of all canvases : the outside merely daubed over that it might resemble the dead and common and worthless things, amid which the creature had to live—a masterwork of concealment ; the inside designed and drawn and coloured with lavish fulness of plan, grace of curve, marvel of hue, all for the purpose of the exquisite self-revelation which should come when the one great invitation of existence was sought or was given.”

“ THE CHOIR INVISIBLE.”

## CHAPTER XI

### Impressions of Station Life

THE storm centre of the station is a point somewhere about midway between the dwellings of workpeople, who happen to be of rival tribes. It is really not often disturbed, but quarrels will arise even within a family circle, how much more then between tribes that, from time immemorial, have been in the habit of indulging in guerilla warfare to settle their disputes, possibly sometimes with the guilty desire of a feast off the captured victims. When it is realised how cosmopolitan a station Yakusu has been, it will appear a wonder that we have not had more trouble. Within a dozen years Bangala, Bopoto, Ngombe, Basoko, Turumbu, Lokele, Arabs, BaFoma, Bakumu, Bamanga, BaGenya, BaPoi, BaSwa and Bakusu have domiciled with us, taking contracts for ten, twelve, or fifteen months' service, and some of them staying with us for term after term. Fortunately we have not had them all at once, but it has been no unusual thing to have eight distinct tribes represented at the same time.

We look back upon the early days of Yakusu history, when our Bangala friends were with us, with real pleasure. Being near to Mangwete and Mama and Salamu, whom they had known and loved so long at Monsembe, they felt at home and did yeoman's work in carpenter's shop, house building, wood sawing, and station clearing, with a minimum of trouble.

Later on, when we were depending more on Bopoto, Ngombe, and Basoko men for the heavy work, we did not always experience tranquil times. Several of our Basoko





STATION WORKMEN (BASOKO) AND WIVES, YAKUSU. *Photo by the Author.*

## Impressions of Station Life

workmen were married, and had settled down for long terms. They were, therefore, rather domineering, and always apt to take the law into their own hands. Indeed, they were the wildest of wild colts, before they were tamed, and many a highway robbery was committed on the river as they passed to and fro, morning and evening, to the sawpits. Inveterate liars, arrant thieves and desperate highwaymen, they gained the respectful fear of others from their bold lawlessness, much as did the followers of the Doone over the peasant folk of North Devonshire.

It fell out in 1901, that one of them had a grievance with a Bopoto workman touching a Basoko woman, one of the wives of the gang. The trouble occurred early in the morning, but they went off to their work. The twilight was gathering when a runner brought us the news that a fight was on. We quickly scattered to take them on two or three sides at once. Half bricks were flying, and pointed sticks were being poised and hurled. A Bopoto man lay on the ground, dead, as they hastened to tell us, but fortunately only winded with a brick. A Basoko face was gory from a cut on the temple, and the lust for blood was loose. We arrived just in the nick of time to intercept the wounded Basoko man, who, with uplifted knife, was rushing to kill his man. For some time the others did their best to get past us and come to close quarters, dodging us round and round the old school house. But the heart was taken out of them when they saw Mrs. Stapleton standing by the Bopoto men's fire, and though they shouted to her several times to warn her to get away from their spears, she did not budge. Driven back to their quarters they were disarmed, and a guard set over them for the night.

Next morning at roll call none of the Basoko men turned up. Word was sent to them once or twice to come, but they refused. It became necessary now to show who had the

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whip hand. They looked sullenly on as Mangwete ordered their dwellings to be cleared and everything they possessed to be locked up. That day and the next night they held out. About noon of the following day, they sent a deputation to ask what they were to do. The command was definite—"Appoint two of your number to confer with two of the Bopoto gang, and let me know what your decision is; also you must promise not to take the law into your own hands again—murder would have been committed if we had not stopped you."

When once broken in, we have always found the Basoko men splendid fellows. They were the backbone of our gangs for all the hard and difficult work from 1900-1905. After all the trouble they had given us, and no workmen have been quite so masterful, it was with deepening joy we watched a change coming over some of them and their wives. The constant quarrels in their domestic quarters had made Mama Mangwete almost despair. We could punish workmen, but it was not so easy for a gentle lady to make those exasperating women feel their wrong doing. The time came when we had the peculiar pleasure of seeing the triumph of grace in the hearts of some of these, our most refractory adult pupils. Several of the Basoko men learned to read and became Christians.

The jibes of cheeky Lokele boys directed against the Turumbu workmen, are the source, two or three times annually, of a set to. It generally ends in a few scratches and bruises.

An innocent fowl once caused an uproar between the Yakusu folk and the Basoko gang. A Lokele woman and a Basoko dame got to arguing over the scraggy thing, and then to vituperation and screaming, and finally to scratching and tearing. Onlookers from both sides had gathered round, and just how it began we never knew. When we reached the scene of the combat, straight from the breakfast table, the Basoko quarters were literally besieged by

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armed, determined Lokele men. Spears and knives were in only too much evidence, and every neighbouring ant-hill was crowded with excited Lokele partisans. In trying to quell the disturbance, the Lokele chief had, unfortunately, received a wound in the foot, which disabled him, and added greatly to the fury of the onslaught. Of course, the Lokele outnumbered them by twenty to one. It was quite three-quarters of an hour before we got them to desist, and they only did so then, I think, because we had collected a dozen of the Basoko spears and sent them to the house. Bricks and sticks and stones were flying about in all directions, and it is a wonder we none of us got hit. A Yakusu headman came careering along from the furthest end of the village to see what all the row was about, and straightway met a flying brick, which cut open his head, so that he fell where he stood. He was led back home, having left it scarce three minutes before. Later on, when I was dressing his wound I made a few remarks about the wisdom of caution. He smiled and said it was nothing, but added that he should not forget it. I have often since joked him about this little incident.

We can forgive them a few of their fights, as long as there is no malice stored up, no spirit of revenge cherished. Happily for them everything in the station life is against strife, and strongly in favour of peace, brotherliness, unselfishness, and the love that suffereth long and is kind. Incidents like those just narrated are quickly relegated to oblivion.

A mission station in such a position is a most potent factor in promoting the solidarity of the race.

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The noisy centre of the station is easily the neighbourhood of the store. As you jump out of bed at 5.30 in the morning, you can hear the dull patter patter of burdened feet, and in a little while a great hubbub arises around the store. It is only Yakusu women with their

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plantain, each struggling to get the best place round the door. A single woman often carries one and a half hundred-weight of plantain, and when you reach the store you seldom find less than one hundred bunches on sale. You have told them until you are weary that you only want thirty or forty to-morrow, but they turn up just as regularly, and shout and scream and jangle with increasingly strident, discordant voices.

When you begin to purchase, it would seem as though all the furies were let loose at once, as each woman throws voluble volleys of impossible language at you, the while gesticulating with her palms and fingers in a most eloquent way. You take no notice and they quieten down somewhat, but when you shut the door with a snap, the howls break out afresh. "All the best plantain left." "Have you no mercy?" "Must I carry them all the way back?" "Look, my legs are weak, my back is sore." "Just my bunch, Kienge, no more; look, you have missed the finest."

Though such keen traders, they are always overreaching themselves. Look well under the largest bunches to descry the poverty of the land beneath. Three or four broken bricks will support two or three miserable little bunches that had no business there at all. How they laugh when you push it off and point it out. I have sometimes greeted them in the morning with a word or two from the mother-in-law vocabulary; it never fails to fetch them. The usual morning greeting, "Are you awake, mothers?" seems so needless.

The further end of the store, where the barter stock is kept, presents no less busy and animated a scene. Fowls in all stages of existence find their way to it, some in baskets a dozen together; some in solitary captivity, but many swung upside down by their legs, cackling miserably. The very eggs, in scores, try to talk, they are so high. We begin to know how far we are from the native



STATION STORE. Printing Shop and Chapel.

*Photo by Rev. William Foxcroft.*



## Impressions of Station Life

in the appreciation of things, when we come to the discussion of the best point about an egg. The last word has not been said to you about eggs until you have been to Africa. Why we should want to buy eggs to eat that are no more stable than water when broken, is a standing puzzle to them. They eat an egg when it is full of meat.

Much haggling cannot be carried on in quietness. A black man loves a bargain as he loves a good meal, and hence the purchase of a single fowl often costs many precious minutes. The job is really not worth a white man's time; he too often loses his temper, and the fowl he wants to buy, as well. A trustworthy youth, who knows all the tricks of an African's methods of trade, will accomplish far better results.

Sometimes we have a run on an article, and then it is "fowls" only, for we never succeed in getting far from the starvation point in that particular form of fresh food. In 1900 I wrote home, "*Apropos* of my remarks about African fowls, I should say that we have only a few small ones left, and shall be hard up in a day or two unless some Arabs or soldiers bring some along for sale. This evening three of the skinniest I have yet set eyes on were placed before us. We unblushingly took one each, and saved the third for our morning meal. We anticipate that meal with an appetite."

From eight to ten fowls are needed per day all the year round for the Yakusu staff. Once the favourite article of barter was white twill towels. The first bale that reached Yakusu was sold out in a single day. Our fowl pens were well filled after that day's work. The white twill towel has been a good friend to us for some years now, having done more than any other single article to keep our larder supplied.

The broad front path is quiet compared with its noisy neighbour that runs parallel with it one hundred yards further from the river. All the rowdyism that centres

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round the workmen's quarters at the village end finds an echo at the eastern end in the racket of the store, and once a day at least, when the school breaks up and the youngsters pour into it with uproarious gladness, the chapel walls resound to their merry shouts.

That chapel building is a fitting symbol of the "Peace" centre of the station, for there the savage learns to pray, and in quietness to listen to the Word that is "meat indeed, and drink indeed," to those that hunger and thirst. Many a silent vow between man and God has been registered within those walls; many a first resolve to love the Saviour and trust to Him has been formed, and many, too, have risen up anew after a fall to follow the gleam again. God be praised for all we have witnessed there, but especial thanks to Him for His wonderful mercy and marvellous grace in receiving, subduing and gladdening so many wild, weary hearts.

How pleased we are to think that it has become the spiritual centre for the whole tribe, and, indeed, for all the tribes of the district. They reverence the European teacher, and are prepared to obey the word taught them. Three times a year since 1904, the station has been visited by happy crowds from far and wide; villages hidden in the bush and on the river bank, a week's journey from us, contain young people who gladly travel to Yakusu for inspiration and encouragement.

In 1906 I made a journey of ninety miles to visit as many out-schools and teachers as possible. It was a great pleasure to me to be able to give to each teacher a copy of the new, handsomely-bound hymn-book, the kind gift of Sir G. W. Macalpine. I took a case of 250 with me, and all the rest were as eagerly bought as the remainder have been since at Yakusu. Also I took with me a bale of bags, worked up so nicely by the friends of Mr. Wilford in England, and of these I gave one to each teacher, and one to each voluntary helper. Though there were one



OUR BAFAMBA (BASOKO) FOREMAN; Likwoso with wife and family.  
*Photo by Rev. C. F. Pugh.*



## Impressions of Station Life

thousand, there were not enough, for many bought them. This was an especially useful gift.

I returned from Yalamba with Mr. Grenfell, and gave notice to the teachers of the forthcoming meetings at Yakusu on the way as we passed. Our meetings synchronised with the May meetings in London, and our visitors numbered a score over five hundred. The station never presented a livelier sight than it did when all were present, especially at the wrestling match between the visitors and the town, which, though not arranged for, happened to be the first item on the programme. But no, I forgot, the first item was a dole of soap to all the teachers, and not a day before their clothes needed it.

The first Sunday's services were crowded with eager, intent listeners. A well-attended prayer meeting on Saturday night, and half an hour spent in prayer by the more earnest early on Sunday morning, doubtless did much to give tone and spirit to the day's proceedings.

The week was a busy one. All our visitors who were not teachers had a school arranged for them under the direction of a native with the aid of the teachers of the Yakusu school. Messrs. Millman and Kempton gave up their mornings to the training of the teachers, and in the afternoon each examined a number of candidates for baptism. Each morning I questioned some candidates, and in the afternoon gave the teachers lessons from the Book of Genesis, and a writing exercise afterwards based upon the lesson.

On Friday night at the church meeting, forty-two names were passed for baptism. Sunday afternoon witnessed the long procession wending its way across the station and through the town singing, "What a Friend we have in Jesus." Five lasses and thirty-seven lads passed through the waters of baptism in obedience to their Lord's command. Looking up from the water's edge,

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people were to be seen crowding everywhere, hundreds of dusky forms.

In the evening 172 sat down at the Lord's table. It seemed a multitude, as I remembered the time when Salamu was the only native Christian here. Now we have 240 church members (*i.e.* in 1906).

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But this chapter were not complete without a word about the "home" centre. How shall we missionaries sufficiently thank a Society that makes such kindly and generous provision for us in the countries to which we go? To have a bit of home with you in Central Africa is to be made at ease in your surroundings, to enable you to accomplish the most in the long years, because the strain of life and the rigors of climate are tempered by the modest comforts that you are accustomed to in Europe. The rapidly-filling death roll of the past received a marked check when houses were improved, surroundings made more sanitary and healthful, and the amenities of life, before often carelessly neglected, or the lack of them all too frequently borne in silence, were considered and sought.

At no place has that improvement been more marked than at Yakusu. We have suffered, we know, but the health statistics from 1900 to 1905 gave an entirely different report of the station from that which the preceding four years had chronicled. And, in spite of the heavy losses, I think we can speak of the ten "good" years of the staff from the opening of the century.

Nothing stirs our hearts so much as to find our colleagues and native friends greeting us again as we reach Yakusu beach after a furlough in England, and on approaching the house to see the glad words "Welcome Home."



OUR "HOME," 1909. Mrs. Surton Smith on the verandah with two girls.  
*Photo by the Author.*



## CHAPTER XII

### On Neighbours

I HAVE promised elsewhere to give some account of the tribes which surround the Lokele world, and with which they have more or less to do. This is no easy matter in the space of a single chapter, and I fear the treatment will lack in fulness and do but scant justice to the subjects dealt with.

To begin with, the Tovokey or Foma people are worthy of as lengthy description as I have sought to give of the Lokele. They have probably influenced the Lokele more than any other tribe with which he has come into contact. They are far more numerous than their riverine neighbours. Their long villages are scattered plentifully over the hinterland triangular district bordered by the Congo on the north, and the Lomami and other tributaries on west and east. With but one or two exceptions, all these villages lie west of Yakusu. For long years they have been at peace with the Lokele, and in a manner subject to them; at least this must be said of the villages which lie within a few hours' march of the river.

In many ways they are the exact opposites of the Lokele. If you weighed them against one another, nearly every time two Lokele men would outweigh three Foma, and many a burly man we could name who would easily turn the scale against two of his forest neighbours. Slim and fairly tall, they are men of muscle, hardened by a life of great activity. Well-formed heads and high foreheads betoken a degree of intelligence which is well borne out by their industrious life. They possess much of the good temper and geniality of their river friends, without that

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dash of conceit and love of bombast which distinguishes and spoils so many Lokele men.

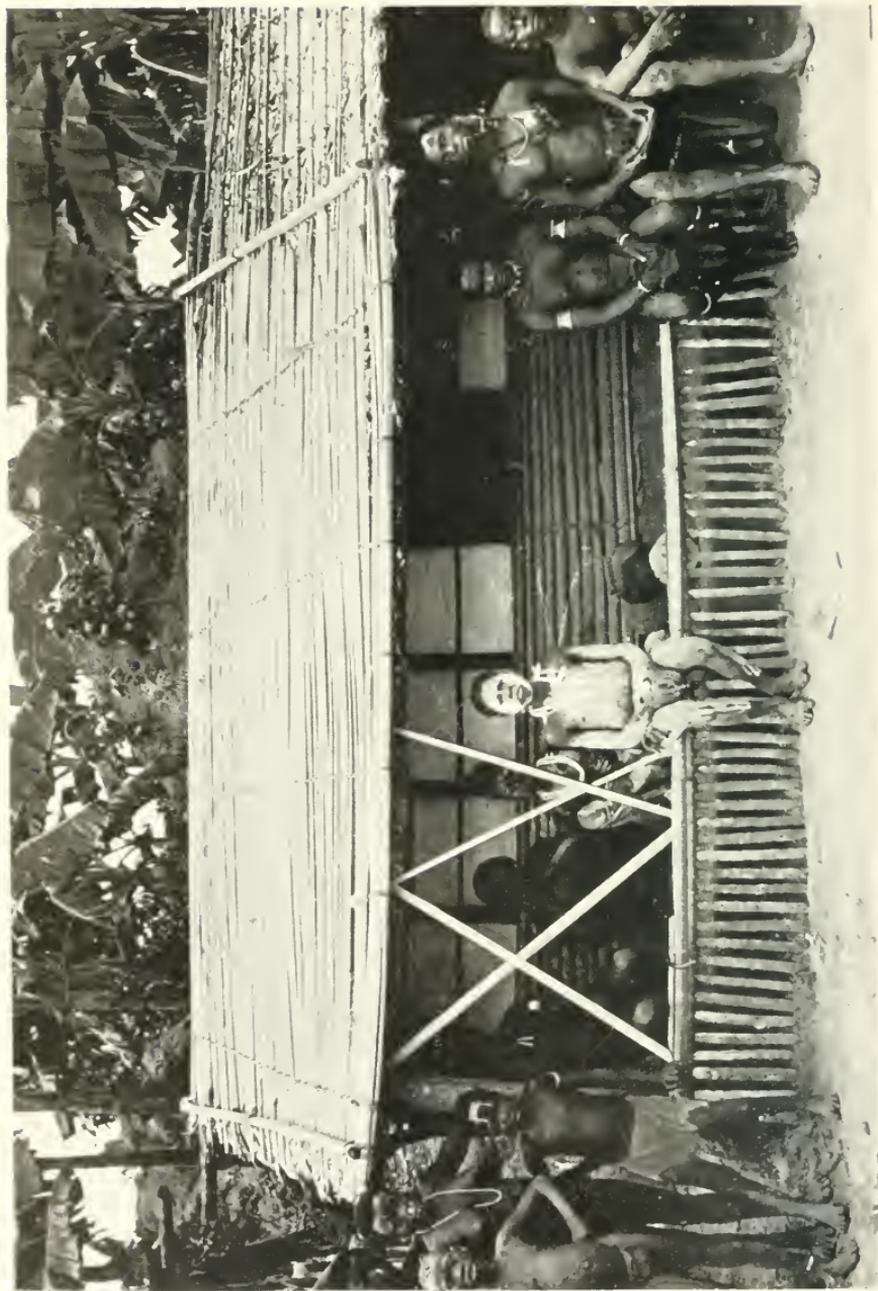
Probably their forest surroundings account for the fact that they go further than the Lokele in the exercise of the inventive faculty. Still, when all is said, the amount of inventive genius that the Foma man can be credited with possessing is miserably small. It was in the Foma schools that we first saw an attempt made at rough benches with backs to them. A Foma lad that I had, though dull at books, was the most all-round clever boy in the intelligent use of his hands that I ever had about me. He served one and another of us about the station for a number of years in various capacities, with faithfulness, and always with satisfaction.

The sobering effect of manual labour is very marked among the Foma people ; it is the characteristic which singles them out as likely to go further in the upward march of progress than the Lokele ; his quieter temperament, more diligent habits, and painstaking methods contrasting strongly and favourably with his headstrong, restless, pleasure-loving, often uncontrollable neighbour on the river. But Foma boys, except in one or two rare cases, will not compare in school work with the Lokele. The latter are brilliant and quick, where the former are dull and slow. Whilst fully admitting that the Foma schools have not had the same degree of attention from the white man, nor so good teachers on the whole as the riverine villages ; also that the young folk are not half so free to attend school as their Lokele playmates, who know very few restraints of work, the judgment is not, I think, too severe. But there is splendid capacity in them for plodding, and they will come to their own and hold it more surely than the others.

It is all for the good of both tribes that they see so much of one another, and intermarry so freely, as there are qualities which each can give the other. Any feeling



A FOMA COTTAGE ON LEGS.  
Leaves of primer stuck in the walls. Boys sit on verandah and learn their letters.  
*Photo by the Author.*



A BETTER-CLASS FOMA HUT. "Lilwa" acolyte sitting in front.

*Photo by the Author.*

## On Neighbours

of superiority that may have existed under the old régime is largely non-existent to-day ; all are on pretty much the same footing with the Belgian Government. The paths between the river villages and the clearing in the forest, with its graceful fringe of plantain trees, where the Foma lives, are well trodden, and visits are made as frequently for pleasure as for business. It was young Lokele men and boys who carried the out-school movement into the Foma villages, and though it did not go with anything like the same swing, owing to hindrances involved by the long working day of the bush people mitigating against its rapid extension, it has caught on in many places and will abide.

The young Lokele carries vivacity and gaiety of demeanour, an alert mind, independence of bearing and audaciousness of speech, courage, and some power of endurance, a zest for knowledge but a considerable lack of the painstaking spirit necessary to acquire it, a love of freedom and rapid and easy movement, a capacity for right-doing, and a strong desire to please. His young Foma friend, while generally cheerful, is quiet, sober in the pursuit of his pleasures, and carries a strong but slow-working mind, a capacity for enduring certain forms of physical fatigue far in excess of his riverine cousin, and an adaptability of ideas in manual labour which easily places him first of the two. He is steady, faithful, in many ways a strong character with the strength which hard labour gives. He is not above learning from anybody, and has largely made the speech of his Lokele friends his own.

By many a fruitful alliance the relationship of cousinhood is rapidly cementing the friendship between these two so diverse peoples, and heredity will do its part in welding characters that shall partake of the physical and mental qualities of both. The capture of brides by Lokele young men is, I should think, as three to one ; it is not often a Lokele girl goes to make her home in a

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Foma village. Quite unconsciously the riverine people are bringing to their tribal life a steadying, strengthening element, that will surely in time help to eliminate the instability and restlessness which characterise so many of them at present.

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The bush people on the opposite side of the river are of a very different calibre. They are a motley lot in many ways. The average Turumbu is small in stature, some of them scarcely more than pigmies. Their villages are mostly the merest little tumbledown, higgledy-piggledy hamlets. There are, I admit, a few notable exceptions. They seem to have been the prey of all men, and even to have needed saving from themselves, for they are most quarrelsome folk. We have often been into Turumbu villages and found only armed men ; old feuds are continually breaking out afresh between village and village, and creating new cause for enmity. They are less numerous than the Lokele folk, both in number of villages and in population. The Turumbu has little to give and much to take in alliances formed with his Lokele neighbour. I doubt if he can add anything that is good to the Lokele character. The union of the two grows a lad who has proved, from our experience of him, very unsatisfactory to deal with. Up to a point he does well, and shows almost as much promise as a Lokele boy ; but, sooner or later, he becomes quite unmanageable, and will suddenly throw up his job and go off in a huff. Before he has reached that stage, he has become cheeky to his employer, discontented, overbearing, and is frequently the conspicuous figure in fights and rows.

In fact, we get on much better with the pure Turumbu boy. Unpretentious, unassuming, he yields to the bullying Lokele what he knows he cannot hold ; but, when backed by others, he will sometimes show his teeth to good





*Photo by the Author.*

EVENING SCHOOL FOR TURUMBU WORKMEN, Mr. Wilford at the board.

## On Neighbours

effect. Indeed, the swaggering Lokele has to mind his p's and q's, for Turumbu spears are very sharp, and can be aimed with remarkable precision and force. Moreover, they have shown no lack of courage in aggressive warfare in the past, as the need for the ditch dug across the Yakusu gardens bears witness. There is also another potent cause for discreet conduct on the part of a Lokele, since there is more "medicine" in one little Turumbu hamlet than in two or three large riverside villages, and the men who can make it, and use it effectively, are probably as five to one. These things help to explain why the Turumbu has held his own, and why many a Turumbu maiden has found a Lokele husband, and sometimes a Turumbu man a Lokele bride.

For ten years past, Turumbu lads and men have figured largely in our station gang, and have borne the brunt of much rough work. We should have got on but poorly and slowly without them. A few have done well in the carpenter's shop, but with these exceptions, until quite recently when two have become bricklayers, their work has been of the unskilful order, cutting firewood for the kilns, burning the bricks, station clearing, the making and roofing of wattle and daub dwellings for the staff, and road-making, &c. The boys have sometimes done better—there have generally been one or two on house work for one of the missionaries, and for a considerable time now they have practically been responsible for all the operations in the brickyard. They are quite inferior to the Lokele in school work. Mentally they are mostly an awkward squad; physically they are certainly a poor lot, and there seems evidence enough to show in a weakened manhood that their morals are debased, and that their influence on the Lokele is in this respect pernicious.

Having said so much, I ought to add that every Yakusu missionary remembers with pleasure the visits he has

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paid to Turumbu villages. The exuberance of the welcome ; the evident delight of the folk to see him ; their care to make his stay as happy as possible ; their unquestioned confidence in him, and their readiness to listen to his message, combine to make our trips into the bush on the north bank most enjoyable. Out-schools have done but poorly among them ; but scores of their boys have been in to Yakusu for months together, and in no villages over a wide area is the missionary treated more as a father than there.

How does the Turumbu strike me ? Somehow as a very irresponsible, puerile fellow. He is genial enough, apt to fawn, but devoted, and as faithful as a dog when he becomes attached to you. His character is one that can place absolute and more than ordinary reliance on your power and goodwill to provide for him and to protect him. He does not look far ahead. Of four tribes represented by the boys of my house staff, a Turumbu lad was one of the best mannered.

It were invidious, perhaps, to speak of him as dirty, when I have said nothing about the cleanliness or otherwise of the Foma. The riverine folk easily hold the palm for personal cleanliness, but there are degrees in this as in everything else. However, when a whole Turumbu village in the bush depends on a little trickling stream for drinking and bathing purposes, you may be quite sure of meeting some very dirty natives there. On the station Turumbu boys can be, and generally are, as clean as the rest. Still the station ragamuffin has been a Turumbu boy for long enough.

Incorrigible cannibals as they have been in the past, surpassing, one would imagine, their near tribal neighbours in their ferocity and abandon to the lust for human flesh, they show themselves to-day with still many traces of their former wildness. Opposite to the mouth of the Lomami tributary there was, for a long time, a really

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large Turumbu village (estimated 5,000 people), and when I visited the chief at the end of 1903, I spoke and wrote of him then as "The last of the true Turumbu chiefs." His fame as a cannibal and the terror of his name was in all that region. Absolutely unscrupulous in the taking of life, I heard strange and gruesome stories of his barbarities. I visited him, followed, not without trepidation, by a few of my boys. He listened with some degree of patience to what I said as he squatted over the fire, his unpleasant-looking eyes fixed, quite often enough for my comfort, on my face. He had given me no welcome, not even offered me a seat. When I had finished, he remarked with a disdainful sort of smile, that there was a chief a little further on who, doubtless, would be very interested in what I had to say. Lawless and defiant, I was not surprised to hear some months later that Ifulufulu had been brought to book for his many misdeeds, and his power for ever curbed.

There are, then, undoubted traces that the Turumbus have been a larger, more important tribe than we find them to-day. Their happy hunting ground has been the forest land between the Lindi and the Aruwimi, bordered on the south by the Congo. They do not seem, however, to have had relations with any other tribe than the Lokele, though the language they speak has some remarkable similarities to that spoken by the natives round Yalamba. They must have suffered severely from the Arab raids, and the horrors of that night of terrors helps perhaps to account for so many of them being timorous mortals, not absolutely devoid of courage, but afraid to show that they can be courageous. They will strike and run away to hide to see what the effect has been. An out-in-the-open, stand-up fight would hardly suit them. They are deplorably lacking in initiative. They are of the folk who will trap the larger animals instead of attacking them openly; but this is, of course, true of many other bush

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people, who cannot well do otherwise for lack of open spaces, and because of the habits of the animals they hunt.

There have not been wanting indications that west of Romée they have been worried too much over the rubber tax, and that the much unsettled state of the tribe has suffered still more through the unscrupulous demands of a Government which has not concerned itself seriously enough with the conditions of their life, and the things that make for their prosperity.

They are indefatigable hunters with nets, traps, spears, knives and even pointed sticks. They live on plantain, bananas, maize, breadroot, the fruits and nuts of the forest, and the flesh of the animals they trap and kill. The small fish of the streams are skilfully trapped, and smoked portions of the larger fish of the Congo are purchaseable on the Lokele markets. That he does not "know" the river, which means that he cannot swim and is afraid to trust himself to a canoe especially in rough water on the wide river, makes the Turumbu the butt of never ceasing jibes from his more daring river friends.

On the whole, they are an interesting folk, quite friendly, easy to approach, and to get on with, and we are glad that they turn with the same readiness as the Lokele to welcome the Gospel. This is reaching them also through the medium of the Lokele tongue.

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It could not have taken long for the Lokele people to decide that the BaGenya were their own sort and worthy in every way of their friendship. These 3,000 odd people, now settled round the seventh cataract at Stanley Falls, migrated from a point 200 miles or more along the Lualaba, where they occupied a district on the western shore of the main river. This we know—that the people to-day found round the State post of Lova claim to be of the same descent. How long ago they left their ancestral home, and why they did so, are questions that are



*Photo by Rev. C. F. Pugh.*

A. TURUMBU VILLAGE. shewine School-house, and Mr. Millman standing amongst the people.



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shrouded in the mystery of the past. The reason once given me for this move, that some of them were struck with the wonderful possibilities existing at the seventh cataract for the lucrative pursuit of their calling as fishermen, seems a probable motive, coupled as it was with a description of the difficulties they had experienced in getting a livelihood in their old district.

Whether that was the inspiring motive or not, down they came, and it cannot have been long before the ubiquitous Lokele found himself admiring the daring and skill of his new BaGenya neighbours at Zingitingi.

No one who looks upon those seething waters can fail to be struck with the peril of the task, and the risks that the brave people run in reaping their rich harvest of beautiful fish. Mr. Stanley's words vividly depict the scene:—

“ These people are all devoted to fishing. The two main channels are almost bridged at the Falls. At very low water they plant poles between the rocks, and by lashing cross poles and propping up the uprights, they have secured access towards the centre of the raging waters. With cables of rattan, they lash their baskets into which the fish are swept, and each day these are visited by the daring fishermen. The little island in the centre is reached in large, broad canoes. It is an exciting sight to see forty fellows paddle one of these through the waves heedless of the boiling and dangerous waters. They advance along the left bank, and then by desperate strokes they edge diagonally across the stream ; the water above the Falls being level with their heads. They miss the island as often as they reach it. If they are unsuccessful, they are swept down the united channel, which is a stretch of roaring water, at express speed, to try again the dangerous course. But if they can only succeed in holding their own, by dint of united straining and tearing at the water, they will touch the lee of the island,

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and a few more rapid strokes will bring them to the shore and their nets. If the nets are full, the fishermen send up a long, wailing shout, which is gladly echoed by the people on the isles, who have gathered each day to watch the daring venture. They think nothing of crossing the raging waters between the other two islands. The feat is performed every few minutes by men, women and children. Such a ferry was never seen. From a little distance off the river, so rapid is the movement, so steep the slope, that one might say that the voyagers were skating down an ice-covered hill. The islanders have not yet adopted electric signals, but possess, however, a system of communication quite as effective. Their huge drums by being struck in different parts convey language as clear to the initiated as vocal speech. Their wealth consists solely of fish. Perhaps the average daily catch may be a thousand, of from five pounds to half a hundred-weight."

These people struck Mr. Stanley as being not only more industrious than the aboriginal Baswa, but also more inventive than any he had yet seen, for, "in their villages we discovered square wooden chests, as large as an ordinary portmanteau, wherein their treasures of beads and berries, large oyster and mussel shells, were preserved. The paddles were beautiful specimens made out of a wood very much resembling mahogany; a vast quantity of half-inch cord made out of the hyphene palm and banana fibre was also discovered. In almost every house there were one or more ten-gallon earthenware jars filled with palm butter, while ivory seemed to be a drug, for we found three large tusks entirely rotten and useless, besides numbers of ivory-ware horns, and ivory pestles for pounding the cassava into flour."

This description was written quite thirty years ago. The visitor to-day will hunt in vain for some of the things Mr. Stanley mentions as the treasures of the people, but let him turn to the race and he will quickly find them

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possessed of the same hardy qualities, and discover that the inventive genius has suffered scarcely any diminishing by the passing of two generations.

These BaGenya, or folk of BaEna, can learn as quickly as the Lokele. Of this I am fully convinced, but the conditions have been nothing like so favourable. Their nearness to a large and important State post has involved them in constant portorage and other work of a most onerous nature. They have survived in spite of it, and have evidently not felt the burden too great, for happily the Government has had no lack of native workmen to help mature the plans and carry on the work at so large and important a post. The presence also within the same narrow limits of space of an extensive Arab settlement has done them little good, and certainly done their morals much harm. While the Lokele is mildly vicious, his BaEna neighbour is fiercely and uncontrollably so. Troublesome thieves and unblushing liars, unbridled too in the exercise of their passions, they have need, indeed, of a transforming, uplifting Gospel.

Sanguinary struggles have been of frequent occurrence amongst them. Our schoolwork has not prospered. It began well in two of the villages in 1904, and a third made a start, but in eighteen months an ebb set in, which, with our own inability to continue an efficient supervision, accounted for the dwindling of the effort. Good teachers left by reason of the frequent trouble amongst the people, and others were afraid to go. The evil amongst so mixed a population as is to be found at the Falls, free from the restraints of tribal custom, are of the grossest nature, and the temptations consequently such as to lead the strongest astray, so that some of our teachers, who were only beginners in the Christian life, easily fell. Of a visit which I paid during December, 1905, I wrote: "We have two good school buildings

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put up by the BaGenya themselves, while a third has fallen down, and has not yet been restored. I find twenty-four who can read, and about twenty-five more who are sticking to it. I cannot speak of any more at present, though some have books. In the three villages there are twenty-one members of Christian Endeavour. On Saturday morning I sat under a rough sun-shelter. The big drum was there in front of me, and half a dozen deck-chairs were round the fire. Many were away at work for the State, and I could not hold school until they returned. But five young men were there with me and they were professing Christians. Without a shepherd they had all been led astray of the evil one. There was a bit of defiance in their attitude at first, and there was only one who seemed in any way ashamed. He was crouching on the ground beside my chair, his face half hidden in his hands. He sat quite still as I listened to the story of wild orgies, and the temptation to join in them which proved irresistible. I will draw a veil over this scene, showing the obscenity of the African at its worst, and proving so plainly that Satan has his seat here. Then I turned to the young fellow beside me, who, in reply to my query, said, 'Yes, I have sinned, but not with their sin. When I have been tempted to join them I have gone to my house and smoked hemp, and at other times I have smoked.' "

While quite a small element, it is yet an important one, and the Lokele has gained something, doubtless, by this alliance. If the standard of moral conduct of the latter is on a higher level, and there would appear no reason to doubt it, one fears that it is the Lokele who falls to the lower level, when opportunity is given, and not the BaGenya who rises. But the pure Gospel message will carry the former higher still, and when the BaGenya seriously consider it and gladly accept it, they also will know a compelling force that will draw them up too.

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The Bamanga people of the Lindi lie somewhat off the beaten track of Lokele travellers, and seem to have little in common with them. From whence they have come is a mystery, since their language indicates that they are not of Bantu origin ; at least it does not conform to Bantu rules of construction. It may be they are the remnants of a larger tribe which has wandered southwards from the Southern Soudan. There they are, some 15,000 people, living on the banks of one of the most charmingly picturesque and dangerous of Congo tributaries. It is easy to imagine oneself in fairy land, when after a most enjoyable canoe journey, one sees from the water a small village of conical huts, that look for all the world as though they might have dropped out of Noah's ark. Larger villages are found which consist solely of one long narrow street lined by these queer abodes of men, which, as you walk along, appear to be all doorless. Occasionally a small sun-shelter blocks the whole path, and under this the men sit in the heat of the day, busy with their wood-carving, or net making or mending. The nets are strong and of wide mesh, for hunting, not fishing. Plenty of little black urchins have come out from between the houses to shyly salute you as you pass, and run away again. If you want to find the women you must go behind the houses. Unlike the Lokele, the domestic quarters of these Bamanga villages, and even the entrance to their houses, are at the back.

The Bamanga folk are industrious and very soberly so. They seem like people who have suffered for generations from being whipped, and can't recover their spirit and go. They are tall, gloomy, taciturn folk. Disease has made ravages amongst them. During the smallpox epidemic of 1900, we have evidence enough to lead us to think that one, if not more, of their villages was entirely wiped out. They, too, are a people, like the Turumbus, whose prosperity and material progress, we fear, have never received worthy

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consideration from the Government. There has been strong cause for us to conclude that in the past they have been made a prey of, and burdened with taxes which have left them too little time to make necessary provision for their own simple needs.

They are to-day largely an unhealthy people, who either do not know the value of salt, or else, through long seasons of misfortune and deprivation, have forgotten its precious preventive and healing properties, and neglected its use ; or else have, of recent years, been too much worried about rubber to be able to carry on their own industries, canoe making, drum-carving, carving of stools, salvers, waterscoops, spoons, &c., and so have been unable to make sufficient to barter them with others for the salt which they so much need.

The impression is strong upon us that they have decreased in numbers considerably in a single decade, and that is a worrying, uncomfortable thought. Our relations with them recently have, unfortunately, not been of a very satisfactory nature. We have been unable to accomplish much amongst them, because they have invariably, during the past three or four years at any rate, hailed our coming as that of deliverers, and consequently much embarrassed us in our efforts to teach and instruct them. It is part of our work to succour the oppressed, and we have not shirked our duty to report things that we heard of at Head-quarters and obtain redress.

From 1904 to 1908, we were never without some Bamanga boys on the station. They did not mix well with the other boys, and were generally a little community apart. They felt the language barrier more than others I fancy, and were certainly less lively and mischievous. With one or two rare exceptions they did not shine at their books, and were astonishingly slow to adapt themselves to the ways of the station. To get them



*Photo by the Author.*

A BAMANGA GROUP.



*Photo by the Author.*

A BAMANGA VILLAGE STREET.

## On Neighbours

down to the river for the necessary daily ablutions was always a task. My late colleague, Mr. Kempton, had a good deal to do in getting a number of these boys to come to us, and had perhaps more to do with them than any of us while they were at Yakusu. He was, I know, pleased with their faithfulness and devotion. One little fellow he had in the house was certainly as sharp as a needle, a bright, attractive boy; and another possessed a fund of quaint, pawky humour that made him the friend of all.

A little boy and girl that my colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Millman, had in the house during 1908 and 1909, proved as interesting characters as any we have had at Yakusu. My colleagues were sorry when they left, induced by their people to return when they had, in reality, but just commenced their training.

We hope that better times are in store for the Bamanga, when they shall be able to pay a reasonable tax, not in rubber or in forced labour, but in money, and have leisure to resume their old-time industries. We look to the new Government régime to accomplish this, and sincerely hope that it will be able to credit itself, at the end of the present decade, with having saved an industrious folk from the fate of a slowly crushing adversity, and restored them to something approaching their ancient prosperity.

The schools we had established amongst them by their earnest request, during 1907 and 1908, not being the outcome of a spontaneous desire among the young people for education as amongst the Lokele youth, quickly died a natural death. However, the Gospel seed has been sown in many a heart, and ere long some softening shower of divine mercy, and the warm sunshine of a better opportunity, will break up the hard earth and allow the fair plant of faith to grow. It will be a glad day, indeed, for the Bamanga when they shall know Him Who wipeth away all tears from their eyes, and Who bringeth to earth's toilers true heartsease and abiding rest.

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What can I say that is good of the Bakumu? They have invaded the district in thousands, pressing westward, directed perhaps in their wandering by the commands of the Government, anxious to people the neighbourhood of Stanley Falls with such successful forest levellers and cultivators of the soil as these folk have proved themselves. They swarm further east and south, in the hinterland on both sides of the river round Ponthierville and in the watershed between the Chopra and the Lualaba. They are indefatigable workers, and most courageous in the field. Many can be found amongst them who have served their military term for the Government. They are made of the stuff that does not know defeat, as far as the natives of Africa can be said to possess it. Opposite to Yakusu lives an old chief who is a mighty elephant hunter. I missed him for months together, and having to pass through his square almost daily in my visits at that time to our sawpits, I wondered what had become of him. At first I heard that he was off on the trail, and then no news for a long time. One day, months after I had given him up for dead, I saw him coming to greet me in just the old fashion, only that walking was painful to him and he was much emaciated. We sat down on a tree trunk, and I fitted together, bit by bit, the gruesome story as it fell from his lips in broken Kingwana. A huge monster had been speared, and turned on its foe. Long scars on the abdomen and the thigh corroborated his account of that attack. There, where he fell, he went asleep for a long time, and when he awoke he was obliged himself to attend to his wounds and try to restore the protruding organs to their place. For ten months he lay in a distant village sick unto death. Being a man of fifty years of age, he must have often wanted to die and find relief from his sufferings. But as I sat there and looked into his face there was no shrinking, and no trace of fear. Within a few weeks of that interview, I heard that





A BAKUMU VILLAGE STREET. Senga, the mighty elephant hunter, stands on the right.

*Photo by the Author.*

## On Neighbours

he was off again, keen as ever. Indomitable; you cannot but admire their pluck.

Their houses, built to last but a couple of years, for they are always seeking virgin ground for their plantations, are models of simplicity and neatness. To the foreigner their villages form a most pleasing contrast in their order and symmetry to the chaotic confusion of huts in the average Lokele village. In personal appearance, however, the Bakumu are far inferior to their Lokele neighbours; in cleanliness they cannot hold a candle to them, and for openness and candour they must not be named on the same page. In saying this, I do not whitewash the Lokele, only that we know whose word we should the more readily believe, and to whom we would more willingly trust our persons and our property.

Linked with their extraordinary capacity for industry is a more than ordinary wilfulness; a wildness that knows no law. Of all the peoples around Yakusu, I think they are the most obscene, indulging with frantic, demoniacal delight in the most shameless orgies. They are of treacherous spirit, and their "medicine-making" powers are consequently much feared. A Lokele will never leave a crumb of anything he has been eating, or any article in his possession, near a Bakumu village, where it might be appropriated and the spirit of it turned against its former owner by a malevolent-minded native. The presence of such people may be tolerated by the Lokele now that he is no longer the final arbiter of his own and others' destiny, and the results of their industry taken advantage of for commercial purposes, but any further intimacy is impossible. Their habitually unfriendly ways make them aliens.

There are some indications of late months that our intercourse with them will be more fruitful of good than it has yet been. We have made many attempts to get boys to come to us with only varying success. Two or

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three schools established have not done well in their villages. Probably half a dozen is the total of those who can read and write, and only one has been baptized.

The Roman Catholics have gained a strong hold amongst the Bakumu villages east of the Lindi mouth, though I have no means of telling how many adherents they number. They do not appear to have had any more success than we have had in carrying on village education, but the nearness of several villages to their headquarters at Ste. Gabrielle has enabled them to get hold of the young people better.

Recently many huts have sprung up within a few hundred yards of the B. M. S. station on the same bank, and the people are showing a greater desire to be amiable. Though we cannot talk to them in Lokele, there is a number of young people round us who know sufficient Kingwana (localised Swahili) to be able to conduct evangelistic services amongst them. It is necessary that one of the Yakusu missionaries should know Kingwana fluently for the sake of the Bakumu work and that around the Falls. In 1906 I had obtained a speaking acquaintance with it, and begun to feel my feet in addressing them, but the subsequent pressing claims of the Lokele work forced the abandonment of that effort, and I have never had the opportunity to catch up again.

They are a people that must be saved.

If this chapter enables our many friends to visualise the pressure that weighs on us at Yakusu by reason of the conflicting claims of such diverse clans, and the bewildering variety of personality to be tactfully, sympathetically dealt with in our attempt to bring them into subjection to Christ, their Lord and ours, I shall not regret this unsatisfactory, because all too brief, attempt to describe Lokele neighbours.

## CHAPTER XIII

### On "Zingitingi"

**W**WE have watched Zingitingi grow. Its development has been phenomenal, and, from a Government point of view, infinitely important. Stanleyville, with its more picturesque native name of "Zingitingi," or "Kisangani" as the Arabs call it, is the capital of the Province Orientale, stretching from the borders of Uganda on the east to the Lomami tributary on the west; and from the Aruwimi on the north to the northern border of Rhodesia in the south. On Stanley's memorable journey it was the western centre of the Slave Raiders, where Tippu Tib held his court, and from which point they confidently expected to sweep the teeming villages of the whole of the prosperous Congo valley into their slave gangs.

But the fiat of heaven went forth against such an iniquitous plan, and at this nadir of the fortunes of Central Africa, the white man came who drove the Raiders from Stanley Falls, from Nyangwe and Kasongo, broke their power, disbanded their forces, and restored the land once more to peace.

To show how well established the Arabs were in Central Africa, I quote a description of Kasongo given by Captain S. L. Hinde, in his "Fall of the Congo Arabs."

"Kasongo was a much finer town than even the grand old slave capital, Nyangwe. At Kasongo we rushed into the town so suddenly that the natives had not time to carry off anything, in fact everything was left *in situ*. Our whole force found new outfits, and even the common soldiers slept on silk and satin mattresses, in carved beds

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with silk mosquito curtains. The room I took possession of was eighty feet long and fifteen feet wide, with a door leading into an orange garden, beyond which was a view extending over five miles. It was hard on waking to realise that I was in Central Africa, but a glance at the bullet holes in doors and shutters, and a big red stain on the wall, soon brought back the reality. Here we found many European luxuries, the use of which we had almost forgotten—candles, sugar, matches, silver and glass goblets and decanters were in profusion. We also took about twenty-five tons of ivory; ten or eleven tons of powder; millions of caps; cartridges for every kind of rifle, gun, and revolver perhaps ever made; some shells, and a German flag taken by the Arabs in German East Africa. The granaries throughout the town were stocked with enormous quantities of rice, coffee, maize and other food; the gardens were luxurious and well planted, and oranges both sweet and bitter, guava, pomegranate, pineapple and bananas abounded at every turn."

Such selfish abandonment to luxuries obtained by frightful barbarities, and waded to through seas of human blood, could not long be permitted after Livingstone's heart-stirring appeals for poor, broken, bleeding Africa. The story of their doings has never been told in its completeness, but there is enough *data* to show us how widespread were their operations, how incredible the havoc they wrought, and how awful the terror they inspired.

In the Province Orientale the Government of the Congo Free State began well, and if the witness we can bear as to the Stanleyville-Lomami section of it is any criterion of the way in which the rest of the province has been governed, then we must admit that the peoples occupying it have had imposed upon them a very different, because more enlightened, kind of régime than that which has obtained in other places of the Congo





*Photo by Rev. C. E. Fugh.*  
Mrs. Millman and "Litwasi." Mr. Millman and Mons. Lambotte on the bank. Off to the Falls.  
OUR STATION CANOE.

## On "Zingitingi"

valley ruled over by the Belgians. How far the presence of Arabs in the district, with their thousands of dependents, has modified the policy of the Government it is difficult to say, but we are thankful indeed that our neighbourhood has remained populous, and that there has been a degree of prosperity, tranquility, and contentment, which has made possible, and largely aided to establish, the growth of our extensive educational and spiritual work.

On the whole our relations with the officials at Stanley Falls have been cordial during the fifteen years of our presence in the district, and much courtesy has been shown us at different times when we have visited the Falls. Our frequent itineraries have carried us, however, more often westward than eastward, and, as our Lokele work has bulked so largely in its demands upon our time and attention, our visits to Zingitingi have been rarer.

Their power once curbed and their allegiance to the reigning authority secured, Arabs who had a following were allowed to remain in the district, and the State granted them a piece of land by the river front on condition of their clearing and cultivating it. With their following they number about 3,000 at the Falls, and some 10,000 at Romée, twenty-four miles west, in the centre of the Lokele world. Their presence largely accounts for the prosperity surrounding us. Many hundred tons of rice are raised annually, and it suffices to feed many a less prosperous place further down river. Such vast areas of the forest are cleared for this purpose as must conduce to make the neighbourhood healthier for European residents.

Twelve years have seen great changes at Zingitingi. What has been said about the BaGenya folk enables the reader to locate their five villages as close to the seventh rapid. Supposing then that we start from the villages of these sturdy fisherfolk and come westward along the north bank, we leave behind us the humble dwellings of

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the aborigines, and begin to pass through the Arab quarters. Well roofed wattle and daub houses, with the "mbarazani" carefully swept and sanded, line the path on one side. Perchance a neatly clad young Arab is sitting, cross-legged, on a mat in the mbarazani reading a beautiful, highly-embellished copy of the Koran; or a boy with his teacher is droning out the Arabic characters as he recognises them on the slab of wood which he holds in his hand; or an Arab slave is deftly braiding the edge of a white garment with a dozen bright colours, the loom being primitive and cumbersome, but the result beautiful. As we pass our attention is drawn to some drawings on the wall of one of the houses. Are they meant to be giraffes or camels? I stop to ask; and am told that they are "ngamia" (camels). There was a hump and a rider, but an extra long neck, and long front legs. I pull out my pencil and sketch a camel. The Arabs watching me laugh, and say, "Yes, that is right; the other is 'twiga' (giraffe)." We frequently see a man with needle and thread busy making a "kofia," scores of which find a ready sale among the white folk, who send them home to their friends as smoking caps. The women are very little in evidence. Here and there an Arab is to be seen kneeling on his prayer mat at his devotions, and two or three, dressed in their spotlessly white "kanju," will greet you respectfully on the path. Sheep and goats wander about without molestation. There are none of the signs of wealth such as we should expect to find in Europe, but we know the Arab prospers, and the general air of contentment is a sure proof that trade is good, and its usual gains easily secured. Of course, the diminishing ivory traffic has made the huge profits of the past impossible to-day, but one shrewdly suspects that the Arab still knows only too well how to obtain more profits than any other trader, white or black.

Habibu bin Slim has a licence from the Government,

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and his firm is now a recognised trading house, which means a great advance in an Arab, their reputation for integrity in business transactions having suffered much from the white man's experiences of dealings with them. We pass his house last, as it is nearest to the State post, and stop to have a glass of lemonade and a chat with this hospitable son of Ishmael, who is proud to hail from Muscat. Habibu's pleasure was great when he found that the British Vice-Consul, Mr. George B. Mitchell, resident at Stanleyville from 1906-1908, could converse with him in pure Arabic. With me, of course, he would condescend to use the local Kingwana.

We are soon walking along the "Grande Allée" of the State post of Stanleyville. We pass the prison and various smaller brick dwellings for officials. The shady paths intersecting the grass plots in all directions, and guiding to the "Salle à Manger," "Bureau de Poste," and to the Quay, look inviting on the the hottest days, and the neatness, most conspicuous in the absence of weeds so hard to keep under in tropical gardens, is distinctly pleasing to the eye.

Soon we are passing the white palings of a garden fronting a house much larger than the rest, where many a Commissaire in charge has resided. It was in that house that I received such gracious hospitality one week end from Monsieur and Madame Sillye. At the end of the Grande Allée, and at an angle to it, is the fine brick residence of the Commissaire-General, with its sentry box outside the front gate, and the familiar blue costume with red fez cap, catches the eye as you turn to go down to the river. If you have two hours to spare at Stanleyville, you will much enjoy continuing your walk along the broad path leading off to the north-east, in the direction of the Chopa River. You will pass the brick dwellings of the sergeants of the Force Publique, and for half an hour the way is lined with the neat dwellings of "old" boys,

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reservists, &c., until in forty minutes from leaving the Commissaire-General's house, you come upon a piece of natural scenery which never fails to charm the resident in that district. The Chopa Falls are about one hundred yards wide, and the chief fall is of about fifty feet in height, though the difference in level between the upper and lower waters is probably quite seventy feet. The Chopa joins the Lindi River at a point about three miles east of Yakusu. The tongue of land between the Chopa tributary and the main river is rapidly becoming cultivated, as so many old servants of the State have settled and made small clearings upon it.

Continuing our walk along the broad path which runs westward parallel with the river, we pass the site of the Roman Catholic Mission, and to-day we shall see in place of the church a fine cathedral, the most imposing building at the Falls. It has but just been completed, and was consecrated last year. With this building and the energetically conducted school, they have well supplemented the work carried on at the original seat of the mission at Sainte Gabrielle, four miles down river. With a strong work going on at both these places, it is easy to see that they out-number us in the district.

Two or three plots of ground occupied by European trading companies and the British Vice-Consulate, bring us to the Parquet and the boundary of Stanleyville. The Lazarette for sleeping-sickness patients, some two kilometres further west, is well situated and well isolated on a hill near the river.

While we have been thus engaged, our eye has often wandered across river to remark on the many buildings that have sprung up on the opposite shore. Two trading companies have long occupied a plot, but next door to them, up stream, a mushroom growth of buildings has come into existence to mark the terminus of the Stanleyville-Ponthierville Railway. That line, completed and opened





*Photo by Rev. C. J. Dadds.*

MEMBERS OF THE "FORCE PUBLIQUE."

## On "Zingitingi"

in 1906, enables the traveller to reach Ponthierville in six hours, instead of spending from four to six days in getting past the rapids by canoe and portage. A number of substantial and elegant houses now grace the slope of the southern bank of the river; a quay, and an excellent workshop with large stores, occupying the immediate foreshore.

It is when we turn to consider the population of Zingitingi that we become aware how heterogeneous it is, and how cosmopolitan in character. When one of the big Government steamers arrives, a gang of chained captives may be seen disposing of the cargo under the surveillance of half a dozen black soldiers. Not all are chained, but they are usually prisoners who fulfil this duty; and hence, I think, I may speak of them as being the lowest down in the social scale. They are bound, whereas the BaGenya fisher folk are free, and this distinction decides the degree of difference between the two. To most men the confinement of a prison is hateful, and the stigma of it unbearable, and we can therefore well believe that to those, who are so much children of nature, it is torture. It must, however, be a problem to any government how to maintain order when the ruling class is so small in numbers and the forces to be controlled are so varied. Tribal animosities are dying fast, but troubles still crop up quite frequently enough to justify the maintenance of a strong police force and to warrant repressive measures from time to time.

Next in the social scale must be placed the gangs of workmen and their wives, gathered from many quarters, and found generally in all conditions of clothing, from cheap smartness to ridiculous cast off garments, and rags and tatters handed on from one to another. Three thousand were in the employ of the railway company for four or five years, at least one thousand of which number were generally to be found on the south bank of the river busy at the base of the line.

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The Arabs and their dependents form another quite distinct class, and of these I have written above.

A regiment of 500 or more black soldiers with their wives makes a small colony in itself. Discipline keeps them apart, and they can only be said to mix with the other natives on the markets. They are all nominal Catholics. Scarcely less than a dozen different tribes are represented among these members of the Force Publique at Stanleyville, and it would be no unusual thing to find that some of them were quite 1,000 miles from their birthplace.

The representatives of skilled labour, black masons, engineers, carpenters and clerks, perhaps regard themselves as a cut above the soldiers, for they are certainly earning better wages. Many of them are British subjects from the West Coast (Accra, Sierra Leone, &c.), and, speaking English, assume a degree of civilisation which is highly commendable. We have had some dealings with them and always tried to help them. Had our work amongst the Lokele grown less rapidly, we should have been able to do more for these brethren. I give hereunder a letter received from one of them in 1901:—

Stanleyville.

May 15, 1901.

Dear Mr. Good morning,

to you Sir, I hopen this few line of myne may meet you in good stat of elth as it lives me at present to-day, and again I thank you very murch for the book wich you sent for me sir is very sweet and good do sir you must vex upon me because I want to come to Church but I get no time on Sunday all time too, and do please my father I take the name of which is in heaven to beg you sir for one bible or one Sankey or one comon prayer or one old weekly news if you please sir and your worshipe I beg again sir and I beg your padon sir, dont know you name you must please send me your name because I am a member of Christ Church.

I close my letter to be

Yours truly,

(Signed) ISHMAEL A. T. WILLIAMS

Sierra Leone young man mason

MASON C. D. H.

## On "Zingitingi"

Amongst the whites there is a bewildering number of nationalities represented. Artisans employed on the railway to superintend gangs of workmen who keep the line in repair, embrace Finns and Russians, Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, many of whom, being of the working class, can only speak to their superiors in the merest smattering of French. The trading houses are staffed by Dutch, English, Belgian and Portuguese. Our king is represented by his Vice-Consul, Mr. Gerald Campbell. The judge may be a Belgian or a Swiss; the doctors are invariably Italian and, as a rule, most able men. The missionaries at Yakusu have cause for gratitude that such distinguished members of their profession as Drs. Veroni, Trolli, and Grossule were within hail at different times when urgently needed.

The admirable work undertaken, first by Dr. Trolli, and more recently by Dr. Grossule, at the Lazarette for sleeping sickness patients, just outside Stanleyville, is beyond praise. May the investigations they so painstakingly conduct, and the preventive measures they so patiently and skilfully adopt, be crowned with the success they deserve.

Military and civil officials of the Government, to the number of some two dozen in all, are either Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Swiss or Belgian, but the two highest posts, that of Adjutant-Supérieur and Commissaire-General are usually held by Belgians. Since the Congo Free State has become a Belgian Colony, a Vice-Gouverneur has been in charge of the Province Orientale.

Many white visitors pass through Stanleyville, as all State officials employed in the Province Orientale have to report themselves there on their way to and from the place of their appointment. To far Ruwenzori's snow-capped peak, on the borders of the Uganda Protectorate; to Kivu's pure, invigorating heights; to Tanganyika's wave-lapped shores, and Katanga's hills rich in iron,

## Yakusu

copper, silver and perchance gold ; they wend their way by caravan through gloomy forest and over open, grass-clad plains, or slowly in laden canoes along the great waterway to Kasongo and Nyangwe, and then by caravan to more remote parts. It has been no unusual thing in the past for six months to be spent by an official in reaching his post.

In 1905 and 1906, we made a determined effort to tackle the work around Stanley Falls, and I was asked by my brethren to look after it. There was a strong likelihood that the school-work begun there in three places would result ere long in the first fruits being gathered from the BaGenya people. I made several visits, but the call came to go to Yalamba, and soon after that to return to Yakusu again. A depleted staff, sickness, and the ever-growing claims of our Lokele work, rendered abortive our efforts to establish a Protestant work among the needy people of that place.

## CHAPTER XIV

### On Language

WITH what mingled feelings does the college-bred man attack the language of the African tribe amongst whom he is cast. He has been led to believe that for irregularity in use, inconsistency of construction and crudity of expression the tongues of savage, cannibal peoples are not to be surpassed. His early experiences do not disabuse his mind of such an impression, if he begins his task of acquiring it *de novo*, with no literature to help him, no grammatical notes to guide him, no vocabulary to give him an exciting start.

If he is wise he will not despise the tongue of the people ; he will prepare by painstaking labour, never-ceasing vigilance and oft-repeated enquiry, to unravel its secrets, and he will be rewarded for his trouble by splendid finds. He is happy if he has come across these words of Professor Henry Sweet, " There is no reason to show that unwritten languages change necessarily quicker than others. As already remarked, a language may be a literary one without being a written one. Change in language is due to the changing life of the people, where new ideas have to be incorporated. People whose life habits have changed but little, generally possess a language which is very conservative though unwritten. The African is a born orator and lawyer ; he loves arguments and elaborate statements. It seems evident, therefore, that it was the necessity of knowing ' who's who ' in a complicated legal statement which led to the elaboration of their peculiar system of concord."

To do more than acquire a speaking acquaintance, to

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get the very genius of the language, must be his aim, and it will be worth his while to struggle hard towards this goal. There is need to cultivate assiduously an ever-enquiring turn of mind, especially in a climate which offers no incentive to mental gymnastics, and to fill pages with hastily scribbled notes to be hunted up again at leisure. The memory must not be trusted, or many a precious minute may be wasted in trying to trace some elusive word.

What pitfalls abound! His psychological caste of mind leads him to interpret words he hears more frequently in defiance of the accepted usage than he is aware. He goes on using them in that way and with that interpretation for months, perhaps, and never once properly understood by the natives. Not only his caste of mind, but his western habits of thought, his idioms, his allusions, are all strange and often meaningless to his African neighbour. So the study of the man, as well as the man's language, must go on coincidentally. One of the peculiar difficulties of learning and reducing a language to writing is the constantly recurring need of unfamiliarising oneself with the use of expressions that have been too freely and incorrectly indulged in, and the correlative need of familiarising oneself with their correct use.

The longer the student is acquainted with the Bantu languages of Africa, the greater does his respect for them become. He never tires of his language work, for it is exhilarating to master an utterance, and to see the gleam of interest when a thought has been idiomatically expressed. It is the eyes of the old men that will reward him most.

No attempt had ever been made to write Lokele until Baptist missionaries undertook the task. Only gradually has its richness become known; unflagging zeal has brought us a bountiful harvest. Here is the literary output of ten years:—





Mr. STAPLETON AT WORK WITH YAKOSO, his language boy.

## On Language

- 1900—A dozen hymns and the Lord's Prayer  
(W. H. Stapleton).  
Gospel of Mark (W. Millman).
- 1902—The Story of the Patriarchs (H. Sutton Smith).
- 1904—Gospel of Luke (W. H. Stapleton).  
A Primer for Church Members (W. H. Stapleton).  
Stories of Jesus (W. H. Stapleton).  
Gospel of John (W. H. Stapleton).  
Catechism (W. Millman).  
School Primers, I. and II. (W. Millman).  
Nehemiah (S. O. Kempton).
- 1905—Resumé of O.T. History (H. Sutton Smith).  
1. Creation to Death of Moses  
2. Joshua to Death of Solomon.  
3. Rehoboam to Advent of Christ.  
Acts of the Apostles (W. H. Stapleton).  
Catholic Epistles (W. H. Stapleton).
- 1905—Gospel of Matthew (W. H. Stapleton).  
Pilgrim's Progress (1st section) (W.H. Stapleton).  
Psalms (W. Millman).
- 1906—Isaiah (S. O. Kempton)
- 1907—Romans (first rough draft) (S. O. Kempton).  
Galatians, Titus and Philemon (S. O. Kempton).  
Hebrews and Colossians (H. Sutton Smith).  
Philippians and Ephesians (H. Sutton Smith).
- 1908—Timothy and Revelation (E. E. Wilford).  
Corinthians, I. and II. (W. Millman).

A growing hymn-book, that now numbers over one hundred hymns, has run through edition after edition.

Lokele has retained all its best features, almost without change one surmises, because it has fortunately escaped mutilation by outside influences. Swahili has been the victim, and the local Kingwana is a proof of what a language may suffer when it becomes the *lingua franca* over a wide area. The attempt to favourably compare Kingwana and Swahili makes one groan.

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Kingwana is at best a mongrel language, and presents unexpected difficulties and disappointing poverty of expression when it is used as an instrument for translation. Lokele, on the contrary, is full of surprises, and is altogether an excellent medium for the translator. Some needs of the translator, of course, are wholly new, and it must not be expected that an equivalent will be found for them. The Swahili, covering a wider range of ideas and having incorporated many Arabic words, often comes to our help.

Can anything strike the ear with more delight than the soft, gently-modulated utterances of the Lokele chief who stands beside your table? It would surely please the most fastidious ear. Those open Lokele syllables are as pleasant to listen to as Italian; the rough "r" is never heard, it has long ago been softened to "l," and the sharp hiss of oft-repeated "s's" is not anything like so predominant as with us.

The Lokele is as gesture-loving as any Bantu, and to stand and watch a native palaver council is a lesson in the effectiveness of gesture. The meaning to a stranger would not always be self-evident, unhelpt by the aid of the accompanying words.

He is fond of onomatopoeic words, and quickly finds a name for an unfamiliar object by the sound it emits. Hence "tuku-tuku" for steamer, in imitation of the beat of the paddle wheels; hence also "paka-paka," just as we might say "tapa-tapa" for typewriter. He says, with much truer mimetic instinct, "likokolokoo" greatly lengthening the final syllable, for our clumsy imitation "cockadoodledo."

The student of Lokele to-day has a comprehensive type-written verb put into his hands; eleven years ago, I had scarcely a couple of tenses to start on. Of its richness and adaptability some idea may be formed from the following:

## On Language

Tenses—Verb ; sumba—to buy.

| <i>Indicative Mood.</i>     | Affirmative       | Negative.                      |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Pres. Perf.              | isosumba          | itisumbe (or iiso-<br>sumba ?) |
| 2. Pres. Progressive        | ikosumba          |                                |
| 3. Pres. Prog. Incomplete   | ikosumbi          |                                |
| 4. Pres. Intentional        | isambosumba       | itisambosumba                  |
| 5. Present of Reality       | isumbi nde osumba | itisumbe nde<br>osumba         |
| 6. Indefinite               | isumbi            | itisumbe                       |
| 7. Near Past Complete       | isumbiki          | itisumbeke                     |
| 8. Narrative Past           | imi losumba       | imi angosumba                  |
| 9. Remote Past              | yasumbaka         | itiasumbaka                    |
| 10. Future Definite         | itosumba          | itosumba                       |
| 11. Future Hypothetical     | imi kosumba       | imi angosumba                  |
| 12. Future Indefinite       | yesumbaka         | ichasumbe or<br>ichasumbeke    |
| 13. Future Remote           | yelasumbaka       | itilasumbaka                   |
| 14. Future Perf.            | -kasumbeke        |                                |
| 15. Unfulfilled, "not yet," | ikasumbi          |                                |

There are six moods, Indicative, Infinitive, Imperative, Subjunctive, Implicative and Suppositional. Some idea may be formed of the intricacies of a Mood like the Implicative when we know that it has four distinct uses :

1. Of an action which ought to, or actually does take precedence of some other action ; " I'll go, but I must first sit down a bit."
2. Of an action which would follow on if something indicated should be done, or need *not* be done because something has happened ; " you need not kindle the fire now (the tea is made) " ; " and we could not think, if we came within reach, but that they would presently pull us in pieces."
3. Of an action which is dependent on and explanative of the principal action ; " I was not at the market to-day, I was obliged to be in the house."
4. Of an action which would have taken place under different circumstances if something else had not been done. " I am obliged to tread again those steps with sorrow which I should have trodden with joy but for," &c.

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It must be recognised also that the state in, or under, which an action is performed, as well as the time of its performance, is ever present to the native mind, so that under each tense heading we find a number of forms which assist in the expansion of its meaning. Our investigations at present lead us to put these states at twenty-four in number, and all but two or three of the principal tenses can be used in this variety of ways to express continuance and actuality ; consequence (direction towards or with) ; consequence (direction from or away) ; recurrence or repetition.

When tenses and moods have been dealt with, we have still the derived verb to consider, and the same form " sumba " is found in the following combinations."

|                   |             |                                  |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Active Transitive | Sumba       | to buy.                          |
| Passive           | Sumbomo     | to be bought.                    |
| Middle Voice      | Sumbana     | to get bought.                   |
| Middle Passive    | Sumbanomo   | to get oneself to be bought.     |
| Stative           | Sumbelo.    | to be in a bought state.         |
| Middle Applied    | Sumbanela   | to get oneself bought for.       |
| Middle Stative    | Sumbanelo   | to get bought by.                |
| Mid. Stat. Pass   | Sumbanelomo | to get oneself to be bought by.  |
| Causative Stative | Sumbeso     | to make to be in a bought state. |
| Causative         | Sumbesa     | to make to buy.                  |
| Causative Passive | Sumbesomo   | to make to be bought.            |
| Causative Applied | Sumbesela   | to make to get bought for.       |
| Simple Applied    | Sumbela     | to buy for.                      |

Happily the conjugations are simply three, and are at once comprehended by the three examples :

sumba, to buy ; oto, to enter ; ene, to see.

I had had no experience of the fascination of philology until the box of Lokele bricks was tumbled out in front of me, and I had to put them together. The power to add almost indefinitely to the number provided an element of bewilderment, but gave a great incentive for a mighty task. The notice, " All missing links to be found on enquiry," was put up by me as a mental fillip.

That others were engaged at the same task at the same

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time added greatly to the interest of it, for we gained immeasurably by mutual criticism. However relentless one may be in one's self criticism, and rigidly unsparing too, the attention wanders, points are missed, and mistakes made, simply because the mind grows tired of the persistently sustained effort. No one dreams of standing still ; to do so would be to drop out of the race, to go on perpetuating mistakes. I well remember using the word to express the thought that the eyes of the Lord were in every place, beholding the evil and the good. After the service a colleague said that surely my word meant that the Lord rolled his eyes round and round in an unintelligent, insane kind of way. Stepping up to a young fellow who had heard me, I asked him what he had understood me to mean. His answer quite confirmed my use of it, and he gave me several other meanings that it would have in different connections. That frankly critical word clinched the matter for both of us to our entire satisfaction.

I have referred elsewhere to our leader, the strong man who was called of God to guide His work at Yakusu to a successful issue, but I must add a word about the splendid service he rendered us when he brought his longer philological experience and keener insight into the mysteries of Bantu speech to bear in unravelling some of the problems of Lokele utterance. I was nearing the end of my first term when he returned from Europe, and I recall with the greatest pleasure the talks I had with him on language difficulties which I had been able to find no parallel for in the various grammars at my disposal.

We know now how much we should have lost had we spent our energies in propagating our message through the medium of Kingwana. It is not surprising that this at first appealed very strongly to the early pioneers, and certainly had the approval of Mr. Stapleton. It seemed to cover the widest area, and struck the first missionary

## Yakusu

observers as being the most practical. But we were switched off on to Lokele, with what grand results the early years of this century have witnessed. At the outlying villages the people were amazed to find that they need not revert to Kingwana in speaking to us, and that there were actually white men who could converse with them, and who preferred to do so, in the tongue in which they were born. The whole tribe opened its arms and accepted us, and they have never gone back on that welcome.

So we thank God that the right language for the evangelising of the Lokele world was chosen. Of a truth the Spirit of the Lord was with us.

“Their conscience is a signpost whose writing has been obliterated.”

“You may go through heathendom anywhere and you will nowhere find humanity, mercy, kindness and love. Selfishness reigns nakedly everywhere, and self-complacency is boasted of as a virtue.”

“Mohammedanism allows the people to go on worshipping ancestors, and adds new spirits of Arabic origin to those already worshipped. Islam nowhere appears among animists as a deliverer.”

“Fatalists have no responsibility; they never act freely, but always by constraint. The soil wherein the human conscience grows is taken away.”

WARNECK.

## CHAPTER XV

### On Manners and Conscience

*“ Politeness belongs to the lying nature of heathenism. The animist is made polite by fear of the vengeance of those who are slighted, by fear of secret powers. The virtues of politeness and self control spring therefore from unadulterated egotism, and are in point of fact ‘ brilliant vices.’ The animist is only polite to equals and superiors.”*

WARNECK.

THERE are barriers in plenty between the white man and the black man whom he approaches. We have rushed into his country unbidden ; we have introduced all manner of strange things ; we are always prying into his ways and asking questions about subjects which he is not in the habit of discussing with a stranger. Moreover there is too often the attitude of a superior to an inferior, and that does not generally promote friendship. Some natives bitterly resent it, and present a quiet but firm and determined front to the innovations they detest. A chief who sees his authority waning has never ceased to rub it into us, that we white men, we missionaries, are the cause. As a matter of fact, if he refused his young people permission to go to Yakusu and learn, they frankly say they would go to the white trader, or become servants for Bula Matale at the Falls.

But other folk are shy, and objecting to explain their actions, or to reveal the secret thoughts of their hearts to an alien white man, however kindly disposed he may show himself to be, shrink into themselves. “ Why should he want to know all about me,” he asks himself, “ except to gain power over me and use it to my hurt ? ”

The fact is, the white man would do well sometimes to

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criticise his own manners before he too freely comments upon the peculiarities he observes in the manners of savages. It is not good to ride rough-shod, for there are as profound distinctions to be perceived amongst even a cannibal race, as are to be discovered amongst the most civilised of peoples. Let him be firm by all means with his black neighbour, but not ungentle. Every resident in Africa will endorse the truth of Sir Harry Johnston's words on the negro. "No one is, or has been, so cruel to the negro as the negro. Put a negro into a uniform, drill him, give him lethal weapons, a sufficient salary, food, and the means of maintaining a wife, &c., and he will have to be very badly treated before he turns against the European who has initiated him into the glorious life of power and authority. Of all the races of mankind, perhaps the negro is the most inherently martial. He worships power in all its manifestations." He continues, "Gentleness devoid of power has little interest for, or influence over, the native of Africa. The iron hand, if it means sometimes suffering for the poor victim, also ensures his protection. So the dog crouches between the legs of the man who whips him."

It is hardly likely that you will find agreement in the matter of manners amongst people whose habits are so widely different as those of the black and white races. All the greater then is the need to understand one another.

What allowance is to be made for folk whose customs permit so much to be done in publicity? Much every-way. Their life is primitive and there is, therefore, no elaborate system of manners. But they are not devoid of etiquette. You may live long years amongst them and imagine that they have no equivalent for "I beg your pardon." It is true they do not speak it, nor do they perform the act seeking pardon on all the occasions on which we should think it necessary. Whenever there is need, however, it is quickly and graciously performed.

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A chief passing out of the chapel one day, accidentally trod on a child's foot. The little one turned and touched him on the arm; he thereupon stooped, and having moistened his finger with his tongue, touched the place, smiling as he did it. Not a word was spoken, but the child was pleased, and the chief went on his way. I, who saw it, mused on this thing, and going out, have since frequently done likewise, always giving pleasure by the act.

Their "thank you" is also an action without words. Whenever you offer a boy something, if he be well-mannered, he will bring both hands together to receive it, looking up at you with a pleasing smile. If he said anything, it would be "isosemola ae" (I worship you), where the act of worship would indicate the pleased attitude of the recipient towards his benefactor. Such an attitude is typically eastern. It is true, again, that there are many occasions on which we should use it which would be quite unintelligible to the native, because they could see no need at that time for its use.

There is a world of difference between native and native in the same village in the matter of manners. Unless the chief is boorish, and there are not many such, the best mannered are generally found amongst his family and his many relatives. This will strike you especially when you have boys in the house who are of princely descent. But it does not always follow, for boors are sometimes found in palaces.

One day I had to cross the river to visit some sawpits. When I had landed, and was proceeding to one of the rendezvous, I passed some Yakusu people on their way to the beach, carrying long poles across their shoulders. One of them I knew well as specially friendly, and I greeted him, but he took no notice and passed by without a word. I might have dubbed him an ill-mannered churl. Before many minutes had passed he came bounding up

## On Manners and Conscience

the path again, and, stopping in front of me, hastened to explain his conduct. The poles he was carrying were for fishing. They believe, he said, that if they wish for good luck to attend them, they must cut only certain trees for the purpose, and observe a vow of silence until they reach the water where the nets will be used.

At another time—a Sunday afternoon—we saw a church member pass us on the path of the station. He came from across river, and we expected him to be at the services as we had heard that he was over. He passed us quickly and with averted gaze, carrying his spear. He was sullen and silent. He was a youth of the gentlest manners, one whom it had been a delight to know for many a year. Why, then, this strange conduct, this offended mien? for he would have been the first to greet us courteously under ordinary circumstances. He had been on some particular errand which demanded the vow of silence.

Yes, we have often misunderstood them, and just as frequently have misjudged them; but we have laboured to understand them, and hence have become warm friends. We echo the words of the first Yakusu missionary: “Nowhere on the Congo are there folk who have been so steadily and peaceably disposed. These are tribes of gentler manners we have got amongst.”

I had thought that I might speak of a Lokele “gentleman,” until the other day I read these words, “The Greeks, before everything else, were physical men; we think less of them spiritually in any sense of the idea that is valued by us; and, of course, we do not think of them at all as gentlemen; that involves, of course, the highest courtesy to women.” Our sense of the meaning of courtesy to women can hardly be found in the attitude of the Central African men towards their women-kind, and hence our strict idea of a gentleman does not find its fulfilment in them. It would surely be unreasonable to expect it.

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But I have said above that there is some appreciable, though indefinable, difference between the Lokele attitude to their women-kind and that of other tribes. In that difference is to be found the germ of the gentlemanliness some of them display. My wife says that for innate gentlemanliness the six boys that she had closest dealings with in the house, promiscuously chosen and representing three tribes, were better than any six English boys of the same age would have proved to be. That is saying much, and I should hesitate to write it did not my own personal experience confirm it.

And moreover I know Lokele natives who have been to their wives all that we could expect a man to be, and according to their light they have proved themselves worthy of the title "gentlemen."

"You serve the truth and we serve lies. The lie always gains increasing power over us, even when we do not wish it. When we are in distress we turn again to the lie."—(A HEATHEN NEGRO.)

"There are many virtues to be found among heathen peoples, but hardly anywhere a love of truth."—(WARNECK.)

We are told that Ranawanola I., the anti-Christian king of Madagascar, brought forward a grievance which he had against the Christians; it was their unintelligible love of truthfulness.

"Whose ways are corrupt because they are led astray of an evil conscience" is hardly true of the people we know. Their sinful practices are rather the result of an untrained conscience. In writing of their conscience it must be remembered that they have gone wholly wrong for centuries. It is not a sudden lapse from a higher standard; they have drifted into their present condition of loose morals. It is not a question of a dwarfed conscience, except in so far as every untrained conscience can be termed so. Its vagaries astonish the missionary.

## On Manners and Conscience

We speak of a conscientious man and forget that he is the product of countless generations of training. You will look in vain for such a thing in Africa apart from the influence of Christianity. A most frequent source of misunderstanding between the native and his white teacher is on this very account ; he cannot at once appreciate the so much higher level of your trained conscience. It depends largely upon his age as to whether he will ever be able to do so. With him some offences against the public weal are condonable, others are punishable. A lie may be an offence in some circumstances ; in others it is highly commendable. So with a theft, and so also with the grosser sins. For personal conduct there is no standard, if it only touches the person and does not affect the community ; a man is his own guide, and therefore we think we may surely argue he is always wrong. Happily it is not so, for God has not left Himself without witness.

Paul's contact with barbarism led him to write words that are very pertinent here : " When Gentiles, which have no law, do by nature the things of the law, these having no law are a law unto themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their own conscience bearing witness with them, and in their mutual relations, their reflections accusing or else excusing them."

Why one tribe should be better than another is a mystery, but so it certainly is. No two people were more competent to bear witness to this than were Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton, who, after completing seven years amongst the Bangala, made their home amongst the Lokele. The change for the better was most appreciable ; they seemed to be in a different moral atmosphere. Longer acquaintance may perhaps have effaced some of the early so favourable impressions, but it has confirmed others.

The Lokele, fearing it may be the power of the white man's medicine (*i.e.*, his evil eye, his bewitching influence), behaved himself at first. Acts of theft were rare. Later,

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when they knew him better, some very stern measures had to be adopted against certain members of the village community adjoining the mission premises to put a stop to their depredations.

There is still vast room for improvement of the native conscience on the matter of the rights of property. Boys vary very much. With the worst, no amount of punishment seems to cure them of it. Kleptomaniacs are to be found in every village. On the other hand, I have been splendidly served, and I know my colleagues can say the same in regard to many boys. It is not all fortuitous. For some years it has been my practice, when taking a fresh boy into the house, to show him round myself and point to things that will be left lying about with open doors while I am busy away from the house. I tell him that I expect him to guard them as though I were always present. In a sense I make him a partner in the company with the other house boys, and they have very seldom proved other than faithful. It has been often amusing to watch their carefulness when the verandah is crowded with natives. Sometimes, in such circumstances, they may be found in the heat of the day closing the doors and windows. In reply to my query of surprise, the house-boys will answer, "Oh, we don't know anything about this lot, and can't trust them."

What constitutes a theft with them? If you were in a position to have seen him take it, but did not happen to, the culprit will indignantly deny that he has done anything wrong, though admitting the action. Some time ago Mr. Millman wrote, "There is not an entire absence of conscience, though its existence might sometimes be doubted. It is, among women, a common saying that a girl slow at deceiving on the market will have a poor chance of being well married, and, indeed, could not reasonably expect it. Still the lamp of righteousness is not quite extinct. It is a great shame to a man to be

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considered capable of stealing from his own relatives, and the most cunning and covetous of boys would count stealing from his own mother as mean."

The shame is not so much in the action, as in being accused of the action, in being found out. The loss of face is the cause of shame. I came across an instance, which was not devoid of humour, in illustration of this. I reached a village and was sitting at chop when someone told me to look well after my things lest they should be stolen. I turned in some surprise and said, "But why; is this place any worse than the others?" "Oh, yes; it's noted for trouble of that kind." One of the inhabitants replied, "That's not true; we are all similarly troubled. There is someone who lives in the bush and goes to and fro. He comes at dusk, or just after dark, and something is always taken. A woman came down river with a lot of money to finish her daughter's marriage negotiations. He came that night, and she lost all. He does not meddle with canoes because he is a bushman. He goes to and fro even in the night, and is afraid of nothing." "Why has he not been caught?" "That is impossible. No hands can hold him, no knife wound him, no spear strike him, no arrow pierce him, no club fell him to the ground. He is called 'Bokwanga.' He has not been seen, but can be seen; he has not been heard, but can be heard to speak. All are in fear of him, though not afraid that he will do them bodily harm." They joke about him and accuse one another of knowing his name.

It would seem to be an easy and irresponsible way of intimating that you are on the *qui vive*; having been bitten before, you do not intend to be bitten again. It does not commit you to an accusation which might bring you into trouble with a people who are very touchy on this point.

Happily there are some, whose names we can give, of whose honesty we should never entertain the slightest doubt.

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The following colloquy will show that there is an undoubted tendency to wriggle. The youth's name was Bambolia and he stood at my window, as, having heard his approach, I looked up from my manuscript. His eyes looked queer and I asked, "Have you been smoking hemp?"

With an emphatic interjection, he asked in his turn, "Who has been accusing me to you?"

"No one," I replied; "I simply asked you a question, and I want a plain answer."

"Nonsense," he said; "you wouldn't look up and ask me a question like that, unless somebody had put the thought in your mind."

"But it is a fact that nobody has put the thought in my mind. I looked in your eyes—now what is your answer?"

"Oh, you white men are always thinking evil of us, and I won't give you an answer unless you answer me my question, and tell me who has been accusing me."

"Look here, Bambolia," I said; "last time I saw you, you acted in a very strange manner. You will remember it was about that young woman whom your people wanted to keep in the town here by force, in order that she might marry you. She was on a visit from another town some distance away, and your folk made a big fuss because they were afraid that if they let her slip away now they would never see her again. Well, when you thought that I was going to settle the matter by sending her back to her town, you raved and swore, and cursed, and became so excited that I thought you were going mad. Your eyes rolled about as though you were demented, and you threw yourself on the ground in your frenzy. I want to know whether there is anything the matter with you, and I ask you yourself a simple question in preference to asking anyone else about you. How am I to get to know if you will not answer my question? Say No, if no is true; and Yes, if yes is true."

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He would not ; he went away in a huff ; he is a Church member.

You seldom get your information by asking a direct question of a native. You are opposed by some such silent reasoning as this : " Well now, why has he asked me that question ; I wonder what he is leading up to ; who can have put him on that tack ? " And while he is searching around to try and satisfy himself as to your motive, he will give you an answer which, if you are wise, you will place no importance upon whatever. Directness is no part of his mental make-up. On the question of truthfulness, I fear we must acknowledge that the Lokele conscience is very warped. Indeed, not until the conscience towards God becomes strong in them can we expect to see the conscience towards man develop to its true proportions.

To say there is truthfulness in them when there is nothing to be gained, and nothing to be feared from the declaration of the truth, is not perhaps to say very much, though it is an admission that they are not wantonly untruthful. But the virtue of truthfulness is dragged low, because it is not allowed to stand alone and to decide the course of action. It is made the handmaid of convenience.

Every lover of the Bantu recognises it as a distinctly encouraging fact that the young so quickly appreciate the claims of the very high standard of morality set by the Christian religion. That they should often fall is not to be wondered at, but that they should rise and rise again to renew the struggle, allured by the bright star of Christian virtue, is a theme for never-ceasing praise. They soon come to know there is a better, a more excellent way, and they ardently desire to be found walking in it.

The Christian teacher needs to be very discriminating, sympathetic, tender in his judgment of their faults, but

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not soft or compromising as to the standard which he should set before them as their ideal, and which he expects them to reach. Too often is it urged that the Christian religion is too severe for the people of so enervating a climate; but the climate is not responsible for the condition of their morals. I have heard of more hideous things being done in Portsmouth than would ever disgrace a native community in Africa. Christianity is the only religion for them. Islam cannot give them that moral strength which alone can make the Bantu race a people of the future, who shall lift their faces upward and rise. Islam may free them from much that at present oppresses their untamed, unenlightened spirits, but it gives them a stern, cold, distant God, and demands a blind belief in an uninviting, unemotional fatalism. They need the warm, encouraging personal friend, the living example of the strong Son of God. This, and this alone, can bring about a new Africa, whose faith-enfranchised sons shall walk uncursed in the upward march of the nations towards an ideal humanity.

## “A Hymn for Beclouded African Souls.”

Eternal Light! Eternal Light!  
How pure the soul must be,  
When placed within Thy searching sight  
It shrinks not, but with calm delight  
Can live and look on Thee.

. . . . .

Oh, how shall I whose native sphere  
Is dark, whose mind is dim,  
Before the Ineffable appear,  
And on my naked spirit bear  
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise  
To that sublime abode;  
An offering, and a sacrifice,  
A Holy Spirit's energies,  
An advocate with God.

These, these prepare us for the sight  
Of majesty above,  
The sons of ignorance and night  
May dwell in the Eternal Light  
Through the Eternal Love.

T. BINNEY.

## CHAPTER XVI

### On Fatalism and the Heritage of Fear

*“Fatalism must be broken up and the heart won to faith in the Living God, and in moral freedom, before we can speak to these over-religious men of any change of mind.”*

WARNECK.

“**G**HOSTS of the most diverse kinds lurk in house and village; in the field they endanger the produce of labour; in the forest they terrify the woodcutter; in the bush they hunt the wanderer. From them come diseases, madness, death of cattle and famine. . . . It is fear that occasions the worship of the departed, and the observance of their mourning usages in its smallest details; fear dictates that host of prohibitions which surrounds every movement of their daily life. Fear is the moving power of animistic religion in Asia as in Africa.” (From “Living Forces of the Gospel.”)

Is life a mystery to the Lokele savage? Many that we know do not seem to worry themselves about its problems, and though they may be born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, they are usually well advanced in adult life before any effects of their trials are seen on them. After the Lokele has experienced some severe illness, or had to face some heavy trouble, he seems quickly to forget the nervous tension through which he has passed. Its ephemeral quality may be largely due to the fact that there is so little of the nervous about it. He lives on the surface so much that life's deepest experiences are passed through like children who visit the sombre stillness of the death chamber, and are soon playing again in the nursery.

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Thought in the abstract is so little a part of his life that he is a stranger to the deep mental stirrings and strong conflicts which make life for more finely tempered souls a mystery and often a burden. Unable to account for things as he finds them which are antagonistic to his peaceful existence, he becomes gradually captivated by fear, and this is the root cause of all his superstitious practices. Pain he does not attempt to understand; he bears it as patiently as a dog, with a pathetically helpless look in his eye.

A strange apathy is noticeable as characteristic of the Lokele in their view of life. It is remarkable how quickly they get over the loss of a member of the family, and any event that we should expect would strike home very deeply has but the most transitory effect. The root cause of this indifference is to be found in fatalism. In common with all the children of Africa the Lokele is a fatalist. "It cannot be helped; it is so determined," is the way he accounts for things. This impoverishes his estimate of the value of his life, and the use he should make of it. It strikes at the root of energy; "What is the good of over-working myself?" he says. The nobler nature is killed, individual incentive is crushed, and the fatalist spirit environs the life of the community, circumscribing the activities of its members, degrading them to a low, comparatively impulseless mode of existence. "Success and riches will fall into the bosom of the man for whom they are preordained without any effort on his part, and if they have not been allotted to him, he cannot compel them."

Life has its value not so much for the person who is in danger of losing it, as for the relatives who may thus be defrauded by death of some profit. A little child is often sincerely mourned for, but one always questions the sincerity of the mourning for an adult. Appearances are deceptive. It is usually prolonged enough and outwardly

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effective enough to take in the casual observer. It is far more to satisfy themselves and ensure their own safety than any expression of sincere grief. What caused death is always the uppermost thought. Suggestion and suspicion are active unless it is patent to all that it arose from natural causes. Even so the term has a very limited meaning, and so obvious an explanation is thrust aside if the least excuse offers for fastening the blame on anybody. Cupidity snatches its dole from superstitious fear. When injured in the fight compensation is the first care, not attention to the wounded. A man was brought to me in a fainting condition, with a gaping spear wound in the small of the back. I naturally busied myself first of all with the care of the man. I might as well have saved my pains. The bandages were torn off as soon as they got him out of sight, for the wound must look as bad as can be if they are to get what they claim.

All manner of means are adopted for finding out the supposed culprit even before death has supervened. A great commotion is caused one night by the arrival of a canoe on the beach of a little hamlet just above Yakusu. The hamlet has been built by a strapping young fellow who has broken his allegiance with his erstwhile chief, and has settled with some two dozen people near to us. For this he has never been forgiven. By many foul means his old associates tried to entrap him and bring about his downfall. He is, of course, a suspect, and his hand is reckoned to be against his old friends. It is a dark night, and in the canoe is a man lying prone. Two are bending over him while three others rest on their paddles. They genuinely believe that if they can induce this young renegade to come down and pour a little water over the prostrate man, he will, unless bewitched by another, recover. The young fellow sees in it nothing but another trap. Should he once get the reputation of a witch, his life is forfeit, or he becomes an exile. In his distress he

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seeks my advice, so terrified as to be quite a pitiable object. As he talks the matter over with me on the dark path, it seems as though his imagination pictures the tormenting spirits all round him. My advice to him to play the man and stand up against this sort of trickery, does not release him from his consuming terror, and he runs off into the darkness as though pursued. This was a case of accusation by suggestion.

Another day one of the brickyard boys comes running to me to say that his mother is dying. As we hasten along the path, I learn that he thinks she has been bewitched while gathering wood and bringing it home from the forest. On our way, an irate elder of our village meets me, and with lively gesticulation declares that his wife shall not do it. Not seeing at once to what he is alluding, I pay little attention and this only serves to increase his excitement. Passing his hut, he points to his wife and assures me that she is the most peaceable of mortals and cherished no malice intent, that it would ruin their home and blight their children's lives. Still not connecting the two things, I turn to follow the boy, who then implores me to make this woman pour water over his mother. In a flash I see it, and hasten to the side of the overwrought woman. It is a case of physical exhaustion, after too great a physical strain. I administer a stimulant, and tell them to keep her quiet and warm for three or four hours. By the evening she is quite well. It appears that she went to the bush to cut firewood, and when returning about noon, with her heavy burden on her back, she met this other woman. Their paths crossed, and for some unexplainable reason the burdened woman stumbled. The other woman stood aside while she passed, and did not touch her in any way. An hour or two later on the market the woman fainted. The case was obvious according to the native method of deduction. But for the *deus ex machina*, which resolved itself into the bold

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use of a simple expedient, a woman's life might have been blighted. A woman-witch is not to be tolerated under any circumstances.

Among the Lokele strange powers are believed to be possessed by disembodied spirits. It is to no rest they go. They lure the young into the performance of the rites in connection with magic by implanting the conviction that some deceased relative is calling them to meet and help them in the sacred grove. This is one of the strongest inducements, and we have never yet known it to fail.

All would like to be at peace with an enemy before he dies. His harmfulness is so great when once the shackles of the flesh are exchanged for the unfettered freedom of the spirit world. Hence the mourning is on an elaborate scale.

The details of a funeral are not pleasant to dwell upon. The Lokele bury their dead beneath their own roof, scarcely more than four feet below the surface. The space covered by the roof of a poor man's hut is seldom more than 18 ft. by 10 ft., and hence the unsanitary nature of this custom is very apparent.

Walking in the village of Yakusu one day, I suddenly became conscious that I was in the presence of the dead. Under a roughly made mat-awning lay the body of a man, which had been reduced almost to a skeleton by dysentery. His head was supported by a small piece of wood, and his knees were bent up and tied together. Small leaves were placed over both eyes and over the mouth, attached by a little wet clay. His hair had been bolstered up with the red ochre, which they use so freely on all occasions. I was interested to see where they would bury him. Seven women were wailing most piteously, and I turned and made for the back of the hut. There, looking in through an aperture, I saw the grave about six feet deep, but not more than four feet long. The bottom was plentifully

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strewn with red ochre powder. I heard that after six months the bones are exhumed and burned, but a later version corrected this to mean only non-Yakusu people who happened to die in the village.

Great display is made of the possessions of the dead man, which are either passed on to his nearest of kin, or else collected and allowed to rot in the open, doubtless with some idea of benefiting the deceased. The possessions of a young fellow who was drowned were gathered and tied to a pole erected on the cliff front. A cane chair, a knife in its sheath, a paddle, a cap and a torn shirt remained for months exposed to all weather, safe from any violation by the dishonest. Custom stood guardian and fear was the deterrent. Similarly, a rope suspended from two tall poles across a square will be burdened with tin plates, bowls, cups, charms, cloth, &c., &c., the treasured nothings of some deceased occupant of a hut near by.

And is there never a tomb, and never a graveyard to be found in the villages of these gay, thoughtless, pleasure-loving Lokele? In reality the whole village is a graveyard and every hut a tomb. Hence their clinging to their old sites and their fear of a deserted one. Here and there throughout the district you will find a tomb. For a little while a young chieftain will honour his father's burial place; yet in ten brief years I have lived to see the roof falling in sodden with rain, and the grave neglected. It is characteristic of the people; they live. In their own way they make much of life. A people without a past, with no traditions, no ancestors of whom they know anything, they draw no lessons for present guidance from the past; nor can it afford them, by contrast, food for melancholy, cause for joyfulness, or inspiration for conduct. How much they lack who have no tombs, the feeling of the fear of death, which they remove and tranquillise. "Death here appears in its most peaceful light; it seems so necessary, so common, so quiet

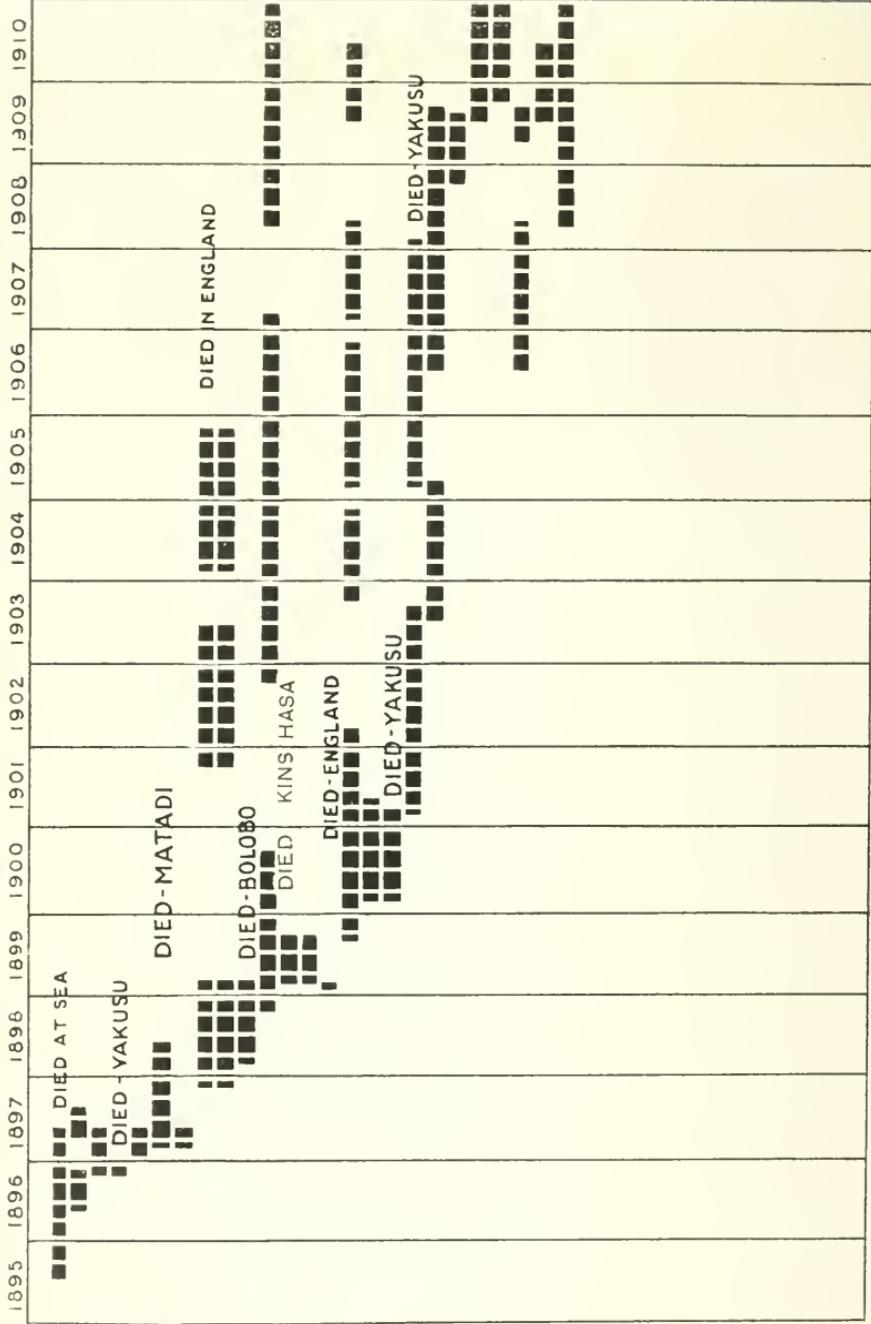
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and inevitable an end, like a haven after a troubled sea."

The manner of Lokele burials encourages the belief that they are inspired by a timid and shrinking fear. This is certainly the heritage of the Bantu tribes of the Congo valley. To them the holy, awe-inspiring fear of the soul who said, "Thou hast given me the heritage of them that fear Thy name" is unknown. They are possessed by the fear that results from the absence of light; they fear the fixed stare and the pointed finger, and above all the muttered curse. They move in dimmest twilight and start at every strange thing that crosses their line of vision, and tremble also at many things that are the ghosts of their own untutored imaginings and have no existence in reality. They endure death because they see that all flesh finds a common fate in the grave. Of what it portends they are quite ignorant. We take to them a fear-transforming Gospel, and bid them look up and find peace, and to look onward beyond the grave in the sure hope of the rest that remaineth unto the people of God.



# DIAGRAMMATIC VIEW OF THE OCCUPATION OF YAKUSU.



Each black square represents three months' residence. Read from the top of each column downwards: the horizontal only shows the length of residence of one and another, the gaps usually representing furloughs in England.

# Dates and Names in the Occupation of the B.M.S. Yakusu

Note Rev. G. Grenfell's Journeys to the Falls  
in 1886

1895

## Claiming.

Harry White, alone two months.

1896

## Holding.

H. White (Jany. to May alone).  
C. J. Dodds (May to October).  
Albert Wherrett (arrived in  
October, died November).  
Mrs. White (from October).  
J. R. M. Stephens (arrived  
December 31st).

1897

## Holding against many odds.

H. White } (left together  
Mrs. White } in April).  
J. R. M. Stephens (left April).  
C. J. Dodds (April to August).  
R. Beedham (March to Dec.),  
(alone 3 months).  
G. R. R. Cameron (six weeks,  
March to April).  
W. H. Stapleton } (arrived  
Mrs. Stapleton } Nov. 4th.)  
H. White, died at sea July 4th.

1898

## Restarting.

R. Beedham (left in May).  
W. H. Stapleton.  
Mrs. Stapleton.  
Miss P. Grenfell (arrvd. in Mar).  
W. Millman (arrived October).  
Marjorie Stapleton, born.

1899

## Developing.

W. H. Stapleton } (left in  
Mrs. Stapleton } March).  
W. Millman.  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger (six mos.,  
left November).  
H. Sutton Smith (arrived  
September).  
Mr. Jeffery (six weeks, left in  
March).  
Miss P. Grenfell, died Bolobo,  
March 16.

1900

## Developing.

W. Millman (left in October).  
H. Sutton Smith.  
Kenred Smith } (arrived in  
Mrs. Smith } March).  
Mr. Jeffery, died in England.

# Yakusu

1901

## Developing.

H. Sutton Smith.  
Kenred Smith (left May).  
Mrs. Smith (died April).  
S. O. Kempton (arrvd. March).  
W. H. Stapleton } (returned  
Mrs. Stapleton } October).

1902

## Consolidating; Church formed.

H. Sutton Smith (left March).  
W. H. Stapleton,  
Mrs. Stapleton.  
S. O. Kempton.  
W. Millman (returned October).  
Geo. Moore, died (*en route*  
with Mr. Grenfell).

1903

## The Growing Church.

W. H. Stapleton } (absent  
Mrs. Stapleton } B.O., 8mos.).  
W. Millman.  
S. O. Kempton (left October).  
E. E. Wilford (arrived July).  
H. Sutton Smith (returned  
October).

1904

## The Rapidly Growing Church.

W. H. Stapleton.  
Mrs. Stapleton.  
W. Millman.  
H. Sutton Smith (absent Upoto,  
four months).  
E. E. Wilford.

1905

## Flowing tide of the Out- School Movement.

W. H. Stapleton } (left  
Mrs. Stapleton } October).  
W. Millman.  
E. E. Wilford (left April).  
H. Sutton Smith.  
S. O. Kempton (returned Mar.).

1906

## Steady Evangelisation.

W. Millman.  
H. Sutton Smith (absent  
Yalemba four months).  
S. O. Kempton  
E. E. Wilford (returned July).  
Mrs. Wilford (arrived July).  
W. H. Stapleton, died in  
England, December.

1907

## The Church Assailed.

W. Millman (left March).  
S. O. Kempton.  
E. E. Wilford.  
Mrs. Wilford  
H. Sutton Smith.

1908

## A Running Fight; Ebbing Enthusiasm.

H. Sutton Smith (left April).  
S. O. Kempton (died February).  
E. E. Wilford.  
Mrs. Wilford (left April).  
W. Millman } (returned  
Mrs. Millman } April).  
E. Busfield (arrived October

# The Occupation of the B.M.S. Yakusu.

1909

## Conflicting Influences. Failing Faith.

W. Millman.  
Mrs. Millman.  
E. E. Wilford (left August).  
Mrs. Wilford (arrived March,  
left August).  
E. Busfield (left August).  
H. Sutton Smith (retd. July).  
Mrs. Sutton Smith (arrvd. July).  
C. E. Pugh (arrived July).  
H. Lambotte (arrived October).  
Litwasi Millman born

1910

## Christianity contra Magic. The Church Disbanded and Reformed.

W. Millman.  
Mrs. Millman.  
H. Sutton Smith (left July).  
Mrs. Sutton Smith (left July).  
C. E. Pugh.  
H. Lambotte.  
Sidney Sutton Smith (born  
May, died in English  
Channel, August).

W. H. Stapleton herein sometimes called "Mangwete."  
Mrs. Stapleton - herein sometimes called "Mama Mangwete."  
W. Millman - herein sometimes called "Mokili."  
Mrs. Millman - herein sometimes called "Mama Mokili."  
S. O. Kempton - herein sometimes called "Bokanda."  
E. E. Wilford - herein sometimes called "Ebongo."  
Mrs. Wilford - herein sometimes called "Mama Ebongo."  
H. Sutton Smith herein sometimes called "Kienge."  
Mrs. Sutton Smith herein sometimes called "Mama Kienge."

## CHAPTER XVII

### Claiming the Site

#### The Humble Beginning of the B. M. S. at Yakusu

1895 **I**N September of the year 1895, Revs. George Grenfell and Harry White steamed up to Upoto on our Mission steamer "Goodwill." Upoto was then our farthest station inland, some 1,100 miles from the coast. In a few days they steamed away again, but not westward this time, as had so often been done before; it was toward the rising sun that the prow of the "Goodwill" was turned. Eastward, and ever eastward, they went on a new quest. For days they advanced up the great waterway until further progress was stopped by the cataracts and rapids near the Equator, known as Stanley Falls.

Turning back, they dropped anchor at a place that had struck their fancy, close to a village of the Lokele people, called Yakusu. Its nearness to the embouchure of the Lindi tributary gave promise of its being a valuable strategic point. On first acquaintance this seemed an eligible site. In Harry White's words, "We have an ideal site, high enough above the water to be never swamped, and even to allow of our coffee and cocoa trees sending their roots downward without fear of getting rotted in undrained soil. A spring of delicious water within five minutes of the beach wells up in the forest."

Here then Harry White determined to stay for a time with some dozen lads from the school at Upoto, who had promised fidelity to him in all things. Mr. Grenfell left

## Claiming the Site

the iron boat to enable Mr. White to visit other towns, and make a thorough tour of the neighbourhood. Thus the first step was taken, a preliminary "dash" (present) was given to the folk of Yakusu, and a good understanding existed between them and Mr. White when the "Goodwill" steamed down river again.

But then troubles began. The boys from Upoto had never been so far away from home before, and though they had faithfully promised to stand by their white man, they soon grew restless and homesick; at length, they made off in the iron boat by night, with only one day's provisions. It was a desperate venture; ten days at least must pass ere they could reach Upoto. How were they to run the gauntlet of the many tribes that lined the river bank for 300 miles? Cannibalism had not then been suppressed over all the river district; the passage of steamers to and fro was still of rare occurrence, and a dozen boys in an open boat would easily fall a prey. However, by the aid of a flag and the story that they were the boys of a white man, they won their way through safely.

White was now left entirely alone, but he did not despair, nor did he sit down in idleness, for in those two months he made friends with his immediate neighbours, and explored the surrounding districts, tramping miles in the forest from village to village. He also made a canoe journey up the Lindi River, by no means an easy accomplishment when it is remembered that his own personal boys had left him, and that he was amongst a strange people, of whose language he knew little or nothing. On the banks of that river, he found a large number of people who were, to his mind, more advanced than the tribes lower down river: "Contact with the Arabs has sharpened the faculties of these folk." Thus important facts were gleaned which enhanced the value of Yakusu as a permanent evangelising centre.

## Yakusu

When White left Yakusu for a few weeks in order to spend Christmas at Upoto, he tested the friendliness and good faith of the people by leaving what stores he had on the site he had chosen. Boxes of barter goods, domestic utensils and personal articles, were left in his doorless hut, and the chief undertook to look after them. He was pleased on his return to find everything intact.

1896 Early in 1896 Mr. White was again at Yakusu alone. He managed, however, to build a rough house on the ground, twelve feet by sixteen feet, roofed with leaves and lined with nothing better than split bamboos. Into this shed Mr. Dodds was squeezed, with all his belongings, when he arrived in May.

The first zeal of the natives to help had quickly spent itself. Mr. White's health began to give way, and Mr. Dodds also suffered considerably. This sickness, coupled with the unsympathetic attitude of the natives, for no people can be more fickle than they, and the strain of continual nursing almost broke the spirit of the strong man. He wrote: "I fear I'm a spent man; I can't regain my energy it seems."

They were cheered in November by the arrival of Mrs. White and Albert Wherrett. Mr. Dodds sought restoration of his shattered health by a trip down river. The dreaded fever at once laid Wherrett low, and both White and his wife suffered repeatedly from most virulent attacks. Within a month the malarial attack proved too strong to be mastered, and poor Wherrett died.

Of that sad hour Mr. White wrote a most touching description. We who have entered into the labours of these martyr-heroes read with dimmed eyes the following words:

"To the neighbourliness of neighbours, I owe the lightening of the burden of that day of dismay. Savage not less in their way than civilised, by their ready help and sympathy they comforted one's heart greatly. My

## Claiming the Site

first demand for help was on the villagers to take a note to the authorities at Stanley Falls, advising them of Mr. Wherrett's death. The chief men promptly paddled off. It would be a stiff four hours' work, though only over ten miles of water, for a crew of half a score. In the afternoon the 'Aia' steamed in with an officer authorised to see that the affairs of our brother were in order. He brought a very kind letter of sympathy from Commandant Malfeyt, Commissaire of the district, and Mr. Langheld, an old trader friend, accompanied him. To the aid of these gentlemen I owe it that by nightfall the last rites had been performed for our brother, to the intense relief of my dear wife, who being called after midnight from a fever-bed to pass through the cold and wet to help me struggle against the disease, had felt severely the shock of seeing death snatch from us so suddenly the deeply-respected companion of her long journey from England. The best men of the village dug the grave under the magnificent 'bokolondo' tree that is our principal boundary mark. Forest covers the earth in this region, and has to be kept at bay by ceaseless exertion from savage and civilised alike, but till it overgrows the site of Sargent Station it shall not close over the spot where we have laid our brother. The evergreen bamboo shrub I planted to-day at the head, and the fencing dragon-palms, will daily draw from many savage lips, 'There is the grave of Akelalau' (that is, 'Him of seemly conduct,' 'Well-doer'), as he was known to the natives, for a path from the village passes close by, crossing the mission estate to the plantations and villages of the forest tribe. And in days to come shall not many a heart swell in gratitude to God for the gift of that life to the making of the Church of Yakusu, and Turumbuland, and Lindiland, Lokele waters, and Bakumu and Foma forest wilds? For, though Albert Wherrett was not allowed to build much of Sargent Station, who shall ever be able to claim

## Yakusu

priority before him as the founder of the Church of Christ in this tongue and congeries of clans and tribes, for the longed-for beginning of which we toil to make a habitable spot, and seek to win goodwill from neighbours, and teach, then preach, the Word ? ”

The Rev. J. R. M. Stephens arrived at the close of the year (December 31), and his bright, merry disposition somewhat revived the drooping spirits of the brave pair.

1897 But all three suffered so continually from the prostrating attacks of fever that they had to go home in April.

The strong “ spent man ” died on the voyage home on the night of July 4. They were nearing Mayumba at the time, and it flashed across the mind of Mr. Stephens that Tom Comber’s last resting-place was there. Permission was sought and obtained from the captain, the s.s. “ Niger ” put in, and Harry White’s remains, with those of the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Pople, were laid beside those of that other strong man, who gave of his best to found our Congo Mission.

And twenty months had passed since the founding of Yakusu. The fickleness of the natives had made it impossible to do very much ; White had, however, put up his house on piles four feet from the ground. The wood for this he had prepared at Monsembe and Upoto. It consisted of a couple of rooms and was fairly comfortable. A little clearing had been done round the house ; but beyond this the chronicle tells of sickness and the fearful lassitude that results from persistent malarial poisoning. He referred most gratefully to the help he had received from Monsembe in the preparation of material for his one-room framed shanty. “ Stapleton and Stonelake were kindly getting on with this. These two men have helped me in very many things ; have let their men get me timber, bamboos ; given me the use of tools and anything I have needed. Indeed, the new station and myself are both indebted very deeply to their help.”



*Photo by the Author.*

The house Harry White built and occupied a few months before he left.



## Claiming the Site

In April, Mr. Beedham had come up on the "Goodwill," and seeing how necessary it was, as has already been told, that Mr. Stephens should also seek rest and change after his trying experiences, Mr. Cameron, who was on board, volunteered to stay for a few weeks. But he could not stay long, as the work at Wathen called imperatively for his speedy return, and so it came about that when Mr. Dodds returned from Upoto, Mr. Cameron left. A brief month's work for Mr. Dodds, getting the boys together into school ways, and dysenteric symptoms developed which absolutely incapacitated him from work. On the arrival of the "Peace," in August, Mr. Field and Mr. Beedham strongly advised their colleague to seek recovery by a voyage down river.

Thus Mr. Beedham was left alone for a time to deal single-handed with the now cheeky and impudent people, who, apparently, strove to make him as uncomfortable and unhappy as they could. The misfortunes of the changing staff, and the coming of new men untried in the ways of the people, had made a firm, bold policy imperative with folk who ever go as far as they can in seeing how far they may go before they are checked.

In order to get anything done at all, Mr. Beedham had to appeal to the tribe in the forest and get them to work for him, clearing the forest, making rough paths, and bringing in some sticks for house building. He had to humour them, and often be content with half a day's work for a full day's pay; to play into their hands in order to play them off against the Lokele, who were doing their best to make progress impossible. To his many other duties and anxieties was added the need of nursing Mr. Dodds for two or three months through a prolonged and trying sickness, in the midst of conditions which were all adverse to his recovery. The strain of all this played havoc with Beedham's nerves, and it must have been a

## Yakusu

great relief to him, in November, to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton.

At the close of the year, though his experiences had been anything but encouraging, Mr. Beedham showed that spirit of optimism without which little lasting good is effected in the mission field. "Various attempts have been made," he wrote, "at the formation of a school, but sickness and lack of workers, with their inevitable interruptions, have made any continuous work impossible up to the present. We are hoping, however, that the new year will witness the formation of a permanent work amongst the many happy boys and girls who daily visit our station."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Retaining the Site and Founding the Mission

**A**LL this sacrifice had nearly been in vain. Such swift recurring strokes of misfortune, such painful effort of building "in tears," gave the stoutest-hearted supporters at home most anxious moments. Was there not good reason to pause and reconsider? There had been difficulties with the Congo Government, and it really appeared at one time that we should have to abandon on "legal" grounds. But these were overcome, and we turn with inexpressible thanksgiving to read again a Minute of General Committee, held in the mission house, on Tuesday, July 19, of this year: 1898

"Reports relative to Yakusu or Sargent Station, Upper Congo River, from brethren Stapleton and Grenfell, were presented and considered, after which it was resolved that, 'The Committee are thankful that, after a very careful examination of surrounding districts, the brethren have arrived at the distinct conviction that Yakusu Station should by all means be permanently retained, and the Committee cordially endorse and confirm this judgment.'"

How much rested on that single decision let this unfolding story tell. We take it up again where the last chapter closed.

The Field Committee had asked Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton to go on from Monsembe, and take charge of the forward work at Yakusu. With some misgiving, mingled with not a little regret, these two devoted missionaries

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packed up all their earthly belongings, though their furlough was almost due, and resolutely set their faces eastward. Entertaining high hopes, they left a comfortable home at Monsembe, and folk whom they loved and whose language they could both speak fluently, to travel 600 miles further inland, and start their missionary life afresh. For them it was the clear call of duty, and, gladly taking up their cross, they obeyed, believing that the aftermath would be a blessed one.

“ When I first saw Yakusu Station, in November, 1897,” wrote Mr. Stapleton, “ my heart sank within me. A small clearing had been made in the bush, just enough to show a site, dotted here, there and everywhere with enormous ant-hills, and the rest of our ground was covered with a dense thicket of undergrowth, and no workmen were to be obtained in the neighbourhood. To get the site cleared, and a station built, seemed an interminable task. We no longer despair. We have seven lads from Yakusu now working regularly on the station. Several of the schoolboys come in every day after dinner, and some forty women two afternoons a week, each getting a cupful of rice for the half-day’s work. Just in front of our dwelling is an ant-hill sixty-six yards in circumference ; on the up-river side is another, sixteen feet high with a diameter of thirty yards. . . . We are cutting down the ‘ bush ’ as quickly as we can, and making wide open paths, believing that this will add materially to the healthiness of the station.”

This year of steady, happy work, at first with Mr. Beedham, and when he left with Mr. Millman, who had come on from Upoto, told wonderfully in the advance of the station. In every direction things began to move. The uncertain element was ever the changing mood of the village folk.

“ In the month of January,” wrote Mr. Stapleton again, “ Mrs. Stapleton called the girls in to commence

## Retaining the Site

a school with them. About twenty responded. They appeared to be much interested, and came in for the next few days some three or four hours before school time, and were exceedingly enthusiastic. It was but fictitious fervour, however, for their mothers arrived before the end of the first week to know what wages the girls would receive. Finding that nothing would be paid, they forbade the girls to come. Unfortunately at this time we were troubled with thieving palavers, and felt it to be our duty to remonstrate pretty strongly with the people. They also began making difficulties with the Bangala workmen I had brought up river with me, refusing to sell them food," &c.

The awkwardness of the village people referred to in the foregoing lines reached a climax, and relations became quite strained for a week or two. But before long they began to see that they were losing by it. Some sixty or more logs of excellent timber were cut a little way up river, and floated down to the beach at Yakusu. Good pay was offered them to pull them up the cliff, but they refused. Practically the whole of the men of two or three Turumbu villages offered. Then Yakusu became jealous and wanted to help. This somewhat broke the spell of their obstinacy. How far they would go, however, was shown by the pranks they played when Mr. Stapleton set off with Mr. Grenfell on a journey up the Lindi. For a whole week they closed their markets and would not sell anything. Neither the threats nor the persuasion of Mr. Beedham were of any avail; the wily old chief played his part. On Mr. Stapleton's return, he was at once informed of the state of things. Leaving his Bangala lads in the canoe, he sent for the chief who was responsible for the deadlock, and gave him five minutes to give his people instructions to make a plantain market. Mr. Stapleton stood by his canoe, determined to go up to Stanley Falls at once and make a complaint to the resident official there.

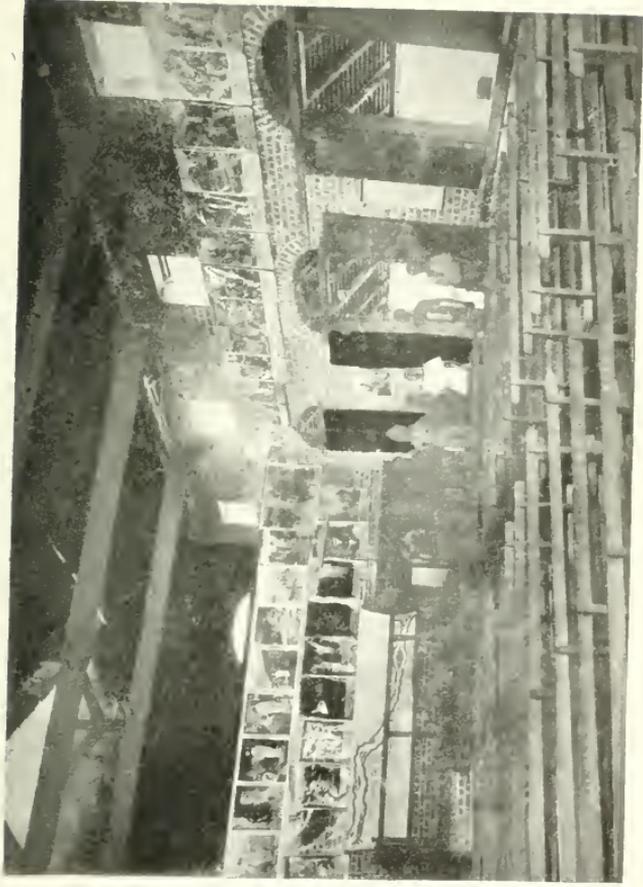
## Yakusu

The old chief tried to laugh it off, but became apprehensive when he saw Mangwete take out his watch and cast him a significant glance. At length, when he saw him begin to get into the canoe, his resolve suddenly broke down, and, racing up the cliff side, he bounded on to the drum platform and thundered out a message to his people. In a few minutes an abundant supply of fine, fresh plantain was being dumped down outside our store with all the accompaniment of unmelodious cries that the women keep up as they struggle to secure a place that shall be of most advantage to them in the sale.

It was the month of January, also, that witnessed the beginning of the regular boys' school. "The boys are not nearly so strictly under their parents' control as are the girls, so one had but to gain their interest to make school with them a success. About the beginning of April, I handed them over to Mr. Beedham, other work fully occupying my time. Mr. Beedham left for England early in May. Mrs. Stapleton then took over the boys; Miss Grenfell kindly offering to stay to teach the girls."

The timber cutting for which Yakusu later became famous was initiated at this time by Mr. Stapleton. On crossing the river one day, he was delighted to find on the opposite bank, within a few score yards of the beach, magnificent trees of African cedar and teak, and a hard yellow wood that has no name in English timber yards. There was nothing but their size that prevented them being worked, and Mangwete soon had a gang dealing with them. As his house was to be floored, ceiled and lined with wood, nearly 2,000 planks of different thicknesses would be needed. There was no lack. "One tree has yielded 400 planks, nine inches wide and ten feet long."

Good progress had been made with the first permanent dwelling house, and Mr. Millman, who arrived in the middle of October, at once took over responsibility for part of the



*Photo by Rev. William Forcett.*  
INTERIOR OF YAKUSU SCHOOL-CHAPEL, opened in 1903.



## Founding the Mission

boys' school, and busied himself also with the building of some better accommodation for the workmen.

During these busy months, language work was not neglected. "I have compiled and had printed at Bolobo," writes Mr. Stapleton, "a Swahili Primer for use in the school. Lads have been induced to come and stop on the station, for longer or shorter periods, belonging to the Turumbu, Tovokey, Wagenya and Bamanga tribes, and I have collected grammatical notes and vocabularies of their languages and also of Lokele. This branch of the work has not progressed as I had hoped chiefly because I have been suffering since May last with malarial swellings of the joints and large muscles, and on a good number of days have been able only to do the work essential to the proper superintendence of the house building."

These swellings were, perhaps, partly the result of the exposure he endured during the early months of the year. In accordance with the wishes of the Home Committee, he made a number of excursions into the surrounding district to glean information, and, if possible, confirm the opinion of the founders of the station as to the value of the position. His report gained the cordial approval of the committee in the Minute above cited.

"The value of Yakusu as a centre may be judged from the fact that within a radius of half a day's canoeing or walking we can visit no fewer than six tribes, the Lokele, the Turumbu, the Bakumu, the Wagenya, the Bamanga, and the Tovokey."

During the last year an event happened which did much to bind to the missionaries the hearts of the Lokele people, and of the Yakusu folk in particular. Marjorie Stapleton was born, and promptly named "Yakusu" by the happy people, who took her to their hearts at once. It would not be inappropriate to speak of it as the most humanising event of the year. It certainly did much.

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to cement relations of friendship with folk who had proved themselves about as fickle, awkward, and provoking in twelve brief months as any people could be. But at bottom the Lokele cherishes no ill-will. His innate "cussedness" will out, but his good nature shows itself with delightful and refreshing frequency.

1899 The well-earned and much needed rest had to be taken, and so in April of this year, when Mr. and Mrs. Roger arrived to support Mr. Millman, Mangwete and Mama with "Yakusu," their new little treasure, and a native boy, Wolamba, turned their faces homeward for a longer furlough than they either of them desired, or then dreamed was necessary. With them also went the Rev. John Jeffery, who had been associated with the brethren for a brief six weeks at Yakusu. On the voyage, Mr. Stapleton developed symptoms of blood poisoning, which resulted in most painful boils, and necessitated a much longer rest in England than they had anticipated.

Brickmaking began in earnest with the advent of Mr. Roger. Some lads he brought with him from Kinshasa showed the Yakusu boys how to make and burn brick. Material existed in abundance all around. Those huge ant-hills, long years ago discarded by the busy insects that made them, proved when dug into to contain a tough, hard clay which only required kneading to the right consistency. The difficulty of ridding the fair face of the station from such earth-pimples was at once solved. The mound behind the old school house was the first attacked, under Mr. Roger's direction, and for months we worked at it, burning quite 100,000 bricks from that one hill before we sought another.

For the present writer, it began to be a living experience from the 6th of September, 1899. Nearly four years had passed since Harry White had first set foot there, and it has been seen how that four years was spent. Scarce any mention has been made of the spiritual aspect

## Retaining the Site

of the work. All the operations thus far seem to have been secular and very mundane. How could it be otherwise? No one missionary had been able to stay long enough to learn the language. But though so much effort had had to be expended in clearing and building that the site chosen might be made tenable, the time had not been wasted. The people in touch with the missionaries, and especially the folk of Yakusu, were slowly beginning to learn some important moral lessons which the presence and lives of the missionaries enforced; lessons that would add point and power to preaching when the tongue was loosed.

No one, reading back, could say "these four wasted years," who has set himself at all to try and understand the insuperable obstacles that bar the enthusiastic messenger's progress at every step. It is all part of a great plan.

It was over this period that Salamu's influence was most felt at Yakusu. Who Salamu was, is a story that could best be told by the lady who won her devotion, and for so many years, at Monsembe first and later at Yakusu, was the honoured white friend of that happy, earnest Congolese girl. In this place let Mr. Grenfell's words suffice to give a brief account of her.

"Salamu was stolen from her home some years ago by Arabs, when they were masters of the country, and later came into the hands of the State, and through them to us. Under Mrs. Stapleton's care, Salamu has grown up to be one of the most promising of the Congo Christians in our ranks, a most interesting and original character. A year and a half or so ago, I took her some fifty miles down river from here (Yakusu) for her first visit to her home since she had been stolen thence by the Arabs. It was only upon coming up here with Mrs. Stapleton that she discovered her people. Not having forgotten her language, she is quite an important personage on the station, being

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the principal interpreter, and in that capacity takes part, as yet, in all the services. But what is better still, she interprets Christianity by her daily life among the people in a manner that is more eloquent than words. The Lord bless Salamu and send us more Christians like her."

This was the beginning of the unfolding plan and it is no wonder that it greatly heartened Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton at the time. To reflect that, unknown to them, Salamu should have been committed to their care with this knowledge of Lokele locked up in her bosom, was to become aware through this indubitable and most cheering evidence that the Lord ever goeth before his servants preparing the way.

Not only was it Salamu's delight to find her people again, whom she had quite lost track of, but it was their joy to receive her once more, and to make known far and wide who it was that had brought her back after so many long years. That gave the missionaries a wonderful interest and prestige in their eyes, and bore splendid testimony to the fact that we were come to unite and not to break up. It also proved a sure advantage in enabling us almost at once, and through the lips of one of their own daughters, to preach the message of undying Divine love.

Let Salamu's name be honoured when we speak of those who helped to build up the work of the Lord in the Lokele world.

Soon after my arrival in September, Mrs. Roger took ill, and when the "Goodwill" arrived at the end of October, she was carried on board, and we bid them a reluctant farewell. How little did we then think, as we looked upon their faces, that dear Roger would be the first to succumb to the deadly climate. I was then just recovering from my second attack of malaria, and quickly pulling myself together I prepared for some strenuous days alone with Millman. At that time we were making up our minds to bend all our energies to gripping the Lokele language,

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and allowing the Swahili to slide. To-day we can have no manner of doubt that the Holy Spirit was guiding us to that supremely important decision. I have referred to this matter in the talk on language.

Mr. Stapleton's house had been practically finished by Mr. Roger, and Mr. Millman was preparing in earnest to tackle the building of the first brick house. In these circumstances I was given charge of the school and the cooking, and began gradually to assume control of the brick and tile yards. Mr. Millman shouldered everything else, and the days sped happily by.

Apart from the school, our directly spiritual work was still confined to one service on the Sunday. Here is a description of an open-air service held during the month of October.

We took up our station near the centre of the village close to the big drum. The attendance was large; a typical Central African congregation. Among the children no clothing at all, and only a scanty allowance for each adult. Two or three forms placed against the iron palings gave Mokili and myself a seat, with Salamu and her husband. On either side of us some Monsembe and Bolobo mission boys who are working for us. In front of us, arranged in a semi-circle, a motley group. Little "kiddies" with painfully enlarged stomachs, and a string drawn tightly across the same to hold their drum-sticks. This was the foreground. Scattered amongst them, or a little behind them, were the Yakusu schoolboys, easily distinguished from the rest by their bright red fez caps, dark blue vests, and baggy breeches. Behind them were the women and girls. Great numbers came and either sat on the ground or on the circular one-legged stools they brought with them. With very few exceptions their toilet was complete; a plentiful use of red powder on the head, face, arms, and body showed what was the prevailing fashion, and what was considered to add most to the

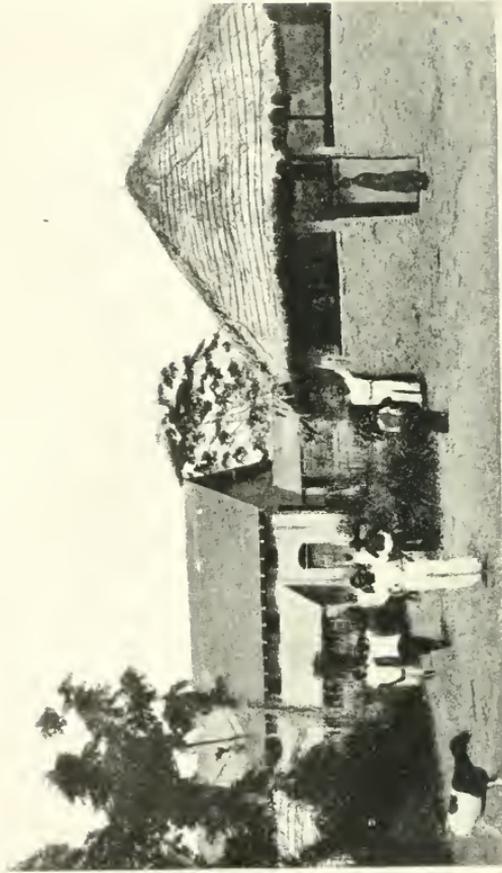
## Yakusu

charms and beauty of these Yakusu belles. Some prefer the use of a black powder, and with this they smear the face. They vividly reminded me of the coal cart men and sweeps of London. I cannot stop to describe the many varieties of head-dress. With nearly all of them, male as well as female, the upper lip is pierced in the centre and a small tooth or piece of ivory, or a rolled-up leaf, is inserted. I noted that two or three girls had possessed themselves of small quills, and put them in the hole drilled in the soft cartilage of the nose, horizontally. Completing the group were some fifty or sixty men standing up behind the rest, amongst whom we were pleased to see the chief Saidu (the bully) with his brother. On a little knoll away to the left, another group was standing, attentively looking on and listening. We sat facing the river, the majestic flood that could tell so much of the life-story of these people if its tale could be unfolded. The sun was slowly sinking, and the eastern heavens were dark with rolling clouds. We sang some of the nine hymns that we now know by heart; Millman read a few words from the Gospel of Mark, which he is translating, and Salamu spoke for about ten minutes; the boys and girls repeated a translation of the Lord's Prayer, and the meeting of about half an hour's length came to an end. These savages could not have been more attentive.

It was a wonder that we kept so well, for at the close of the year, Mr. Millman wrote: "During the last three months, sickness has been very prevalent in the district. The white men have suffered heavily from hæmaturic fever, while small-pox has raged amongst the natives. That our mission has so far escaped is marvellous in our eyes. We know whose hand is with us; in very fact 'a thousand have fallen at our side.'"

Another paragraph from the same report will fittingly close this chapter. We little thought when it was penned





*Photo by Rev. William Forfeit.*

THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOL CHAPEL AT YAKUSU, where teacher and preacher preside.

## Retaining the Site

how soon the brethren at Upoto would be stretching out the helping hand again.

“ It is with great thankfulness to all concerned that we recall the fact that in our need for workmen every river station contributed to our help. Mr. Roger brought with him from Kinshasa some boys who taught our Yakusu boys to make and burn brick ; Bolobo sent us two bricklayers who are training four Yakusu boys, and will do more when efficient tools arrive ; Monsembe has supplied us with a very efficient carpenter, under whose eye another Yakusu man is working ; while from Upoto hail six good sawyers. With such resources the founding of a new station in the future will be less expensive and infinitely less dangerous for the missionary than formerly. The success in this direction must be great cause for praise to God.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### Making our Position Sure

*"The man who seeks to move the rock of heathenism with morals is using the wrong lever. Its perverted morality is the outcome of its perverted religion. The first error was in departing from God."*

WARNECK.

1900 **T**O our great surprise one of the first items of news we received in the new year was that the Home Committee had asked Kenred Smith and his wife to come straight on to Yakusu to the relief of the overwrought brethren there. At the moment of reading it, we did not think ourselves at all overwrought, and for two months had been immensely enjoying our experiences together. However, the reason was quickly apparent. Mr. Roger had returned to England with the news of my two serious fevers—the first within a week of my arrival, when I went to bed with a temperature of 105·4, and the second attack, only six weeks later, which was scarcely less severe. Wherrett's so sudden decease was still fresh in everyone's mind, and the prospect of Millman being left alone with a sick colleague was too grave a matter to leave to chance; hence the wise decision of the Home Committee. Upoto's loss was our gain, and for a year we had the pleasure and profit of Kenred's fellowship, combined with the privilege of associating with his dear wife.

The year opened stormily, as far as relations with the natives were concerned. One morning I was much annoyed to see the girls run yelling out of school without a moment's warning. The drum was beating, and summoning them with the news that the sentry in the village was threatening the people because they were making

## Making our Position Sure

trouble with him about the tax. It was only an incident, and guessing the true state of affairs, we did not interfere. But there was no more school that morning, excitement was too great. As was often proved in after days, the village could be in full flight across river in their canoes, with most of their earthly belongings as well, within half an hour of the receipt of some alarm.

Thirty-six girls were in regular attendance at the beginning of the year in spite of the umbrage which many of them took over our Christmas gifts. We gave all the scholars a fathom of cloth apiece. The morning on which I arranged to give it out, there happened to be not more than a dozen girls present. Of course the news soon spread, and the absentees came running along; but, that order might be preserved, I was obliged to keep the doors shut. This mightily offended the young ladies. However, we got over that little palaver all right; and what is more, some of them started wearing the cloth we gave them, which was a decided advance.

It was in the middle of January that I wrote home: "It is almost necessary to disabuse your mind of all preconceived ideas of missionary life in Africa if you would form a true picture of my surroundings, and the nature of the work we do. It is so different from anything I had imagined. On Saturday morning last, Millman and I were working under a shed in the large brickyard. In front of us was the fenced-in field covered with bricks drying in the sun, and beyond that the two kilns. We were cutting some special bricks for the front of his house, when all at once he said to me, 'I guess your mother hasn't any idea of what you are doing now, and wouldn't dream that any place in the heart of Africa could be so peaceful and quiet. You know folk at home seem to think that we are surrounded nearly all day by crowds of natives and their chiefs, armed with long spears!' . . . . I seem to be much more of a missionary when I

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am in school of a morning teaching the boys and girls hymns, arithmetic, reading and writing, as also on the Sunday in our service. But there can be no doubt that we influence and teach them very much by the industrial work that the mission undertakes. If we can only break the deep-rooted habit of misdirected, desultory labour, we have done much towards a change of life. Needless to say our hope is set specially on some of the boys who came to Sunday school yesterday morning. The burden of our prayer daily is, 'Let them not fail of an entrance into Thy Kingdom.' "

Alas, the forces working against the progress of these lads towards the light of the love of God, and the freedom of the truth, were infinitely greater than we then realised. I have referred, in the chapter on " Magic," to the events in connection with it which took place in the early part of the year.

It happened that amongst the boys working for us, there were a good number who were just about the age for the " lilwa " ceremony. The people were mad on the trail again, and we, on our part, were determined to do our utmost to prevent it as far as our boys were concerned. A larger number than usual of the boys gathered round us one night to sing and pray. It was bright moonlight, and we sat round on the ground in the open space in front of my house. Afterwards two or three of them asked Mokili if they would have to go through the " lilwa " ceremony. He said " No." Thereupon they cried " lilwa—lilwa—lilwa," and it was taken up and passed from mouth to mouth. The men of Yakusu were irritated to exasperation by such mockery of their oracle, and demanded a heavy fine. In doing so they let their greed spoil them, for it was absolutely impossible for any of the boys to pay a third of what they asked. On hearing of the disturbance that had been caused, we strictly enjoined the boys not to mock at what their parents revered.

## Making our Position Sure

At the same time we told them that we did not believe in "lilwa," and, so long as they elected to stay with us, they would neither have to pay a fine nor pass through the ceremony.

Mokili told the chiefs that "lilwa" was effete, that God had sent another religion by the white man, but that if the boys mocked again, their parents should punish them. This was not sufficient, as a parent's punishment would not satisfy the demands of the priests of the cult. Saidi demanded that each boy should pay twenty shokas. The next day they brought to us a man from the village whom they declared to be suffering from the "lilwa" curse. He was certainly a loathsome sight, with no nose and part of one cheek eaten away, while the disease was slowly marring the rest of the face. In no gentle tones they were ordered away, and told that if they cursed any of the boys, who are easily terrified and made to believe that their lives are blighted, they would be seized and sent up to the State for punishment. The atmosphere was electric for a few hours, and later on when we heard what one of the Bopoto boys had written to Mr. Forfeitt at Upoto concerning it, we could well believe his account.

"There has been a lilwa palaver here, and when I asked one of the boys what it was he said he did not know, but that if he had been through it, he dare not tell me. The men of the town when they were so angry decided to send ten men to bind Mokili, and ten men to bind Kienge, and ten men to bind Mondele Bofoto (Kenred Smith) my master. When the morning came, however, they were afraid. Then they drew stakes as to whether they should burn their houses and go over to the other side of the river to make a town."

Evidently there was a big row in the village over our action that night. We were kept awake with the uproar till a late hour. Something, however, turned up to draw off

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their attention, and we were kept in the moment of danger. What that something was I do not now recollect, but it seemed to us that the people were always running away on the slightest pretext. On May 22, I wrote, "Lady-smith is relieved; we got news of this three weeks ago, but the papers with full details only arrived at 7 p.m. last night. It was not until we met at breakfast this morning that the enthusiasm which so caught hold of the British public, suspending business and generally turning things upside down, manifested itself amongst our little British company here. I think "Lady (Kenred) Smith" was much relieved when breakfast was finished, and I know she was still more relieved when she heard that the women and girls in the town had all run away, so that there would be no school for her this morning. It gave her a splendid opportunity for letter writing.

"I expect by this time such an item of news is not surprising. The reason for their flight now is that the four principal headmen are away, and the people have not paid their tax of fish to the Commandant at the Falls. Hence they are in hourly fear of an officer appearing to take it by force."

By the arrival of Mr. Kenred Smith, I was able to devote practically the whole morning to schoolwork, for he took the superintendence of the medical work off my hands. Language work also benefited, for Mrs. Kenred Smith at once agreed to keep house for the three of us, so that Millman and I boarded with them. This took the burden of kitchen duties off my shoulders as well, and I entered upon an experience of liberty that I had scarcely known before.

One hundred and twenty was the normal attendance of boys and girls at school during this period. I was able to start a special arithmetic class, and in less than six months several of the boys showed marked ability. The girls used to spend the first three-quarters of an hour

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with us over the opening exercises, and then, fling out, would walk to the house, on the verandah of which Mrs. Kenred Smith taught them. In spite of their six months of comparative liberty (*i.e.*, without the teaching of a white lady), they soon began to work in earnest. Our few hymns had increased to thirty-five by this time, and we all knew them all by heart.

Some of the youths of Yakusu who could not get to school regularly, on account of the duties devolving on them, I welcomed to my house and table at all hours of the day, pleased to see their keenness. Litofe and Bofoya were regular visitors. I wrote of this, "How you would smile to see the two or three big fellows that come in and sit at my table nearly every day to write for an hour or two. I have perfect confidence in them, and frequently leave my house when meals are on, and at other times while they are here. Each puts his pen in a different place, on a little ledge perhaps almost out of reach, or behind some books. More than once they have forgotten where they put them, and I have had to assist in the search. The new books we have just had printed at Bolobo are proving very useful, and we hope to get many efficient readers by its means. You would scarcely believe it, but these boys learn to read quicker than English boys, and in a language they do not understand. There is no doubt we are greatly indebted to the Ki-Swahili version, and now that we are having some scripture lessons printed in Lokele, the advantage is evident in that some forty boys and girls are able at once to read and understand them."

I gave Litofe one day a page of translation from Genesis to read. When he had read it through slowly, I said, "Now can you tell me about it?" He looked surprised, and said, "My eyes have only seen the letters, when I have read it once or twice again, then I shall know." Litofe was a young married man, and the effort required for him to master his letters had been considerable.

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Mr. Millman, who had made splendid progress with his house during the year, had to leave us in November for furlough. The Sunday school started in January had prospered. About thirty met with us regularly on Sunday mornings, and just before Mokili left several of them faithfully promised to follow in this way, and to keep near to Christ. They were urged to remember the Commandments and to keep them. The evident sincerity of their purpose greatly cheered our departing colleague, and he enlisted many a prayer on their behalf while in the homeland, that in them faith might grow from more to more. The majority of that little band later entered the church, not in a company, but one by one as they were moved by the Spirit to believe

1901 With the New Year came the news that the Rev. S. O. Kempton was on his way to Yakusu. His coming would enable Kenred Smith and his wife to return to Upoto, where their presence was much needed; but, alas, the stroke was to fall which made Yakusu the final resting-place for Mrs. Kenred Smith. Stricken down with a quickly fatal attack of hæmoglobinuric fever in April, she breathed her last after only one year's residence in Africa. They had bravely come to our help twelve months before, not recking the consequences. How much was demanded of them, who had lived in many a thought and cherished wish at Upoto during their stay with us. Bopoto boys were round her all the time while at Yakusu teaching her their language, and suddenly the voice that they longed to hear among their own people was silenced for ever.

The sadness of that day was mitigated somewhat, for the hearts of the people were moved to sympathy, and they were exalted in our eyes. These women and girls who loved Mrs. Stapleton, and had revered the little white child, had made a friend of Mrs. Kenred Smith, too. How quietly they followed her remains to the graveside,

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and what marvellous repression of feeling was showed by the great crowd that gathered there with us. The silence was more eloquent than would have been the prolonged wailing, so characteristic a feature of their own funeral ceremonies.

A month later, an offer of a passage to Upoto on the Dutch trading steamer seemed too good an opportunity to be lost, and Kenred Smith left us. His gift was accepted; her memorial is with us, beside that of Albert Wherrett, but the living memorial, the fragrance of a life laid down, abides, and the growing Church of Christ amongst the Lokele bears witness to-day of its imperishable value.

So for awhile Kempton held the fort with me, and nothing hindered the progress of the work, saving one or two insignificant fevers. As the middle of the year passed, the one event talked of by all was the long expected return of Mangwete and Mama and Wolamba. Their long-deferred departure had bitterly disappointed them, and their continued ill-health had caused the committee, and their many friends, serious anxiety.

Time and again the mother of Wolamba had been to me wringing her hands and crying, "My boy is dead; my boy is dead." At first she was easily pacified, but as the months rolled by her alarm increased. I could not tell her when Mangwete would return, and she exclaimed, "See how many moons have passed and not a word from my boy. How do you know that he is alive?" I reminded her of Salamu, and who it was brought her back after seven times as many moons.

There was one who watched more eagerly than we did for the coming of the "Goodwill," and in October her long vigil was rewarded.

“ He that goeth forth and weepeth ! It is his tears that cause him to go forth. It is his sorrow that will not let him rest. True pity is a mighty motive. When the real abiding pathos of life has gripped a man's heart, you will find him afield doing the work of the Lord. You will not see his tears. There will be a smile in his eyes, and, maybe, a song on his lips. For the sorrow and joy of service dwell side by side in a man's life. Indeed, they often seem to him to be but one thing. It were a mistake to refer the whole meaning of the words about a man's coming again; with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him to some far day when the reapers of God shall gather the last great harvest of the world. Through his tears the sower sees the harvest. Through all his life there rings many a sweet prophetic echo of the harvest home.”

AINSWORTH.

## CHAPTER XX

### The Darkest Hour, and the Dawn

OCTOBER was the red letter month for Yakusu 1901 in that it brought us again Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton.

They were the *first* to return to Yakusu after furlough. How we shouted with pleasure that wet Wednesday morning when the "Goodwill" hove in sight; how pleased we were to find them well after their long journey. What a happy meeting, too, for them with the people who had been thought of and prayed for all the long furlough. How the girls rejoiced to see their Mama back again, and how the mother of Wolamba stared to see her boy, who, she thought, would never return, so fine and bonnie.

Their coming caused us much happiness, and we had reason to look forward to a time of continued, progressive activity, and of resulting prosperity. Their actual return proved an even greater source of rejoicing than we had expected it would be. It fixed on the minds of the people the fact that we have a continued policy, that we are working with a real purpose, and that we seek but one thing, their highest good.

We youngsters were cheered to find our leader so appreciative of the changes he saw in the place since he left it two and a half years before, and I know we were both struck by his kindly considerateness in discussing things with us. A few days put us both at our ease, and a few weeks cemented a friendship which lasted till death.

It was of this year's work that we were able to write: "The school is breaking the strength of opposition and suspicion, and we recall with gratitude several events which prove that the people can sympathise and help,

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free from the love of reward which is so detestable, because so marked a feature, of the folk. It would be easy to speak of their faults, but, putting them altogether, they go up in the balance when weighed against the two or three actions that have brought tears of joy to our eyes."

For six round months Mr. Kempton had been school-master and superintendent of brick and tile yards. One hundred and eighty scholars, from sixteen different towns and representing eight tribes, afforded scope enough for any single man's energies. Not all could be accounted for as to tribe, and he wrote, "There is a certain pathos in the incompleteness of these figures, for some of the children are unable to give the names of their parents, or town, or tribe. They never cease to regret having to bear the stigma of slave. The ordinary Congo lad, albeit not sentimental, is proud of his tribe, his town, and his chief. When a lad cannot answer enquiries respecting these, I have seen the cheek flush and the tears gather in the eyes. One of the best things the Congo State has done in this neighbourhood was that of crushing the power of the Arabs at Stanley Falls, thus checking, if not wholly putting an end to, slave dealing."

"In these boys and girls lies our hope for the future evangelisation of this district. Keen, therefore, is our interest in their spiritual welfare, and real is our regret when some, who have been seeking to live uprightly and to break with bad habits, suddenly lapse into the old ways and live as the heathen around. Other lads, through their constancy and faithfulness throughout the year, have been a joy to us, and when they return to their own towns we pray that they may so live the new life and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as to win many converts. In after years we hope to write of many an one in relation to his work amongst his dusky tribesmen :

'He lured them on to brighter worlds,  
And led the way.'"





*Photo by the Author*

EXAMINATION DAY AT YAKUSI!

## The Darkest Hour, and the Dawn

Fifty girls were soon round Mrs. Stapleton, who were quite unhappy if school was missed for a day.

“ We received such a warm welcome,” wrote Mrs. Stapleton; “ flags were flying and there was a motto over the steps of our house bidding us ‘ Welcome Home.’ ” In a week it seemed almost impossible that we had been away at all, and at the end of a fortnight I took over the girls, and commenced school duties. I was very glad to gather them round me, and to find that some of them had greatly improved in their studies. They are a wild, high-spirited lot of girls, but some of them give us good reason to be hopeful.

“ One of the best of them has just left us for a home at Yalocha. There was great excitement about her marriage, as two young men were both eager to possess her, and as soon as one of them had struck a bargain with her relatives, she was hurried into his canoe, and taken down river by night to her new home. In a few days a piece of plantain leaf was brought along to me on which she had written, ‘ I am with sorrow to have left without bidding you farewell. Will you send my slate and pencil ? I do not want to forget what I have learned. I will try to do right. Achaka.’ She had written this little note with a piece of charcoal, and I am keeping my first letter from a Yakusu girl.”

I was happy to have completed, on Mr. Stapleton's arrival, a substantial brick kitchen and domestic offices, which were connected with his back verandah by a raised brick pathway, covered over. This meant that the wooden house and the brick house were now quite completed.

The next building we agreed ought to be the permanent chapel ; but first a respectable brick store seemed a crying necessity. Ants had spoiled nearly £10 worth of cloth, because we had no proper place to stock it. The need of keeping a barter store was as urgent as ever, for during the year

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our "shoka" currency had involved quite as much labour as previously to obtain. We measured out thousands of yards of cloth, and offered umbrellas and shoes, felt and straw hats, spoons and forks, plates and dishes, saucepans and pudding pans, shirts and vests, white jackets and a multitude of less bulky things with varying success, in order to obtain the heavy rusty shoka in sufficient quantities to enable us to keep our work going, and pay our way with a respectable margin.

So the close of the year witnessed the foundations laid of a large station store.

1902 I was glad indeed to adopt the suggestion Mr. Stapleton made that I should gradually hand over all my immediate interest in station work to him, so that from Christmas I might be entirely free to spend a couple of months in touring the district by canoe and on foot. My furlough, of course, was due when the "Goodwill" visited us in March.

The year that opened so brightly for us at Yakusu was the herald of sorrow and the harbinger of grievous loss to our returning colleague, Mr. Millman. Delayed at Monsembe on his way up river to us, Mrs. Millman endured an attack of fever which could not be mastered. Within a few weeks of leaving England their radiant joy was clouded by the necessity of a parting, hard indeed to be borne.

As I journeyed down river, carrying with me the MSS. of my translation of the "Story of the Patriarchs" for the printers at Bolobo, the stunning news reached us at Nouvelle Anvers, and a few hours later we met Mr. Moore, Mrs. Whitehead, and my stricken colleague on the beach at Monsembe. He was bravely bearing up, and facing with splendid courage the prospect of five years of a loneliness that is all the more poignant because it finds no expression in words.

Before I left Yakusu we had prepared some decorations

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to welcome them, not hearing till the steamer arrived of their delay at Monsembe. More than five years passed before any other lady reached Yakusu, to stay; for, until Mrs. Wilford's arrival in 1906, Mrs. Stapleton was the sole lady missionary at work there. She had anticipated Mrs. Millman's arrival with keen satisfaction, having written early in the year, "On the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Millman, I shall be free to do more for the women of our town. I am often asked by them to spend more time with them, and my welcome among them is always pleasantly sincere. The other day a group of mothers were asking me various questions about 'Yakusu,' as they call our little girl; and one woman said, 'Truly, my friends, Mama Mangwete must love us to leave her child and come back to us.' Then we had a quiet little talk about Jesus, whose love for them far exceeds ours, although truly we do love them, and seek not to miss opportunities, knowing how short life may be for us out here."

Within three months of penning those words her new colleague was breathing her last at Monsembe. A "short life" indeed, but one the completeness of which we shall none of us question when the mysteries of life are made clear, and the grand, Divine plan is revealed. Later, it was said by the one who suffered, and bowed to the will of heaven, as he recorded the wonderful events of a year of unexampled progress at Yakusu, "God's plan unfolds before our eyes with startling completeness."

Our industrial work received a very decided check, and was brought almost to a standstill during the month of February. It was again a tussle with the tribe over the "lilwa" ceremony. The old men were determined to have their way this time, and not to let a single boy slip through their fingers. We felt it all the more, because the personnel of our staff of boys represented a much wider area than it did in 1900. There were now boys from sixteen different villages with us, and most of these were

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Lokele. As I have indicated, in the chapter on Magic, we took up a somewhat different attitude from that previously adopted.

For several weeks the station was practically deserted. Our village alone sent one hundred acolytes, of varied ages and sizes, to the charmed grove. Only women, and less than a dozen men, were left in Yakusu. The whole tribe between the Lindi and the Lomami were occupied for fully two months in this grotesque form of spirit communion and worship of the deceased fathers of the clan. By twos and threes the boys left, wages or no wages. Every morning there were four or five short. We soon had no Yakusu boys or workmen on the station. Still we thought we could jog along with the other Lokele boys from down river who were with us, some forty or more. But the Yakusu chiefs began worrying them, and their own people from the various villages implored them also. Several were firm for some days, but the pull was too strong and their own resolve too weak. They were eaten up with curiosity, and fairly taken off their feet with excitement. We were sorry for some of them, for they had done good work for many months, but we were quite frank in telling them that, if they broke their contract, they could not expect to claim their wages afterwards. This was the only hold we had on them at the time. It was no good ; they left us in despite of it all.

On the last Sunday on which we had anything like a representative gathering, I spoke to them about Daniel, with what loyalty and persistence he "continued" to do right and to worship God. Some of them, we were confident, had their eyes sufficiently opened to see the folly of it all. Soon rumours reached us that a few were heartily sick of the farcical character of it long before it was over. We were forced to hope much in the work of the Holy Spirit, and to plead that, where we were so helpless, He would the more potently manifest His presence.

## The Darkest Hour, and the Dawn

We must not expect to break a custom, perhaps centuries old, in half a dozen years. Six months before this it seemed as though we were within a very little of forming a Christian Church. Now it seemed indefinitely postponed. At that moment we thought it would prove the best blow struck at that ancient custom. The chiefs and townspeople made no secret of the fact that they did not want the white man to have their boys, so they sought to bind them by a tie which, in the past, no one had dared to break, and, from their point of view, thereby saved the community from any radical change which might have been brought about by our teaching.

The temporary gloom of these thwarting experiences soon gave place to the clear shining of an assured spiritual advance. While these things were going on, and before I left to return to England, three were meeting with me whose declared purpose it was to be baptized. Mr. Stapleton continued the special instruction which I had begun, and by the month of July they were judged ready. Of these three, Mr. Kempton wrote in March, "Through the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high hath visited us. We have now three enquirers before us who, we confidently hope, will become the first members of the native church at Yakusu. May we not take this as an earnest that in a few years God will no more be a stranger in the land?"

Of that soul-stirring experience, Mrs. Stapleton's words shall tell: "We have just had our first baptism, Baluti, Masengo, and Wolamba. It was a memorable day in the history of Yakusu. We had the usual afternoon service, and Mangwete explained the rite to the crowd assembled, and then quietly we made our way down the bank to the river; and there, in a most glorious sunset lighting up the scene, Mangwete baptized them. It was indeed a hallowed time. Masengo's face glowed with joy and feeling, and Wolamba and Baluti looked very resolved and earnest.

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The whole town was there, and perfect order and decorum prevailed."

Thus the founding of Yakusu became a fact, and to God be the glory. Soon glad tidings reached me in England, in that five other young people came forward in the fall of the year, saying that they wished to follow Jesus.

Reporting on the year, Mr. Stapleton wrote: "1902 has been most distinctly a good year, a year of movement and real progress. There has been a great desire on the part of the people to learn the white man's book. Early in July we began our school-chapel, for which the late Mr. Arthington and a few friends subscribed the money, and friends at St. Mary's Gate Church, Derby, the furniture."

"Translation work, which I had specially hoped to push forward this year, has suffered most through our being short-handed. I have translated the Miracles and Parables of Jesus, which, having been printed with illustrations at Bolobo, is in the hands of our scholars, and is greatly appreciated. We have also had printed Mr. Sutton Smith's 'Stories of the Patriarchs.' I sent down in November the MSS. of a new Hymn-Book, also of a 'Primer for Enquirers,' and the first part (a fifth of the whole) of 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.' I am at work on the Gospel of Luke, and Mr. Millman is revising his MSS. of Mark."

## CHAPTER XXI

### Consolidation and Extension

*"By prayer we help to distribute the energies of God."*

J. H. JOWETT.

**W**ITH this chapter begins the story of an era of prosperity that has scarcely a parallel in the history of our Congo Mission. Unbounded enthusiasm, leading to a rapid extension which almost exceeded our powers to efficiently guide and control, marked the next three years' work. It was providential, indeed, that at that time we had a strong staff—Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton, Mr. Millman, Mr. Kempton, Mr. Wilford, and myself. The boat was well-manned and we pulled all together, and went very much further than prudence dictated, or our most sanguine anticipations had led us to expect. The fact is, that the prudent missionary would have been left very far behind in such a movement, and have failed miserably at his task. We were guided by faith and sustained by prayer, and for the rest, though we knew there were breakers ahead, we took the scores of young people at their word, and endeavoured to give them such a start in the Christian life, and such a hold of the Christian faith, which they had so eagerly embraced, as to carry them safely through the stormy seas of fierce assailing temptations that we knew would have to be met. How many would survive the day of trial we could not then tell. Our one duty we felt was to make assurance doubly sure, by testing without discouraging, the many young applicants for baptism, and examining them very carefully to make sure of the sincerity of their intention. We had otherwise laid ourselves open to the danger of

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leading many into the Church who had laid no foundation, and would quickly fall away into error, and succumb to the degenerating influences of the corrupt and foolish practices of witchcraft.

As the movement gathered in momentum with the passing months, we often discussed together what the exciting cause could have been. Every mail brought us assurances from friends in the Baptist communion, and others, of their earnest prayers for God's blessing. One letter Mr. Stapleton received from a friendly vicar in the Church of England deeply touched him, showing as it did the catholicity of interest of many of Christ's followers in that communion.

It became clear that it was God's gracious answer to the appeal which found definite expression in a paragraph, penned in January, of Mr. Stapleton's report of the preceding year's work.

"I would like to ask the many in the home churches, who are specially interested in Yakusu, to join us in definite prayer to God for a number of young men, married and single, also young women, living in the town, who are much upon our hearts. The truth has laid hold upon them with a grip they cannot escape. There is no doubt but that their lives are changed; in the instance of some of Mrs. Stapleton's big girls this is markedly the case. They discuss freely together their desire to follow Christ, but shrink from the feared consequences of a definite adhesion to His cause. Some of these latter beg, almost pathetically, to come on to the station to live under our protection. But at this stage it would seem essential that these should take their stand amongst their own people, and amidst the town life and work. We are sometimes a little impatient of their 'halting,' but it is so difficult for us to enter into their dread of separating themselves definitely from the ways of their people, or fully to appreciate the consequences of such a step. We

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doubt not they will come, but have thought that many of our friends might esteem it a privilege to join with us in definite petition that these may be led to complete surrender of themselves to Jesus this next year. We are the more anxious, perhaps, as it is certain that this neighbourhood is on the eve of great changes, and we would desire greatly to see a work firmly established ere the 'old order changeth, yielding place to new.' "

"How the building of the two railways from this point to the Great Lakes, which has just commenced, will affect us and the district it is impossible to foresee; that it is fraught with big consequences is quite clear, and we would ask the prayers of the mission upholders at home that we may be on the alert to adapt ourselves to the changing circumstances, and may have knowledge of the times, that we may think God's thoughts in the coming days which are sure to test our faith, our wisdom, and our resources to the full. We would that we might miss no opportunity of furthering His Kingdom."

Those last words fitly echo the spirit in which we faced the ordeal of the next three years' work. It was for us all a most heart-searching experience. We will take the events in their order.

All the heavy work in connection with the erection of our splendid school-chapel was over, and everyone began to look forward to the opening day. The two score thousand tiles needed for the roof proved more difficult to obtain than the bricks had been, because there were always more breakages in the handling and burning of them. However, Mr. Kempton had at last the satisfaction of seeing the last square foot covered, and Mr. Stapleton the keen pleasure of beholding his *magnum opus* in the building line an accomplished reality. It was not a week too soon for the day school, which had been steadily growing, had received a great impetus on Mr. Millman's arrival the preceding October from Monsembe.

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It was of this year that he was able to report 400 names on the register, and 300 daily attendances. "Besides these, there are more than as many again on our out-school registers, so that we reckon to-day there are 1,000 Lokele girls and boys learning to read. Our scholars themselves are putting their shoulders to the wheel fairly zealously, and whenever they go visiting, trading, hunting or fishing, they also go teaching. The outside demand for teachers is greater than we can at present cope with, consequently it is getting a common occurrence for boys to come up river on a fishing expedition, set their traps at night, attend school in the daytime, and stay hereabouts just long enough perhaps to acquire the alphabet and hear a Bible story or two, then go back to their towns to tell what they can remember. Very few natives are really too old to learn to read; one of our chiefs is getting on very well in school, and has just got into the class of which his own son is the teacher."

"Naturally the out-schools are very irregularly attended, nearly every scholar having to get his own living by fishing, hunting and market-gardening; nevertheless the native registers show a daily attendance varying from thirty to one hundred and thirty at each place."

The new chapel was also needed at once for another remarkable meeting that was held every Thursday evening. A Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour had been formed in January, and of that event Mr. Stapleton wrote:—

"The baptism of our first three converts in June, 1902, made a deep impression, and the first result was the application of six others for baptism; these I formed into a preparatory class, which met me weekly. It was evident, however, that there were many others who, whilst not prepared to join this class, yet had been awakened to deeper interest in our message, and it was to attach these more closely to ourselves, and to provide for them

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a stepping-stone to church fellowship, that the Society was formed. At the ordinary meeting of the preparatory class I explained my idea, and submitted the form of pledge. All thought the idea a good one, and all agreed to sign. An open meeting was announced for the next Thursday night, to be held in our sitting-room, and about thirty responded. The pledge was read and explained, and the six candidates for baptism signed their names. Others asked to sign, but were told to learn the pledge, and then make a definite application to one of the missionaries, who, on assuring himself of the applicant's understanding of the pledge and earnestness of purpose, would submit his name for membership.

“The meetings evidently met a felt want. Week by week they grew in interest, the numbers increased rapidly, so that in a few short weeks not only was the sitting-room crowded with young folk packed as closely together as possible in long rows on the floor, but the crowd flowed out into the living room, and then out on to the verandah, as many as 150 being present. From the outset I presided at the meetings, but everything possible was done to make them realise that the meeting was their own, and that I was simply chairman, to direct and suggest.

“For some time before the new chapel was habitable, the meetings were much too large for the house; but as soon as possible they were held in the new building, and it is now by far the most popular gathering of the week. The membership has grown to 140, whilst from 300 to 400 gather every Thursday evening, quite a number of the old people coming to hear something that their own folk have to say, who rarely come to hear the white preacher.”

Once more a grave was opened in our little cemetery. The Rev. George Moore who stayed at Yakusu for a few weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, preparing for the journey towards the Lakes, died after an illness of but

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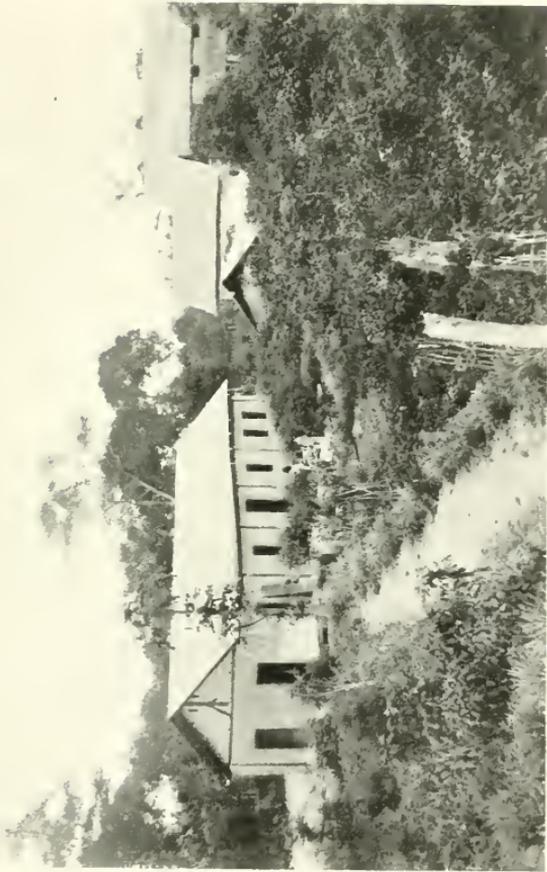
three days ; “ died facing the foe, having played the man and found his grave with the brave on the field.”

Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton went down to Bolobo in July, in order that he might see through the press his “ Comparative Handbook of Congo Languages,” a work which proved him to be among the foremost of the philologists of Central Africa. This left Messrs. Millman, Kempton, and Wilford together. The last named had spent a few months at Upoto on his way up river, and when he finally reached Yakusu received a very hearty welcome from the brethren there, and soon settled down to serious work.

Salamu had been getting weaker and weaker, a prey to sleeping sickness contracted while at Monsembe. “ A month after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton for Bolobo, her spirit gently wended its way home, and the sleepsickness-ridden body of the woman, whose life had been such a strange blending of extremes of joy and sorrow, was laid by that of her husband on August 14.”

On my return in October, Mr. Kempton left for furlough, having spent a unique thirty months on African service, and been privileged to witness such tokens of the Divine Spirit’s working as fall to the experience of but few in so short a time.

The reception I received on the beach at Yakusu, when the “ Goodwill ” steamed up, was memorable ; it being in such marked contrast to the state of things which the “ lilwa ” ceremony was responsible for on my leaving in 1902. It was most cordial and demonstrative. There was a great wave of enthusiasm for the “ book ” passing over the Lokele world. As we came through the district, it was highly amusing and interesting to see canoe after canoe put out from the various villages, with the teacher on board. Men could be seen running along the strand with slates in their hands. One canoe, on boarding us, was capsized ; the teacher hung on to the steamer boat and



*Photo by the Author.*

VIEW OF STORE, shewing (in the centre of the picture) where the patients gather for outdoor dispensary, 1907.



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got safely on board, as did also an old school-girl and a man. They greeted me effusively. I wrote at that time, "The brethren here killed a leopard in the trap set for it at the end of the goat house. Kempton has taken the skin home, and is, I guess, proud of it as he helped to shoot it. The beast killed a little boy in the town one evening, within a few feet of the hut. Parts of his remains were afterwards found in the forest. Another night it got into the goat house and ran amuck amongst our best milch goats, killing twenty. Next time it came it found a trap ready, and failing to recognise it as an instrument of death, was captured and despatched. The mother of the little boy came, and with tears streaming down her face, took Millman's hands and shook them for some time. How long we have sought for a word to express 'gratitude,' and here is an act illustrating it which will live amongst our people at any rate for one or two generations.

"We are having crowded services, and the new chapel looks A 1. The Christian Endeavour, too, is flourishing, and the decidedly Christian element in the village is increasing. Several are already candidates for baptism, and the forthcoming service should include quite a number from Yakusu who have had all the advantages of the school and the preaching without having materially changed their village ways, as boys and workmen on the station necessarily do to some extent."

My first task was to build the third dwelling house, and I therefore arranged to take over the sawing gang and the carpenter's shop, and to form a squad of bricklayers and house-builders. This I could see would occupy me for the next twelve months. While I was busy with it, Mr. Millman agreed to keep on the medical work, which prospered greatly under his care, and won us golden opinions amongst the people. He also had all the burden of the school work, helped by Mr. Wilford, who went in every morning for an hour or more. All the work involved in

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the superintendence of the brick and tile yards, and the preparation and burning of the kilns, was shouldered by Mr. Wilford, who shortly began to take his regular turn with us in the preaching services. "The fuel gang," about fifteen men in all, employed on alternate days three days a week to bring in from the forest and cut the wood needed for the burning of the kiln, devoted the rest of their time to station clearing, and house repairing, &c. So Mr. Wilford, who looked after this department, or rather this set of departments, found himself a busy man and lived much in the open. Following the example of the other workmen, whose evening school I took over from Mr. Kempton, the Turumbu clay-diggers and kiln-burners asked to be taught, and as soon as Mr. Wilford could speak sufficiently well to do it, he started a class for them. So obviously did he strive for their welfare, that the Turumbus called him "Fafa, 'asu ako Ebongo." "Our father, that is Ebongo."

But I could not start building a house without bricks. The unceasing building operations carried on during my furlough had resulted in the completion of the long store, a goat and sheep house, built of the cast-off remainders of kilns, and the large brick chapel. A kiln was no sooner opened than it was at once used, so that I found only some 2,000 serviceable bricks in hand, albeit a quarter of a million had been made during the year. It was imperative that some one should visit the out-schools and villages of the district before Christmas, and so it was arranged that I should take my bricklayers and their helpers with me and spend the first three weeks of December on an itineration.

Just before I got off, however, two American gentlemen turned up to stay with us for ten days. They were Mr. W. E. Geil and his secretary, touring Africa in defence of Christian missions. The latter gentleman was very ill while with us, but by dint of assiduous and careful nursing,

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Mr. Millman set him on his feet again. In my turn, I had to nurse Mr. Geil through two nights' fever. Their long and tiring journey through the great forest from the Uganda boundary was enough to account for this state of things. When they left us to go down river, we were pleased to think that they were both looking fairly fit.

It was a novel experience being interviewed in Central Africa, and having to nurse one's interviewer. Mr. Geil was immensely impressed with our "auditorium," as he at once called it, especially when he saw it crowded with natives at a service. The story of its building, too, by native locally-trained lads, with the exception of one Accra carpenter, and the fact that all the material had been made on the spot, greatly astonished him. Hearing of the ant-hills that had towered beside it for some months, until finally demolished for mortar, and the many other ant-hills that had supplied all the clay for the bricks, led him to call our sanctuary "the Ant-hill Church." All this information was confirmed when he went across the station and saw the foundation of my house being laid. It was practically built on, and built out of, one ant-hill.

Some account of this visit, and Mr. Geil's interview with us, is to be found in his book, "A Yankee in Pigmyland."

My journey amongst the villages, and the festivities of Christmas over, we prepared to sum up the events of the year. The out-school work had so extended that the exchequer was in debt. At the Christian Endeavour meeting on New Year's Eve more than 200 were present. It was explained to them by Mokili that the expenses of maintaining the teachers in other Lokele villages for the past three months was not covered by the resources at our disposal, and he appealed for some gifts on Sunday. The response altogether exceeded our anticipations, and revealed the real nature of the movement Godwards amongst the people. In Mr. Millman's

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words, "The result was surprising and gladdening, for early on Sunday morning folks began bringing their offerings of native money, fowls, eggs, plantain, cloth, beads, pots and such like things, so that by Monday night, when the goods had been turned into money, we received from the boys in charge of the collection the sum of 458 shokas, which is 251 more than we needed for the moment, and will enable us to begin the year with a favourable balance.

"This in a country where a well paid labourer gets a shoka a day. And they send you the fifty-one shokas (*i.e.*, 25½ francs, which is £1), through us for the new Congo steamer "Endeavour." Their letter and money will follow by the next mail. We hope their offering will not arrive too late.

"From all this it should appear, first, that there is manifest a decided awakening of interest in the things of God; perhaps, as often is the case, some of it is evanescent, but not all. Next, that by preaching and visiting, journeying, teaching, doctoring, training, translating, and printing the Scriptures we are, in the name of the Master, trusting to cope with the situation; also that there never was a time in the history of this station when the prayers of the home Christians were more to be desired than at present, for in answer to them we have been led into paths from which there is no turning back."

## CHAPTER XXII

### The Revival in the Further Villages

#### The Church Rapidly Growing

*" God often influences the inner life of the heathen by dreams and visions in such a manner that all psychological explanations leave something inexplicable."*

WARNECK.

**S**UCH an awakening was disclosed to me, in 1904 my journey through the district, during the last four weeks of the year 1903, that I was almost constrained to say, " As the Lord God liveth before Whom I stand," for this stirring of the hearts of the heathen brought me very really into the presence of God, and that New Year's collection, above mentioned, seemed to set a seal to the sincerity of the movement, the intensity of which each passing month more clearly proved.

Though we abated no jot in carrying out our programme of station development, and gave ourselves with renewed ardour to teaching and medical work, not neglecting the translation of the Word, the feature of this year was the beginning of the gatherings of teachers and their voluntary helpers at Yakusu. These have been held almost regularly three times a year since then, though sometimes through illness, or the exigencies of other work, we have only held two in twelve months. The necessity which led us to adopt this plan was clearly shown at the time by Mr. Stapleton : " I have already intimated in a previous letter that the demand for teachers to found out-schools in our district of Yakusu, came upon us in such a rush that we were compelled to send out lads as teachers

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who were very poorly equipped, and to recognise others who had begun school on their own account under pressure from the people, whom we could not have ventured to send out ourselves. It was obvious that under such circumstances something would need to be done to help the teachers. A 'summer school' was suggested, and as we have summer all the year round we decided, should the venture prove a success, to have three summer schools in the year. Accordingly we sent out my language lad in a large canoe, with invitations to all the teachers and their helpers to come to Yakusu for ten days' meetings. We calculated on an attendance of sixty. A new leaf roof was put on the old mud store, and some rough beds were built inside it. We thought that, as a number would be staying in Yakusu with their friends, this accommodation, though none too comfortable, might serve the purpose. Towards the end of the week the canoes began to arrive, names were given in, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, and we began to wonder whereunto this thing would grow. On they came until the teachers and their helpers, with those who had volunteered to paddle their canoes, totalled up to 120. We were afraid to ask how or where they were all going to sleep. In response to requests for rooms," I could do nothing but send them round to the 'hotel, and trust to their good nature and to their power to pack themselves away into a next-to-nothing space.

"One of the most pleasing features in connection with the school was the cheery way in which these young men and lads, gathered from nearly thirty towns and belonging to four different tribes, chummed up and lived in the heartiest fellowship under conditions far removed from palatial. Quite a flotilla of canoes was moored to our beach, the farthest town represented being sixty miles away. Many were the questionings from the people *en route* as to what could be going on at Yakusu.

"The meetings on the Sunday were crowded, no fewer

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than six hundred being present. We had arranged a baptismal service for the afternoon, as many of these young people had never seen this confession of faith. Eighteen were immersed. It was a very impressive service, and as a result several names were given in for discipleship. For the first time in our history the Communion Service was held in the chapel at night.

“ At the Thursday evening meeting, the financial statement was presented, and reports of the half year’s work given. The Sunday morning collection, with small amounts which have come in since, nearly reached the sum of £10. As we counted it up, and realised that the expense of all our schools was thus provided for the ensuing four months, we offered up an earnest prayer for our financially embarrassed secretary and the committee in the homeland.

“ At the dismissal prayer meeting, we clasped hands all over the chapel, and sang the Lokele version of ‘ God be with you till we meet again.’ The next morning the canoes were manned, and the teachers left one by one for their respective towns; and we, blissfully happy and thoroughly tired out, chatted over the lessons and blessings of the gatherings, and began making plans for the next.

“ In the stead of the quieter times we thought we should have, when all our building operations were through, it is given to us to be in the thick of a movement unparalleled on the Upper River. We have seen the birth of a desire to read the ‘ Book ’ and to hear God’s Word, which can only have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, in answer to the effectual prayers of those who have lifted holy hands to God in the homeland.

“ Town after town has sent up its deputation for a teacher, and now that all our available lads are out at work they still keep on appealing for more.

“ Neither persuasion nor threats will keep the young

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folk away from the village schools. On every hand little school buildings are being reared by the scholars at their own expense ; in practically every Lokele town on the banks of the Congo, to a distance of more than sixty miles from the station, the praises of God are being sung in the words we have written. But we confess that the tunes are awful ; to say that their writers would not know them is to state the case very mildly ; each town has its own rendering, and some towns might well boast of several adaptations of the original ; we dare not think of the sound that would go up if by any chance our scattered congregations could come together in a camp meeting. Still, largely in ignorance it may be, and certainly sadly out of tune, it might almost be said of this district :

‘ And hour by hour fresh lips are making  
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.’

‘ Four times during the past month we have had a deputation of nearly forty young men and women, who paddled twenty miles on each occasion, to beg for a teacher. We got them away the three times with a few alphabet cards, though the third time we should have been glad of a place to hide from their importunity. The fourth time they won, and went off proudly happy, having secured the personal boy of one of the missionaries.

“ A few figures may serve to put you a little more definitely in touch with our present position. During the past twelve months, twenty-eight schools have been started ; in twenty months the membership of the Young People’s Society has increased from six to one hundred and fifty, and on the first Sunday in July we baptized eighteen candidates.”

This growth of our district work made it imperative that we should inaugurate a system of regular visitation of all our outlying villages, examining schools and giving instruction to Christian Endeavour members and candidates for baptism, also holding magic-lantern services

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wherever possible that the older folk who were crowded out of the school services might hear as well the glad message, "Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

During this year it fell to Mr. Millman's lot twice to take a crew of scholars and Yakusu day teachers with him, and seek to give some guidance and encouragement to the much-harassed educational enthusiasts in the farther towns. These tours not only put us in possession of many surprising facts, but also served to establish and strengthen the multitude of separate efforts which made up the whole movement. Threatened chaos in some places, the result of mismanagement, was averted; quarrels that had arisen were settled, disturbing elements were pacified, and the vital connection of each separate school with the parent school at Yakusu was made doubly sure.

Mr. Grenfell visited us again in September, and his letters bear witness to the striking character of the revival around us. He wrote on September 10:—

"Here at Yakusu also further knowledge of the country is proving that our estimates as to villages and people were below the mark. I refer to this that you may not be disheartened by the reports concerning up-river prospects generally. If you had regarded similar reports a few years ago, there would have been no Yakusu station to-day, and the history of our society would have been minus one of its most remarkable chapters. God's spirit is very manifestly working amongst the people. We are all compelled to allow it is not our doing, but God's."

Mr. Grenfell took Mr. Stapleton through the district on the "Peace," and also for a fortnight's tour up the Lomami. With what joy must our veteran leader, whose wise foresight had been so largely responsible for the choice of Yakusu, and whose sagacity bade us hold on in the face of every thwarting circumstance during dark days, have penned the following words:

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“ The visits to the out-stations were most inspiring. In many villages the school houses were far and away the biggest buildings, and this entirely at the cost of the natives themselves. Unfortunately just now, the supply of books and reading cards is quite inadequate, and in many places four or five scholars have to learn from one card ; but we are taking steps to remedy this. These out-stations, to say nothing of the prospective work along the Lomami and among the thirty or so villages that have sent deputations requesting teachers, and where in some cases schools have been built in anticipation, could keep a steamer and missionary well employed in going to and fro and looking after them. We were again much impressed as to the need for better trained teachers, but did not succeed in evolving any scheme for producing them that we can at present recommend to the consideration of the committee.

“ At several of the landing-places we were welcomed by the assembled choir of scholars with their teacher, singing translations of ‘ Around the Throne,’ ‘ Crown Him Lord of all,’ and other well-known hymns. The singing as singing was often very poor, but there was no doubting the heartiness with which they sang. Even before the engines had stopped, and while we were still some distance off, the strains reached us. Remembering what I could remember about this place, one is not inclined to criticise the singing. For myself my heart was too full and I had to join.”

“ Some of these places I had seen in the hands of the Arab raiders ; some of them I had seen still smoking after they had done their worst. In all of them wickedness and cruelty had had a long long reign, and the people had suffered many sorrows. But now, surely, was the beginning of better days, for was not this the beginning of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings ? God has indeed been good to me to let me see the dawning of such a day.”

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“ In the midst of our many difficulties, it is no small encouragement to find things progressing as they are in this district, and that without putting the society to any expense for either teachers or buildings. We have teachers in one or two villages that have never been visited yet by missionaries, and among the waiting requests for teachers, there are several more from places we have not reached. It is not merely the desire to read that is impelling them, for many of the deputations have come with definitely expressed anxiety about the message of which the ‘ Book ’ tells them. Many of them have somehow come to realise that there are other things than those that can be handled and felt, and that there is another world than that in which they find themselves. We can only put it down to the gracious working of God’s Holy Spirit upon the Word which has been scattered to places beyond where it was originally sown.”

The question of the support of thirty out-schools was a large one. We could be by no means sure that the collections would continue at the high level at which they had started. A novel method of helping along the funds presented itself one day. One of our young men shot a wild pig with Mr. Millman’s gun. The Stapletons and ourselves took a leg each, the meat of which lasted us four days, plus the liver and kidneys. For each leg we paid the equivalent of 2s. 6d. in native money. After giving the hunter and his helpers their share; we sold the rest for forty-nine shokas, realising in all about thirty francs. Such a subscription would help along an out-school for some time. While Mr. Grenfell was with us, one of our out-schools sent in a collection valued about £2 2s., comprised of fifteen bottles, twenty-four spoons, some cloth, and one hundred shokas. The school was flourishing greatly under the care of the teacher, and this was the testimonial of the young people, and the expression of their wish to keep him.

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I go on to quote from Mr. Stapleton, for I feel that his words written at the moment were the moving utterance of the man who was God's appointed leader at Yakusu through those marvellous times.

“ One has need of the language of restraint in writing the report for 1904, for the year has been marked by an extraordinary manifestation of Divine favour. The gracious life-giving Spirit has moved through the whole district, creating longings and resolves which only an accepted gospel can sustain and satisfy, and we have followed breathlessly in His wake, seeking to interpret His mind and to work His will. Surely the day of grace for these people has dawned ; pray God strength may be given us to serve His purpose in their eternal salvation. No need is there for us to plan new openings ; by dream and vision He has spoken to many whom our voices have failed to reach, and to others whose faces we have never seen ; and He has shown His sovereign power again and again by choosing as His instruments those of whom, in our short-sighted wisdom, we had never thought. Large as our parish is, already the movement is spreading outside the bounds, and we can only follow where He leads, in thankful amazement as to whereunto this thing will grow.

“ In reviewing the year the dominant feeling in the hearts of the Yakusu staff is one of devout thankfulness to God for the wonder of His working, and of chastened surprise that we have been so signally blessed.

“ At the end of the year we have schools established in nine-tenths of the Lokele villages, our furthest outpost being seventy miles away. Schools have been opened in the forest villages of the Foma and Turumbu tribes, and also in the villages of the fishing WaGenya at Stanley Falls. Little openings have been made in the villages of two other tribes, but these have not properly caught the infection yet, and are not counted in the returns. Often at our wits' end for teachers, lads who had somehow

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learnt the alphabet have been seized by eager learners, school-houses have been begun by the young folk as an earnest of the sincerity of their desire, until in sheer desperation missionaries' house lads have been sent off to foster the growing work. Lads and lasses have paddled eighty miles to beg a primer, or to buy an exercise book or pencil, or to secure a rough slab for a school seat. Obdurate chiefs, after refusing their young folk a teacher, have been up to beseech for a lad of some sort in order that they might free themselves from the wearying importunity and secure some sleep at night. Many of the teachers have proved themselves worthy, having withstood patiently harsh opposition on the part of the older folk ; one, who could get no house, sleeping outside without a murmur, his self-sacrifice becoming known to us only by the merest accident.

“ The greatest surprise, however, has been that in the various villages 118 young folk have rallied round the teachers as voluntary helpers, whilst when one remembers the reluctance of the fishing Lokele to build himself a decent dwelling, the school buildings are a standing marvel. The mission contribution to these buildings has been the rough doors and a table, which were beyond the skill of the villagers to make. The little Y.P.S.C.E.'s, which have sprung into life in the villages, give promise of a rich ingathering into the church at no distant date. Already nine have been baptised as the result of this outpost work, and thirty names are in for baptism.”

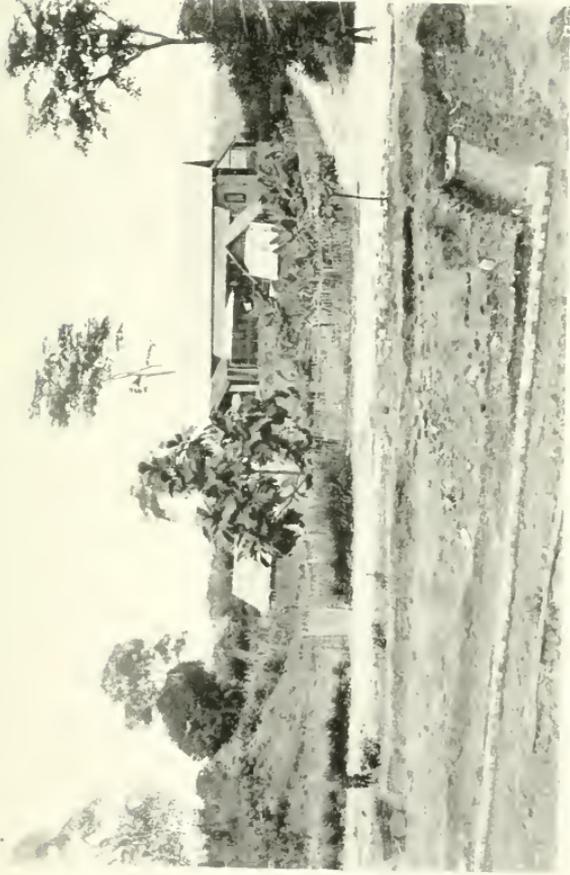
Describing the candidates at one of these baptismal services, Mr. Stapleton wrote: “ Looking into their quietly happy faces, as, one by one, they stepped into the water, and into the wistful eyes of some of their companions, who had been asked to wait a time, I could scarcely realise that these were the wild, mean-spirited, quarrelsome young folk who gave my wife and myself so much heartache in the first days of our settlement at

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Yakusu. Well do I remember what a difficult lot they were to manage, and how hopeless sometimes appeared the task of taming them, when first we attempted a school. We promised a tiny mirror to those who would learn the alphabet. One day six of them qualified for the gift. Hardly were they distributed when the unlucky recipients were seized upon, the mirrors smashed, and almost every rag torn off their bodies, and the school broke up in a free fight. But missionary after missionary has sought to bring them under the spell of the Cross, and here they were to-day proclaiming themselves followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

“ A happier day for the missionary it would be difficult to conceive. Several times during the day I caught the spontaneous unuttered prayer going up that our Brother White in the glory land might be vouchsafed a place amongst the many silent witnesses.”

“ The definitely religious character of all the school books and teaching, when thoroughly grasped, may also scare off some of the viciously inclined. However, in December, some 3,000 presented themselves for examination, so that we are well within the mark in regarding 2,084 as *bonâ fide* scholars. Naturally, too, our teachers are poorly equipped. We have not had time yet to grow trained teachers. We are still very young as mission stations go. The village Y.P.S.C.E.'s, too, are somewhat crude and shallow. We are fully aware of the weak points, and are setting to work to remedy the defects. We would not forget to strengthen our stakes whilst we are lengthening our cords. All the teachers and their helpers were called in for ten days in July and November, and given a hard drilling. Upwards of 150 responded on each occasion, and with very happy results. We shall hope to call them in again twice during the year; and, besides these two gatherings, we are planning a month's definite training for the paid teachers in July.



THE EAST-END BACKS House No. 3. Foundation of Institute in foreground. 1907.  
*Photo by the Author.*



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“ We have conducted four baptismal services during the year, baptizing altogether fifty-three candidates, amongst them being two married couples living in the town. Most of our members are villagers living independently of the mission. The first marriage ceremony has taken place in our chapel—that of a young woman who was on the candidates’ roll for baptism. On consenting to marry a man from another town, she insisted on this service. The husband is learning to read in the village school, and is now also a candidate for church fellowship. We hope to baptize them together. Four babies born in the town have been dedicated to God by their parents, following, as they said, the example of Mary, the mother of the Lord. One of them named Yoane wa Bolufi (John the Baptist), the son of our married deacon, is reckoned a marvel of size and intelligence.

“ The members of the staff have enjoyed capital health, and have had a very busy and happy year. You will not need that I should tell you that we have had our difficulties and disappointments, our failures amongst the teachers, and the slipping back of some of whom our hopes were high, but how should we reach full stature lacking trial of any sort? The joys and blessings have far exceeded. ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul.’ ”

This report was the last Mr. Stapleton penned at Yakusu, and the words with which he concluded, “ May the Lord go before us and give us grace to enter into His harvest,” were prophetic of his own abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom, which took place in less than two years from this time. How little any of us thought then that he would so soon need grace to relinquish his dearly-loved and so ardently pursued earthly task, to quietly follow his Lord into the larger room and the more privileged service.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Steady Development. Welcomes and Partings

1905 **T**HE return of Mr. Kempton this year was hailed with joy by all of us. "Bokanda" was a name that for black and white alike meant the personification in its happy possessor of abounding good humour, a never failing spirit of fun and laughter, coupled with a capacity for hard work, a shrewdness of wisdom, and a deep spirituality which made him a much-loved colleague.

A visit of a month or two which I paid to Upoto, at the request of Mr. Stapleton, gave me the privilege of meeting Bokanda there in March and returning to Yakusu with him. Hence I was an eye-witness of the incidents he describes: "Naturally the most interesting part of my journey was that through this district. People ran along the banks, or came out in canoes, or crowded round us in the towns where we stopped, and the burden of their enquiry was: 'Have you books for us?' That it was no idle enquiry is proved by the fact that we have sold hundreds of books the last fortnight, 500 copies of the hymn-book, all that the press at Bolobo could supply being eagerly seized. The school-houses which the people are building at their own cost were larger and finer than anything I ever expected to see put up by the Lokele."

Mr. Wilford took furlough on Mr. Kempton's arrival, and having spent the last two months of his term in touring, went home to enthuse many audiences with his glowing accounts of the conquests of the Cross which he had witnessed by forest path and on river bank.

## Steady Development

A very serious attack of hæmoglobinuria, from which I suffered while at Upoto, made it necessary for me to spend several weeks, when I reached Yakusu again, on the station, exposing myself as little as possible to the intensity of the sun's rays during the day time. I gratefully acknowledge the exceeding kindness shown me at Upoto by Mr. and Mrs. William Forfeitt and Kenred Smith, to whose unremitting and skilful attention I owed my life and my regaining of full vigour. The service I have since been able to render to the cause, on behalf of which we are all prepared to give our lives, is, therefore, to be put to their account.

The meetings we held in March were once again a source of inspiration and strong encouragement to all. I think the staff particularly felt the sustaining power of God, for physically none but Bokanda were really fit. He wrote of the meetings, "A few days after my arrival here the native teachers and their helpers began to gather to what my colleagues somewhat facetiously call a 'summer school.' The joke, of course, lies in the climate, not in the school. At the initial prayer meeting of the 'summer-school,' definite petitions were offered that some would volunteer for service in the towns now asking for teachers. At the close of the meetings, two young men offered themselves, and since then others have come forward, so that ten more outposts have been occupied. At Christmas we had thirty-nine out-schools; to-day we have a total of sixty-five."

"The most inspiring of the meetings was that of Sunday afternoon, March 26, when thirty-two converts were baptized, bringing our church membership up to eighty-eight. All this means swift progress, for which we can do no other than thank God and take courage.

"It is inevitable that there should be some cases that should cause sorrow of heart. Some few have died during my furlough, clinging to their heathen beliefs and

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customs to the last. Others, who were once near the wicket gate, have been enticed away by Mr. Worldly-Wiseman; others have failed to climb the 'Hill Difficulty.' But others have come to the Saviour and 'found rest by His sorrow and life by His death,' and are treading hopefully and determinedly the road which leadeth to the 'Celestial City.'

'For whose sake grant us, God,  
Grace to endure yet faithful to the end.' "

Writing a fortnight after the conclusion of the "Summer school," I said: "Last week was one of rest for most of us. Mangwete is very poorly and does not pick up at all well, though he is taking a good tonic. Mokili jogs along in his usual way, always hard at work, never complaining, but never really strong. I am knocking about getting the inside of my house straight and the necessary furniture made; and, as long as I keep out of the way of the sun on very hot days and look after my liver, have no apprehension of a relapse. . . . Bokanda walks about the station in his might, a picture to all of us of what a furlough can do for a man in setting him up. He has caused us more merriment than we have enjoyed for a long time. We joke him so about his enormous appetite, and almost portly presence, that he is fain to suggest cricket as a means of decreasing one's weight. We generally get an hour a week; he would like to double it."

My impression is that as a staff we often felt slack this year, "under the weather"; and it was, for all but one of us, a struggle to keep pace with all the claims made upon the strength of body, mind and spirit.

Mangwete became really seriously ill for several weeks, and never regained his wonted elasticity before he left. The climate had marked him far more than he knew, and it may be that the disease which in eighteen months had claimed him as its victim, was already affecting his health prejudicially.

## Welcomes and Partings

I was all the time regaining strength, and though not entirely free from fever during the year, I had no long illness to deter me in my efforts to help keep the work going at the high level set by my colleagues. Mokili and Bokanda were, at this time especially, "towers of strength."

Bokanda shouldered the task of building the fourth dwelling house. It was of brick, the main building being covered, like the others, with corrugated iron sheets and the verandah with tiles. The rooms were lofty and ceiled with cedar, which made them pleasantly habitable under the otherwise unbearable iron sheets. He, therefore, spent twelve busy months after his return superintending foundation-laying, bricklaying, digging, sawing and carpentering operations on a large scale. He had more difficulty in getting and keeping good bricklayers than we had experienced before, and for awhile was at a standstill for a boy skilled enough to lay the arches over doors and windows. It is a fact, and we chronicle it with some degree of disappointment, that we never succeeded in keeping a Lokele bricklayer for any length of time. By fifteen or sixteen years of age they are old enough to be married, and their matrimonial negotiations are such protracted affairs that a lad gets quite out of the routine of steady work. They are altogether disinclined for work of any kind while their fate hangs in the balance, and it nearly always happens that a return to village life and ways is made a condition of consent by the bride at the instigation of her parents and the elders of the community. An unmarried Lokele youth who wants to follow the white man and put himself to some trade, lays himself open at once to the bitter experience of being unable to obtain a Lokele wife when he wants to marry. That is what tribal influence means, and it is hard to break it. The elders have no difficulty in convincing the girls that the curse of barrenness and other evils will surely follow any

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attempt on their part to break away from the customs of the people. In fine, it means that a youth must forsake the name of his tribe and deny the markings on his face if he is ambitious enough to be a permanent workman of the mission or for the State, if he is at all anxious to become something more than a fisherman, a blacksmith, or a string-maker under the native decadent conditions.

Conservative to the core, the tribe has resolutely opposed the tendency of the young folk to run along the new lines of extension and expansion opened up by the white man. Up to a point they are indulged by their people, no check is put upon them, but at length they find the road narrowing down to a single gate, and they must go in the course marked out for them, involving the abandonment of their newly-cherished ambition, if they are not prepared to take the bold course of breaking away from the tribal protection and all that it means. It is a bitter experience, however alluring the marriage prospect may be, for there is that in the nature of many of them, an intuitive groping for guidance and light on some of the problems of their existence that has led them to welcome gladly the message of the Gospel, and give good heed to our advice on many things. Happily many of them are bravely counting the cost, and are forsaking the doubtful heritage of the past for the assured blessings of to-day, and of days to come, under the Gospel dispensation.

Thirty-five new schools were opened this year, and the number of voluntary helpers nearly trebled the figure of last year, reaching about 350. Itinerations were made by all three of us at different periods, and thrice during the year the station was thronged with happy crowds of evangelists and voluntary school teachers, who, during August stayed for five weeks to receive careful instruction in the three r's, in hymn-singing, and simple lessons in Theology—*e.g.*, The work of the Holy Spirit ; The Teaching of Jesus in the Parables, &c.

## Steady Development

Severe and prolonged rains limited the output of bricks and tiles somewhat, and more than once put quite a damper on our brother Kempton's energies in the house-building line. However, the "stickability" inherent in members of our race enabled him to triumph over these passing difficulties incidental to life in the tropics.

Seeing that our best teachers had all been sent out to hold the outposts, the station school, though not so well attended as in 1904, took much of Mr. Millman's time and strength. My work in the dispensary continued to be absorbingly interesting, and the attendances were as full as at any time. Very great was the opportunity given us of influencing natives from a wide area. At one moment I would be attending to a Basoko woman from a village one hundred miles west of Yakusu, and turning from that case would find at my elbow a little fellow from the WaGenya settlement at the Falls. Next a mother from a Turumbu village in the forest, who sadly needed a little wise attention, and benefited speedily by the treatment. Yonder on the form was a Lokele youth, with a wound fifteen inches long on his leg, the result of falling into the fire when under the influence of hemp. If I can cure him we shall never fail of a welcome at the large village from which he hails. At length my task accomplished, and the last halting patient disappearing along the path, I turn to lock the door and seek my breakfast. But a poor fellow is crawling along the path on his knees, resting every few moments. He is a Bakumu youth from a village across river. I stop to cleanse the frightful ulcer that has made such havoc of one of his heels. In one and a half hours on a single morning, I have talked to patients from six tribes, and done something substantial to win their friendship. That is why our work has prospered so, and that is our best argument for a fully equipped hospital and a doctor.

Though so urgently needed, no ward for the retention

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of patients requiring special care could be put up, there being so many claims on our time and attention. The only space at our disposal was a small section of the general store, six feet by ten feet, and this served us for all purposes until our new dispensary was put up in 1909.

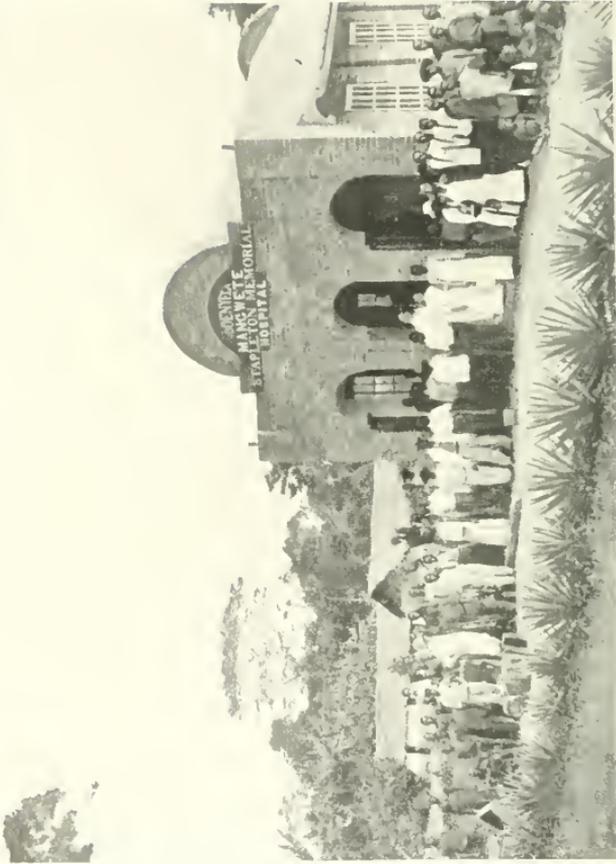
The evening classes for workmen continued to flourish, and it came to be regarded by all as a *sine qua non* of employment for the Mission that every employée should learn to read, or at least make a genuine attempt to master his letters. So much school work on the station and in the district increased our need for books. Mr. Stapleton gave much time to translation work, and the Bible Translation Society kindly acceded to his request to print the New Testament Scriptures that he had prepared: they comprised Matthew, John, Acts, 3 Epp. John, 2 Epp. Peter, 2 Epp. to Thessalonians, James, and Jude. Concerning the aid we received at this time, Mr. Millman wrote: "And as you know, they (B. T. S.) are not alone in rendering us help, for the members of the Y. P. M. A. have sent us primers, and Mr. MacAlpine hymn-books, and some other friends of Mr. Kempton, writing exercise books for the school, all of which gifts are bearing rich fruit; nothing seems lost, the good of every little act seems multiplied many times when put out to usury here, though what it will really take to lift a people, who can say?"

November saw the "Goodwill" once more at our beach, after her one thousand mile run from Kinshassa. Boxes were being packed and preparation made for the departure of Mangwete and Mama. "The 'Goodwill' has come and gone again; this time it has left us the poorer. We stood on the beach on Thursday morning at 7 o'clock and watched two familiar faces recede from us. A little more than four years ago they returned to find Bokanda and myself here, and through these years have struggled and toiled, have triumphed and endured, and their labour



*Photo by the Author.*

Rev. E. E. and Mrs. WILFORD IN CAMP.



*Photo by Rev. C. F. Pugh.*

THE BEGINNING OF THE HOSPITAL THAT SHALL BE, Mr. Millman (architect and builder) to the left; the Author and Mrs. Sutton Smith standing in the doorway.

## Welcomes and Partings

has not been in vain. When they think over it all on the quiet of the voyage home, they will be very glad and give thanks continually. Hardly any two missionaries have left the field for a well-earned furlough leaving behind them such bright prospects, and tokens of such assured success. To them it must be like a laurel wreath to those who have won in the contest. Such success is a very blessed recompense. To know that the sacred, soul-saving truths we would lay down our lives to propagate, are now enshrined in many a heart, producing already the peaceable fruits of calmness and assurance, and evident power to resist and overcome evil, is reward enough in itself, satisfying and heartening."

The above words were written to my mother on November 12, 1905. I added: "For both of them there is the exquisite joy of meeting their little girlie again."

Our hearts had been too closely knit together by the memorable experiences through which we had passed for us ever to be really separated, and spirit leapt to spirit in the months of 1906, when events happened that so deeply touched us all. Though leagues of sea and land stretched between us, the chord of truest brotherly sympathy drew from our hearts most fervent prayers for the welfare of the two in the homeland who were called upon to pass through such deep waters.

Often one hears sneers at "Mission blacks"; and, truly, there are some who do us no credit. Fault could be found in all, and it is easy, in the spirit of Tennyson's cynic, to note the spots and wrinkles, and to think, however fair and beautiful, every face

"Padded round with flesh and blood  
Is but moulded on a skull."

Those who have known missions at first hand have often given praise to native workers. Said Henry Drummond, "I believe in missions for one thing, because I believe in Moolu." And elsewhere he writes: "I cherish no more sacred memory of my life than that of a Communion Service in the little Bandawe chapel, when the sacramental cup was handed to me by the bare black arm of a native communicant (Moolu)—a communicant whose life, tested afterwards in many an hour of trial with me on the Tanganyika plateau, gave him perhaps a better right to be there than any of us."

R. L. Stevenson declared that "the best specimen of the Christian hero I ever met was one of the native missionaries." Yet he knew James Chalmers and Father Damien. And our Congo evangelists are not a whit behind those of other fields. Of one I heard that, having been persecuted and driven out from a town on one side of the river, he immediately began work at another town on the other side. A second had suffered imprisonment because he had incurred the anger of a chief through giving evidence of the chief's cruelty, but as soon as he was free he avowed his readiness to return to the same town. Several teachers in our own district have bravely faced suffering in their efforts to teach and preach. Many others are working patiently at lonely posts.

KEMPTON.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Labours Unceasing and Labour Ended

**W**E all but succeeded in celebrating Christmas, 1906  
1905, with a fire on Mr. Millman's premises. Having determined that, though without a lady's presence, we would not be without Christmas puddings and mincemeat, one of our number set to work in earnest to make these strangely mixed articles of festive diet. They were made all right and eaten to the last crumb, but in boiling the puddings the Lokele stoker was in such mortal terror of displeasing his white man by letting the fire out, that he went to the other extreme and set the roof on fire. Providentially Mr. Kempton was near by with a large garden squirt, and was quickly successful by his own unaided efforts in quenching the incipient conflagration.

An American visitor, Mr. Eben Creighton, having come through from Uganda, spent a week with us. He brought with him a Christmas pudding from the Church Missionaries in Toro, and we ate it together, and later sent our good wishes to these our nearest Protestant neighbours on the East.

The year began busily and without any burden of anxiety regarding a debt. "The Yakusu community by its efforts has supplemented the gifts of the various outpost stations, and the profits from the sale of writing books and pencils, to such an extent that again the expense of the maintenance of teachers and evangelists, amounting to £95 10s. 10d., has been more than met."

This was one of the many good items in the report Mr. Millman penned.

## Yakusu

The meetings held in January were not so different from those held before, and mentioned above, as to call for special comment. In order to keep the minds of our students alert during class hours, we allowed more time than formerly for recreations. These included wrestling by moonlight, when tribe pitted itself against tribe, and town against town; and by daylight, swimming in the river, and a primitive kind of hockey.

Forty-three candidates were baptized, including two married couples. The river was exceptionally high, and no place could be found on the mission beach, so we baptized them from the town beach. Thus it came to pass that they witnessed a good confession before an audience of over 1,500 people. "In the towns to which they returned there is abundant need for their witness to the faith they hold. Many are now loosing from their old moorings, and are prepared to traverse strange seas, even though tempests should break, if only they are assured of clear guidance and kindly help. May each one of these Christians so lately gathered here determine by the grace of God—

'I must arise, O Father, and to port  
Some lost complaining seaman pilot home.'"

Thus wrote my colleague, Mr. Kempton, whose eye was ever on the present and the future event, gauging aright the full import of to-day's movement, and girding up his mind to prepare with a wise prescience for to-morrow's anticipated happening.

Our examination of candidates throughout that second week of January afforded us more than ordinary encouragement. It was borne in upon us that the good Lord was not unmindful of our efforts and labours of love, and was multiplying them amazingly. A five minutes' conversation with a young fellow in the house, perhaps a brief explanation of some difficult passage in the Gospels; the following week he is away down river fifty miles distant.

## Labours Unceasing and Labour Ended

A dozen lads round the fire are listening intently to all he has to say, and this little incident is referred to. Some weeks afterwards, on visiting the town, you find the new thought woven into their prayers, and some lads you have never met before can explain the truth that one stumbled over at the far-away mission station several weeks ago.

I examined thirty. Each afternoon two or three members of the church were present to help me, and for two hours seven or eight candidates sat patiently waiting their turn, earnestly listening to question and answer and explanation, and seriously thinking the while, as was shown by their subsequent replies. I looked at one candidate, a young married man named Litiyeli. By the cuttings on his face I could see that he belonged to the numerous Foma tribe in the bush on the southern side of the river. He was already slowly reading. His town was twenty miles away, and I could not remember seeing him before. I thought to myself, "You cannot know much; it will surely be well for you to wait some months yet." I proceeded to ask him many questions. He answered most intelligently, and convinced me that he had already gripped the truth that Christ could save him, and had saved him, because he prayed in faith. His wife also was a candidate for baptism at the same time, and, quite contrary to the expectation of all of us, was equally able to give a reason for the faith that was in her. She went by the name of "Oyaleke tina"—"Do not dwell near."

Another said, "I joined the endeavouring Christians because my father and mother could not tell me about this good news of Jesus Christ, and I wanted to know. When I heard that the Holy Spirit was given to man that he might not die, I said 'here is knowledge come to man.'"

A lad of fourteen assured me that he was born again, and when asked how he knew this, he said, "I am so

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happy to think my sins are forgiven that I am full of joy." Then asked what difference it had made to him, he said that he did many things now that he would never have done before, and all for the love of Jesus.

Mr. W. E. Geil, in his book "A Yankee in Pigmy Land," calls these natives "ex-cannibals," and they are that. In the Gospels we read of a raving lunatic touched by a Divine hand, sitting down "clothed and in his right mind." Day after day as I sat by the table and looked into the faces of those Bantu negro lads and listened with growing astonishment to the tale they had to tell, I bowed my head in unspeakable, thankful acknowledgment of the same power, and I murmured to myself "The Living Christ on the Congo; the Living Christ for Africa."

The completion of the heavy work in connection with the building of the fourth permanent dwelling house, had the good effect immediately of freeing us for district visitation, and the staff went north, south, east and west on evangelising journeys.

In March and April I spent thirty days between Yakusu and Yalamba in canoe and tent. Though I suffered a good deal from slight fevers on this trip, accompanied with splitting headaches, I was mercifully sustained and enabled to press on until the prolonged task of school inspection, preaching, teaching, doctoring, examining candidates for baptism, listening to and settling numerous palavers in over eighty forest and riverine villages, was completed, and I landed at Yalamba with an empty provision box to await Mr. Grenfell's arrival on the "Peace."

On this journey I had had the painful duty of suspending a number of church members on account of the hemp-smoking habit. From the first we took up a firm attitude regarding it, though we little dreamt how far the young folk would go in yielding to it, nor how greatly it would thin the ranks of the church.



*Photo by the Author.*

Rev S O. KEMPTON ITINERATING.



## Labours Unceasing and Labour Ended

On my return to Yakusu, we made immediate arrangements for the May meetings. These I have referred to in my chapter on Station Life. Then Mr. Millman accompanied the British Vice-Consul, Mr. G. B. Mitchell, on a journey up the Lindi and across country to Banalya, beginning to descend the Aruwimi from that point. He only arrived at Basoko in time to minister to our veteran leader's last needs. Mr. Grenfell died at Basoko on July 1, 1906. As soon as news reached us of Mr. Grenfell's serious condition, Mr. Kempton hurried off to render what assistance he could. "Though this left me alone with three white men's work to do, it was the only course to take. Bokanda was glad to find that Mokili had reached Mr. Grenfell's side some days previously. For me the fortnight following Mr. Kempton's departure passed like a flash, except the Tuesday on which the news reached me, and that was a long day and a very sad one. I stopped work for the day all over the station, and in the afternoon held a memorial service in the chapel, which was crowded with natives. One thing is very certain, that his death has had a very marked effect on the Basoko workmen. There is some sterling stuff in the make up of this tribe, as we have proved here in the past seven years, but their morals are very bad, and it will be a stern fight for the Yalamba staff when it is formed. We are all pretty much of one opinion here, that the Basoko will make better Christians than the Lokele, for they are steadier and more to be relied upon."

What transport of joy must be his who fell thus at the very front of the battle, as he beholds to-day with unclouded vision and perfect understanding the triumphs of the Cross at Yalamba; nineteen in the fellowship of the church, and seven others under examination as candidates for baptism.

The next event was the first visit of our new s.s. "Endeavour" to Yakusu. She arrived with her passengers,

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including Mr. and Mrs. Wilford, on July 14, and we were delighted to hear that the bonny vessel had behaved herself well, and that the trip had been in every way a satisfactory one. A little anxiety had been felt as to the health of the passengers *en route*. Amongst others who were incapacitated slightly, Mrs. Wilford had suffered from rather a trying fever, but in a day or two after reaching Yakusu she began to recover, and has since enjoyed very good health for Central Africa.

For us it was a real pleasure to welcome another lady to our staff, and she was pleased to find so comfortable a home awaiting her in the brick house at the eastern end of the station.

A week after the "Endeavour" left us, I was off to the Falls on my long Lualaba journey. This voyage will, we hope, soon bear rich fruit in the establishment during 1911 of two B. M. S. stations between Ponthierville and Lokandu. In this trip I was, of course, breaking fresh ground. There were no schools to examine, no candidates to be questioned and none of the many thronging duties that made a tour to the west of Yakusu such an effort of mental and physical exertion. Those long days of glorious weather in the canoe, with good books, set me up in every way. With the aid of the Kingwana dialect, I gave many lantern service addresses, and did a good deal of simple medical work at each halting place.

Scarcely had I set foot again at Yakusu ere Mr. Kempton was off in the opposite direction for three weeks. Of a few of his experiences on that occasion he wrote in his own fascinating style: "On three Sundays little groups of Christians gathered for the Communion, and truly the Lord was made known to us in the breaking of bread. Other happy hours were spent in examining candidates for church fellowship. A goodly number of enquirers came forward, making altogether a fine band of young men and women. Many of these are the pick of

## Labours Unceasing and Labour Ended

their villages for intelligence and uprightness, and in them lies our hope for the evangelisation of this district. Not one of them may be greatly gifted or deeply learned, but

‘The healing of the world  
Is in its nameless saints. Each separate star  
Seems nothing, but a myriad scattered stars  
Break up the night and make it beautiful.’

“Among other requests for teachers, I was especially glad to receive the first application from a village belonging to a tribe with a terrible reputation for ferocity and cannibalism. May Christ soon sway His sceptre over this people also.”

Of the methods of travel and incidents that made up the excitements of the journey, he wrote: “The ‘dugout’ canoes used by the natives here are a little lighter than a Thames barge. Against stream twenty or more paddlers are required to make one travel at a pace a man walks, hence travelling is neither fast nor luxurious. The school-boys reckon it part of their work to post the missionary from their town to the next, and on the downward journey they do it willingly enough, but they are not so anxious to pull against the current. This would furnish a text for the moralist. However, it is better not to moralise when canoeing, but to keep the weather-eye lifting for rocks, sunken trees, and sand-banks. Hereabouts crocodiles and hippopotami may usually be disregarded by reason of their great scarcity. Once we were racing another canoe, our steersman got excited and rammed the other and lighter craft; result, all our rivals knocked into the water. Another time we ran on to a sunken tree. My crew immediately jumped into the river, trod water, and held up the canoe, thus saving myself and my baggage from an unpleasant soaking. Whenever possible I walked from one village to another. On one occasion we came to thick bush; the boys said we must crawl along on hands and knees. I was hesitating when a swarm of wild-bees passed that way, and hurriedly we crawled into the thorny brake to escape them, not, how-

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ever, before the boy in the rear had received stings enough to make him suffer from swelled head for a couple of days.

“Gordon Cumming describes a certain part of Africa as a ‘forest of fish-hooks relieved with patches of pen-knives.’ The description seemed apt. Certainly when we had finished that day’s tramp a Jew from Houndsditch would have given little for our clothes, so ragged and torn were they.”

Of the interesting work of inspecting schools, he wrote: “The examinations were attended by crowds in most of the villages. Fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters came to witness the triumph or failure of their relatives and friends. Their comments on each individual performance lacked nothing in frankness and audibility. Facing such an ordeal some scholars became intensely nervous, and grown men, with arms strong enough to throw their heavy fishing-nets far across the waters, trembled so much that they could hardly hold the book; while married women (for not a few of these are on our school rolls) asked kindly neighbours to take their infants, for the task of reading aloud at such a moment demanded their supreme and undivided attention. Their attempts at writing recalled the historic efforts of Sam Weller. At one school an old woman followed me from class to class, and noted the work of each scholar with affectionate interest. At last I turned to her and said: ‘Well, mother, can you read?’ She replied, ‘No; I had no opportunity when I was young, and now I am too old and dull to think of it. But I like the young folk to have a chance, and so I sweep the school and keep it tidy for them.’ She had constituted herself caretaker that she might do something towards helping others to an education denied to herself.”

October saw us again with happy crowds round us at Yakusu, and a busy month ensued in the multitude of our endeavours to help them. The splendid results of this

## Labours Unceasing and Labour Ended

Conference convinced us anew how strongly the tide was flowing towards righteousness, and the "knowledge" of Jesus Christ and of God, which is Eternal Life. Out of 238 candidates, seventy-five were passed as, in our opinion, fit for baptism. "These seventy-five were all baptized in the River Congo on Sunday, October 21, and received into fellowship the same evening, when about 260 gathered around the Lord's table. Now our church has a membership of 337, who are widely scattered as light bearers throughout our large district, and we have no less than 700 names before us of those who desire to follow Christ through the waters of baptism. The majority of our visitors returned to their towns after ten days' training, but our recognised teachers, numbering about 75, have stayed for their annual month's training."

To this account Mr. Wilford added, "In the midst of the ever-extending work, we have lost, for the present, Mr. Sutton Smith, who has been called to take up temporarily the late Mr. Grenfell's work at Yalamba. Who will take his place and come to the help of the Lord in the very heart of Africa?"

I was absent at Yalamba until March of this year, 1907, having accompanied Mr. D. Christy Davies to take charge there on November 7. The Rev. W. R. Kirby took my place when the "Endeavour" came up in the spring. The event that turned my footsteps so soon towards Yakusu again was one that we had none of us foreseen. While many plans and projects were absorbing our thoughts as we journeyed hither and thither in our efforts to shepherd faithfully the growing flock, Mangwete was busy crystallising them into the reality of action at home. By means of a large sectional map of our district, it was easy for him to convince the committee of the supreme importance of the B.M.S. position at Yakusu. Indeed, they needed no such convincing, for the story of the revival had cheered and encouraged all hearts.

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The proposal then that a Training Institute should be granted, to include a dormitory and an industrial section, met with ready approval. In the very midst of this activity, and while these arrangements were actually in progress, the bolt fell that struck us all dumb. On December 6, 1906, at a Nursing Home in London, Mangwete died. For a while dismay held our hearts ; the untowardness of the event staggered us.

On the field so little concerning his illness had come through to us ; a rumour of deputation engagements cancelled on account of an attack of hæmorrhage, and no more news until we heard that he had entered his Master's presence. It meant for me at Yalamba two or three of the darkest days I ever passed through. Still and silent I stood within a sanctuary that I had never entered before, murmuring again and again, " And what now, Lord ? " From the solitude of those hours I came forth a different man ; chastened, I hope, to more humility in service.

The depth of my feeling helped me to see how great was my loss, and our loss. I had not thought that any man could exercise such an influence over me as Mangwete had done. My colleagues at Yakusu were equally moved. The soul-searching experiences through which we had passed since 1902, as together we followed in the wake of God's Spirit, marvelling at His presence in such power, had knit heart to heart in a common soaring faith, and a mutual abandonment of self in service.

No effusive expression of esteem is needed to commemorate the deeds of the man we loved and followed as our leader. To us he was very human, very brotherly in acknowledging a fault, and for the rest he possessed those rare qualities of heart and mind which make a man great. The work he accomplished at Yakusu is his best monument, and should this story succeed in showing that to his many friends, I am glad to have been permitted a service which devotion and friendship seemed to demand of me as a duty.

## “The Habit that Clings”

Four youths came into my room and sat down on the floor. In a minute or two I turned from my writing to speak to them. Lomami plunged into his subject without his usual hesitation. For more than a year he has been in the grip of the hemp-smoking habit, quite unlike himself and quite unhappy. He said that since Christmas (two months ago) he had broken with the habit, and that Lokalo and Chungu, who were with him, had done so too.

“I have waited and prayed for the day when you would come and tell me this, Lomami.”

“Ah, Kienge, it has been very hard.”

“Why so hard, Lomami? Is it pleasant to smoke; do you enjoy it afterwards; what does it make you feel like?”

“It is so hard, Kienge, that I will bring my pipe to you to destroy. It is not nice; I will tell you what it does. When I have smoked much my eyes run away from me, and I cannot fix them; I try to read the print of my book and fail. When I try to speak to my wife, I cannot find the words I want. When I sit down to eat, my mouth is hard and dry, so that I have no pleasure in eating. I have gone into a sleep like death, and when I wake up long afterwards I am fit for nothing; I cannot think, and all my bones are soft.”

“Surely you could have broken with it before, Lomami.”

“Ah, you don't understand, Kienge, unless you have smoked, how strongly it grips us. One man, when he was asleep with the death-like sleep of hemp, fell into the fire and burned himself, and didn't know until he awoke hours afterwards that he had suffered hurt. Yet he smoked again as soon as he could. Everyone knows that a 'basili' smoker will lapse from his usual habits of decency, not knowing what he is doing.”

Thus spoke Lomami. His case had been an aggravated one. His wife had all but despaired, time and again, of getting him to break with it. I once asked him if he wanted his little boy, “Samweli,” to go the way he was going. He said, with signs of emotion, “No, no.”

## CHAPTER XXV

### Clouded Days and the Speedily Ripening Harvest

*“ The insurmountable wall that rises up between the heathen and God is not sin as amongst ourselves (not in the first place at any rate); it is the kingdom of darkness in which they are bound. That bondage is found in the fear that surrounds them, fear of souls, fear of spirits, fear of human enemies and magicians ; in an ignominious dependence on fate.”*

WARNECK.

**T**HIS brief history naturally draws to a close. Much has happened in the past three years to try our faith, and test the sincerity and worth of our young converts, but we have never had to sound a retreat. We have passed through a time of stern conflict, defensive rather than aggressive, when the heart was not enthused as once it was by the movement of the throng in the direction of righteousness. Many have fallen into error, and some into grievous sin. Sharp reproof has been necessary perhaps more than loving persuasion, the temper of many seeming to demand the more authoritative and abrupt word of rebuke. Yet we recall many prolonged conversations with erring young Christians when our solicitude for their soul's welfare has touched them to tears.

The forces of evil followed hard in the wake of the wave of enthusiasm, and snatched at one and another so that we were much put to it to keep our ranks from utter demoralisation. My visiting of the flock during August, 1907, revealed how much profit the Evil One was making out of the strain of perversity in the Lokele nature. I

## Clouded Days and Ripening Harvest

was astonished to hear them make many excuses for their conduct, and there appeared to be no fear of God before their eyes. Some said they would repent when they chose, and asked with effrontery why it was wrong to do certain things. "Give us your reason for saying we must not smoke hemp? Where is it mentioned in the Word of God?" Again and again this question was put to me. Another said, "I have only one sin; I have not many; and I don't want to repent yet. I will give it up when the others decide to; we will do it all together." Alas! that saying was very characteristic of the people, for they are "follow-my-leaders" above any others that I have met. The movement that swept over our district four years ago and planted schools in every river town and many forest villages, has had a tragic sequel in the equally rapid spread of sinful habits from community to community.

One referred to the "Word of Truth" as "make-believe," like their own magic; and thus showed how error blindly followed through many generations begets error, and an inability to recognise the truth.

Another little band I found had started to quarrel amongst themselves. Possessed of natures that are peculiarly touchy on the point of accusation, whether false or true, they took umbrage at a certain action of the teacher's, and, as they confessed to me, broke loose altogether. Being wayward, undisciplined children, they could not endure being falsely accused, but must needs taste for themselves the pleasures of sin for a season. I spoke to them in much solemnity on the words of John, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth," &c.

In spite of the "falling off," which we had to contend with, manifest in the out-schools, the Christian Endeavour Village Societies, and the backsliding of church members, we were cheered by the evidences of a quiet work of the Holy Spirit begetting new life in the soul. We baptized

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122 during the year 1907, and our assured spiritual advance over the position we had reached three years before this, was abundantly confirmed.

The building of the dormitory and institute granted to us out of the Arthington funds was undertaken by Mr. Wilford. The Vice-Consul of H.B.M., Mr. G. B. Mitchell, kindly laid the foundation stone for the latter building, speaking a few words in the Kingwana dialect, of exhortation and encouragement to the natives assembled.

Station services and the day school suffered owing to a crisis in the long-drawn-out quarrel between the two chiefs, Saidi and Senga, which led to a split. Nearly a third of the people of Yakusu crossed the river and formed a community on the opposite bank. So bitter was the feeling that they were practically cut off from us for twelve months, and have never quite renewed their old intimacy with the mission.

We were all feeling very keenly the dearth of offers for Congo service. Almost every mail brought us distressing news of the undermanned state of down river stations. One day Kempton sat down and wrote off to the Rye Lane Baptist Church Magazine the famous letter to young people, of which the burden was: "I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." It was a rousing call from a brave man of God to consecration and a full surrender of talents to Christ's service in uplifting humanity. He pressed the claims of the Congo Mission upon them, and urged in a masterly way that the cry of Africa ought not to pass unheeded, for was not North Africa the home of Christianity in the early days of this era?

In February, 1908, the writer of that appeal passed from us to join Mangwete. Repeated attacks of biliousness and small fevers helped to produce the weakened state of



*Photo by Rev. G. Grentell.*

"BOKANDA" AND LEMBE (his Bamanga protégé).



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the system which could not resist the dreaded hæmoglobinuria when it appeared. My own health had been somewhat broken since the preceding September, but after Christmas I had managed my ordinary station duties. This enabled Mr. Kempton to make a fortnight's trip up the Lindi amongst the Bamanga villages, which he seemed to much enjoy. Early in February the people of the village had trouble with the Government, and during the third week the presence of a State official in Yakusu caused much restlessness. Three times in the night Bokanda arose owing to this upset; once we walked through the village in the moonlight, and later the chief and headmen came on to the verandah and woke him again. He talked with them for twenty minutes or more, helping to allay their groundless fears and suspicions. There can be no doubt that this night exposure induced a chill, and brought on next day the fatal attack.

In March the news reached our returning colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Millman, at Bolobo. Mr. Millman's letter to the committee appeared in *The Herald*: "My wife and I are well nigh broken-hearted with the news. It will take us three weeks yet to reach Yakusu. How different our arrival there will be from what we hoped. Only a week ago we received letters of welcome from our brethren and from the native church, but without Kempton the station can never be the same to us.

"It requires at least six men and two women to do the Yakusu work. We were promised a sixth man before Stapleton fell, but we never got him; and now we have lost Kempton, too."

The Yakusu staff who worked with him can never forget "Bokanda." He inspired us with his lofty conception of the missionary's task, no less than he inspired the dusky folk among whom he moved with his evident sincerity of purpose and unaffected piety. He commanded the esteem and respect of all. Admiration is

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the first step on the part of the black man towards trust and obedience, and a childlike reliance upon his white friend to protect and advise him. He was teacher, counsellor, and friend to scores and scores of natives. On the station he did much to win the workmen and workboys under him to a right view of the dignity of labour. He worked joyously, and hence in all that he did he maintained a high level of excellence. In preaching and translating he brought the powers of a well-equipped mind to his task ; in teaching he was patient, kind and firm ; as a companion, for white and black alike, he was the embodiment of good humour, and his light touch of wit often eased the burden of the toilsome day.

We could ill afford to lose such a man from our staff. We could not think, then, that he and Mangwete were as though cut off from the work they loved, nor can we think to-day that they have had no part with us since in the labours of the Gospel they both of them gave so unstintedly to proclaim ; we have believed them with us in many thoughts and prayers during the days of trouble through which the Lokele Church has passed.

It was a great joy to the staff to welcome the Rev. C. E. Pugh to the work in July, 1909 ; and, later in the year, Monsieur Henri Lambotte, of Liege, the first Belgian Protestant to offer for service on the Congo.

During his furlough, Mr. Millman had gathered funds for a Stapleton Memorial at Yakusu, and the early months of 1909 saw the erection of a waiting-room and dispensary in one building, which would enable us to deal more efficiently with our growing medical work, and form the nucleus of those hospital buildings which we confidently hope will ere long be established at Yakusu.

Some account has been given, in the chapter on Magic, of the struggle with the tribe in the spring of 1910. We had no idea at first how strong were the forces which menaced the peace, and, for a time, the very existence

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of the church; nor is it surprising if we failed to gauge correctly the influence which so deeply-rooted a custom still exercised over the minds of our members. We had good reason to believe that most of them would splendidly stand their ground, since they had proved steadfast through times of subtle temptation. The emotional element in their characters, so strongly appealed to in 1904, had left but little energy in some to persevere in conquering old habits, and they had drifted away, but the majority had continued in the way and in the teaching of Christ. We can make no extenuation for the falling away of the Lokele in 1910. It is the strongest proof that we have yet had that these backsliders had not been entirely delivered from their heritage of unwholesome fear.

It was a day of dismay for us when we contemplated disbanding the church that we might begin again on unmistakably clear lines, but when, after long consultation and prayer, we took the step, the wisdom of it quickly became apparent. The newly-formed church has entered upon a freer, gladder existence. Our action helped to clarify the issue in the bewildered minds of the flock, and though some 150 in the Lokele area were left outside, the others signed on again with such zeal and determination as were very cheering to witness. The Yawembe area, west of Isangi, is untouched by this Lokele custom, and though they reckon to be of Lokele origin, there are some dozen villages which never join in the celebration of the rites. These villages bore rich fruit last year, some 300 applying for baptism. Yalikina is the principal town, and for some years now has maintained the school work at the highest level. The chief is a fatherly old fellow, has some of the most orderly folk around him, and has for long now, since he gave up hemp smoking, been steadily friendly towards our work. It is a sight to see the school building in that village crowded with 200 native youths

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and girls ; to hear them sing is a revelation, not of melody, but of hearty enjoyment of the exercise which somehow affects nearly every muscle in their bodies ; the Catechism is splendidly recited almost from cover to cover, and no preacher in England could find a quieter, more attentive audience than is obtained the moment they settle down to listen to " mboli ya Mungu " from the lips of the missionary.

It is always an inspiration after visiting the Lokele villages east of Isangi, in so many of which the once healthy school work has become disorganised, to reach Yalikina and find so steady a level maintained. God grant their good example may be emulated ere long by the lagging Yaokanja schools !

H.R.H. King Albert of Belgium, when as Prince he passed down the Congo, paid a visit to the school at Yalikina, and was much struck with the interest of the natives in their own bit of educational work.

Of the year 1910, Mr. Millman writes : " We began the year with 477 church members in good standing. We have baptized 132 (chiefly from the Yawembe district), making a total of 609. But the year has been one of crises, and the number of members now in good standing is 454 ; except the thirteen cases of discipline for drinking, gambling and stealing or immorality, the rest are those who have declined to sign the new roll with its declaration against the worship of the dead. The money subscribed by the native church at the monthly collections is £88 6s., which, together with the profit of sales of animals and other offerings, has been divided amongst the fifty-four teachers and evangelists to the tune of a little over one penny per day. The fact that these men and boys continue to teach for this pay is a never ending source of wonder to me. Just above Stanley Falls I found that the labourers who cut wood for the steamers have house and

Mr. Fugh. H.S.S. E. Busfeld. W. Millran & Litvasi. Mr. Scrivener. Mons. Lambotte.



Mrs. Sutton Smith. Mrs. Millman. Mrs. Billington. Mrs. Howell. Mr. Howell. Photo by the Author.

A GROUP TAKEN AT YAKUSU IN 1910.



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garden free, and goods and money to the value of about one shilling per day."

It may seem that much too much prominence has been given to counting up the gains in this story, and I am aware that, on the face of it, the criticism is justified. Yet I think I may say that that is a matter of least importance to those of us who have had most to do with it. We have never been blind to our liability to error, as these pages have surely shown, and we have never wittingly trespassed on the Lord's prerogative. The Lamb's Book of Life is in His keeping, not ours.

“ What we have loved,  
Others will love, and we will teach them how :  
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes  
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth,  
On which he dwells.”

“ Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ We have yet much to learn about the real needs of the world. For the uplifting of men and for the great social task of this our day we need ideas, and enthusiasm, and all sorts of resource ; but most of all, and first of all, we need vision. And the man who goes farthest, and sees most, and does most, is ‘ he that goeth forth and weepeth.’ ”

AINSWORTH.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### Aims and Ambitions

**T**HERE is a sympathy that is not born in one, it has to grow, and very certainly the habit of heart and mind which appreciates the native, wins his confidence and retains his friendship, is a delicate and difficult acquirement."

The heart searching question which the missionary anxiously puts to himself or herself has been referred to in the chapter on "Woman and her Work," but it deserves fuller consideration than was there possible. It must be the supreme aim of the missionary to find points of contact, else he will never gain that beginning of interest which will win him many an adult convert. There is a world of difference between the man sent out by the B. M. S. and the man to whom he is sent. Though so obvious a statement, it is worth re-stating in order to provoke the enquiry, "If such a world of difference, is any real intimacy of friendship possible?"

The chances are that though they see one another every day under the blazing African sun, and sleep within only a couple of hundred yards of one another every night, they will never understand one another, never get any closer than a formal entente, a friendly footing. Their transactions with one another may be frequent and, up to a point, mutually satisfactory, but they are mostly of barter or exchange; he does not come to school or work with one of the white men on the station, and so fails to get as familiar with the missionary as the average schoolboy.

He is a man to whom a beautiful thought is as strange

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as a snowflake, and a brilliant thought as rare as an icicle hanging from the eaves of his hut ; who looks out upon his little material world with a glassy, utilitarian gaze. He is prejudiced because he is a critic—a keen but ignorant eye-critic, not a broad-minded critic. He seems dull of hearing, for he seldom takes in a statement at first telling ; it must be repeated two or three times. It may be that he is lazy, for the habit has grown on them to reiterate, and in all their palaver councils this is the feature that most strikes the foreign listener. Whether he is dull of hearing, or dull of understanding, the missionary does well to remember that he cannot repeat himself too often, as though the word had gone forth, “ by reiteration shall ye save men.” His quick eye has looked you up and down and read you through and through. Your character is an open book to him, long before you have got to know very much about his. Your unconscious actions, perhaps more than your carefully considered ones, have been clearly interpreted.

He is quick to appreciate some outstanding feature of the character of his white man. They often get very near the truth about him by the nickname which they freely use among themselves. Whenever they use it in public he has done something which is characteristic of him. I only accidentally discovered what my nickname was, and have had to conjecture its meaning, since no native would tell me. If my conjecture is correct, it is strikingly true of me.

It is the misfortune of the missionary that he is obliged to live in so much better style than the natives. With the rough and tumble shanty that Harry White managed to exist in for awhile, the Lokele man found no fault. However impossible as a permanent dwelling for a white man, it pleased the native, for it was just on his level. The sight is never witnessed to-day which Harry White described :—

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“ In making fish nets the men here certainly are industrious workers in a free and easy take-your-knitting-out-to-tea kind of way. A gentleman brings his basket with balls of string and net along to your verandah, and fastening his net to your corner post, goes at it with his neighbour, already so established, like any two females of elegant habits in ‘ our ’ village.”

He will get on with you and be at ease in your presence, while you are still floundering and feeling, every time you meet him, very much embarrassed and uncomfortable. The fact is you have a lot to unlearn before you can enjoy a feeling of *bonhomie*. You are so much a child of books, and he is so much a child of nature. But do you love birds? have you any affection for animals? do you care to talk of fish and to discuss the ways of catching them? and can you enjoy a romp through the village with little children, then you can get on equal terms with any native anywhere. Do you like a fireside talk and a humorous story under the African stars? that, too, will find him at your side. And it must be your care, your aim, to do these things, if you are to gain that beginning of interest which will win you many an adult convert. They will not come to your mission house; you must go out to their own fireside, or stand beside them on the beach as they mend their nets, or cross the river with them sometimes in their own canoes, just the man and his wife and children, his pots and nets and fish basket for curing his catches, and you, the missionary, awkwardly balancing yourself on the edge. And if you are prepared to try and alleviate their sufferings, to show them that you sympathise with their pain, you will soon get near them, soon become a father to them in their trouble.

These remarks may seem very commonplace, but it is the commonplace that gets neglected. We are in danger of living too much on a mission station, too little among the people, of leading a very busy life within too

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circumscribed an area, of rushing hither and thither, planning, building, clearing, translating, teaching, writing, and forgetting that certainly one of the aims with which we started out was—

“ To live in a house by the side of the road,  
And be a friend to man.”

Don't be concerned with preaching much at them at first. Their indifference will mortify you, but it is largely unintentional. When you have once gained your point of contact they will want you to preach to them, they will listen as children to a father. Something has awakened within them that enables them to appreciate you, to know that you are a man very like themselves in some things that are of most account.

There is no doubt much demand for constructive work on the part of the missionary to Central Africa. His aim must be to implant ideals. He naturally turns to the young life as offering the most fruitful field for his effort. The magnitude of the opportunity and the ease with which he gains a fair measure of success, lead to an absorption of his attention on this alone, and the tendency is for the old people to be unavoidably neglected. We have never purposely, heedlessly, passed them by; it is rather that we have been swept along by the swelling flood of young life, and the old folk have stood and watched us pass, often, we have imagined, with a sigh of relief, remarking, “ He is not going to disturb us; it is the children he wants.”

Enough has been said about the aptitude of the young people to show that a wonderful chance of permanently influencing them would be lost if they were neglected. The remoulding of the race, the stemming of the backward flow which has drawn so much vigorous, active life with it into inanity, must be ever a slow accomplishment, and its attainment will rest with the rising generation, not the dying one.

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To every missionary who pauses, after ten years of work, to reflect upon his efforts, perhaps to reconsider his plans, there comes the painful feeling of many misspent hours, of much misdirected energy. Not that he has ever consciously been unfaithful, he has been the victim of circumstances, and has pressed joyously, zealously forward, often unthinkingly following the line of least resistance.

The object lesson which Christ set when He chose twelve, upon whom He impressed as much of His personality as they could receive, and into whom He instilled as much of His teaching as they could imbibe, is a very striking and pertinent one for the missionary. It has ever been in my mind as an ideal, as a necessary plan, as the only effectual method. Wherever it has been followed by others, though only partially, imperfectly, it has borne rich fruit. The longer we live in Africa the more surely we know that the white man will not evangelise the country. It must be his duty to train those who will. The converts he himself will gain will be few, for however long a resident he will doubtless admit that he is not very skilful in his fishing for these men. They are such queer fish and his accepted methods of angling too often do not attract them.

We are firmly convinced that the Lokele youth will not be much the better for the ability to read and write unless it is accompanied by some manual training which will help to develop his character along sober lines. He has got infinite capacity for conceit, and quickly suffers from the painful complaint of swelled head. It is necessary for his good, his sure advancement, to keep his nose down, that he may not take the bit between his teeth and run away with the notion that he knows everything because he has begun to know something.

We have had to modify our aims somewhat in dealing with him, for his name is legion. To keep the numbers down within our ability, to deal with them individually,

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has been all our difficulty. It has been a case of *embarras de richesse*. Since 1904 this has been going on. We have found it hard indeed to keep our hold of any lad sufficiently long to really make a mark. The result is seen in the readiness with which they drop back into old habits. It has been a time of unparalleled opportunity, and when we think of the crowds of young folk to whom our word is law more potent than that of any of their own elders ; in whom the desire is strong to live rightly, and who seek our advice in the crises of their lives as to their course of action, we give thanks and press on.

The genius of our tribe for emulation and co-operation has greatly helped us. I suppose such a movement as we witnessed over nearly one hundred miles of river during 1903, 1904 and 1905, all emanating from and centring in Yakusu, would have startled the early pioneers out of mind. The wonderful thing was that it could happen in less than ten years from the time of the first settlement. We see to-day how easily we might have missed it all had another policy been adopted. And no less do we see how surely one and another has been guided to the doing of his and her part faithfully, so that the whole scheme should have a glorious consummation. He who only spent a few weeks on the place filling a gap, and they who have laboured through toiling years at the same task, may rejoice together, for none could have been spared. To mention names would be invidious when we know that, apart from the brooding, inspiring, energising Spirit of Christ, it had all been in vain.

It has been seen from these pages that we have hesitated in the past to form a colony ; that is to say, to withdraw our young married Christians who desired it from their heathen surroundings, and settle them permanently round us. We have been strongly tempted sometimes to do so, when we have been more than ordinarily aroused by the evils of the village life, and the many hindrances





*Photo by Rev. C. E. Pugh.*

Mons. Lamotte being carried across a stream on a preaching journey by one of our evangelists.

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which bar the upward progress of young followers towards holiness. To create such a new society is, perhaps, more tempting because it seems a quick cut to the desired goal. I do not say that it proves to be a short cut, because while there is some escape from certain hindrances, other evils show their face. The fact is, that by so doing, we more quickly grow a black man such as the average white man wants to see, but the problem is not thereby solved how to grow a black man who shall be strong to help and save his brother black.

In the midst of our unbroken virile tribe, any method such as the one above discussed would have meant that the whole clan would have fought shy of us and looked askance at our efforts. Therefore we give thanks that we were saved at that time from adopting a plan which could scarcely have succeeded, and might certainly have brought disaster.

We are trying, then, the difficult and slow task of superimposing a new state of society on the old corrupt form existing. The persevering reader has seen already that it is not all corrupt, and has doubtless himself concluded that some of the leaven of righteousness from within could and would effect vast changes. While in the main our sole reliance has been upon this, and we have expected young men and girls to attain some degree of holiness, of purity, of honesty, of truthfulness, in the midst of surroundings which in the past have gone dead against it, and to do this, not in their own strength, but in the strength of their newly found Saviour, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that this is expecting too much of a number of them. While fully prepared to say that if the Gospel cannot meet a condition like this and triumph, it is effete, we must admit that a more favourable environment for some years would greatly aid the growth of the tender plant. Unless a young man can divorce himself from his village life to such an extent as to throw off the

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responsibilities devolving upon him as a member of the community, he finds it hard indeed to traverse the more excellent way. To mention one difficulty alone out of many : he is expected, and even bound, to take over the wives of a deceased brother. The young Lokele Christian woman finds it practically impossible in the village to retain her frock. We need to be Divinely guided in this matter as to how far we should go in suggesting a separation for the present from the village communities that they may become to a degree independent of customs that drag them down, and keep them down, to the old low level.

We are not attempting in any way to anglicise the people. In twelve years I do not suppose one of us has taught a boy a round dozen words of English. Notwithstanding the fact that they could learn it much more quickly than French, as is borne witness to the world over, we have consistently kept up our instruction in that language, wherever there has seemed any aptitude for it, and since the advent of Monsieur Lambotte there has been a daily class, and good progress has been made by some of the more zealous.

We certainly have not been guilty of giving them too many European luxuries. A visitor unaccustomed to the ways of an African might condemn us for not being particular enough, but I think a somewhat longer acquaintance would show that the life of the workman and work-boy on the station is appreciably better than the life he would live in the village. I refer, of course, to his style of dwelling. We aim at providing them with that kind of accommodation which they can most readily copy when they leave us to return to their own villages.

Standing where it is, in the midst of the best populated district anywhere to be found on the Upper Congo, the centre of a spiritual movement which has already gained a sure footing, what ought Yakusu to be ?

We have seen its missionaries immersed through long

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years in industrial activities necessary to the upbuilding of a healthy, useful mission centre, surrounded by crowds of happy young life, teaching and disciplining them to skilful employment. While this was absorbing their interest and attention, we have beheld them overtaken by an almost spontaneous educational movement amongst the young people of villages extending along a stretch of river as far as from London to Oxford. Their attention has had to be diverted from the central activities to these outside points of interest, and coincidentally the need has arisen to provide competent teachers for the village schools. As each school has been the home of the spiritual life in the village, the presiding dominie has had, perforce, to be an evangelist as well. Hence the Training Institute has come into being at Yakusu, and the need for establishing scholarships has presented itself, that we may be able to educate a band of teachers and evangelists. Twenty pounds per annum would enable us to keep and train one such worker for two sessions of four months each. Under the care of Mr. Millman this work is prospering, and though the exigencies of the outside village work, and the paucity of capable workers, only allow him at present to call in the bands of teachers for eight weeks of continuous classes, this is a matter that time will remedy, and the growing numbers of those coming under our care will enable us to weed out the undesirables, and to give longer, more efficient training to the best lads, whose help in the further villages is so urgently called for. We are bending all our energies to the accomplishment of this, for every village needs a man who shall be a spiritual force, a guide to the erring, a strong tower for the weak, a rock staying the drift backward. Every religious movement demands a man, and if God does not call forth one Lokele who shall stand before the whole tribe for righteousness, purity, and truth, we trust He will be heard of us and bless our efforts to provide for each village a strong, earnest Christian worker.

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But we, who know the conditions, know that the B. M. S. Yakusu must stand for more than this. We are losers immeasurably in the fight if, for some years to come, we trust to the out-schools and their leaders to Christianise the district. We have to remember that every day, almost, a voice is raised warning Christendom that Islam is alive, and is making a heavy bid for the Southern Soudan, and after that the whole of Bantu Africa; that its Arab emissaries can penetrate with ease to places which the white man can only reach with difficulty; that they live and travel without apparent harm or inconvenience in a country and climate which are inimical to the health of the white man; and that they propagate a religion that is infinitely less exalted and less exacting than Christianity, and hence much more acceptable to the pagan hordes of the dark continent. The Congo generally may not be in much danger just yet, but most certainly the Falls district is, the moment that the latent forces of Mohammedanism awake to activity around us.

The question comes to be—Are we going to do the most possible, the best possible, or to be content with doing the least possible? Is it a good thing that the industrial activity at Yakusu is largely a thing of the past, that the happy crowds of children are no longer needed round us, because we have no work for them to do out of school hours? Where can we better implant ideals than in the daily intercourse with them which station life affords?

There is a place for the village schools, but the missionary can never see much of the scholars, for he can only visit each school at the most five or six times a year. *We need to maintain the station school at its old high level,* and there is good reason to believe that we could soon make such a school self-supporting by the sale of bricks, tiles, garden produce, &c., which the scholars would make and grow. We ought to have them about us so that we

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may continually draft from their ranks the brightest and most promising to fill the vacancies in the Training Institute.

The need for a thoroughly equipped hospital, which will give the opportunity of training native assistants, both male and female, has long been felt, and the lady doctor, Mrs. Longland, so recently appointed to Yakusu, will soon have her hands full. In an amateurish kind of way we have already tackled this, and given lessons in Elementary Physiology and first aid to the injured, and trained some lads to a degree of usefulness which has proved quite commendable.

It is clear to us, from the efforts made by a trading company on Ile Bertha, just below Yakusu, that a serious attempt made by the mission to employ labour will bring round us to-day many Lokele youth who are Christians and married, and who are anxious to break away somewhat from the old traditional industries of the tribe which offer to them so limited a scope for their energies, and no opportunity at all of escape from surroundings, which, in some cases, are absolutely derogatory to the growth of their Christian character.

It must be borne in mind that each passing year is multiplying the number of possible employments. The limited horizon of native life is widening indefinitely. The young people will not be held in check by the restraints which their fathers have yielded to. In other parts of Africa it has been discovered to be the business of a mission to fit them for these new employments, to train not only teachers and evangelists, but clerks, artificers in iron, carpenters, agriculturists, &c. It is surely our duty to do the most we can for the people we love and work for, that they may not always be the lowest down, but may be fitted to take the places they can take if they are willing to make the degree of effort necessary for it. That the Bantu is equal to answering such a call, and will

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make the mental effort required to meet it, is abundantly proved by the extraordinary success of Lovedale in South Africa, of Blantyre in East Africa, and of our own work on the Lower and Upper Congo.

It may not be generally known to the friends of our African Mission in England that Yakusu is as far from the Kimpese Training College as Constantinople is from London. Distance and language barriers make it impossible that we could ever send students there. We have had to tackle this big question locally, to found our Training Institute in the district. Most naturally we want to make it possible for the majority to benefit by making the institute as wide in its usefulness as possible, expanding the industrial section of it to meet the requirements of the hour.

Thus the young Christian and his wife who are determined to clothe decently, and live in cleaner, better made houses, can be given the instruction which will enable them to follow some other employment less desultory and more profitable, presenting the advantage of drawing them from the midst of habits and manners of life that are not conducive to their mental and moral improvement.

If Yakusu is to be the mission it ought to be, we need six male missionaries on the staff. To evangelise the Lokele world is a great task, and we are only, as yet, at the incipient stage. The door of opportunity is wide open; countless young hearts are enquiring diligently, "What shall I do; which way shall I go?" What port will they reach if they fail to fall in with the Heavenly Pilot?

In the midst of all our efforts we pray God that the official world of the Belgian Congo may turn an eye of pity upon the people they rule; and that such significant words as were uttered by the Duke of Connaught recently at Livingstone, Rhodesia, may not pass unheeded by them:

## Aims and Ambitions

“ The civilisation that had once crept into South Africa and disappeared, was based on a violence to native races. Yours rests on the firmer soil of sympathy, and the amelioration of the conditions of native life.”

So shall we have no doubt of the marvellous change that the long future will witness taking place in the Lokele world.

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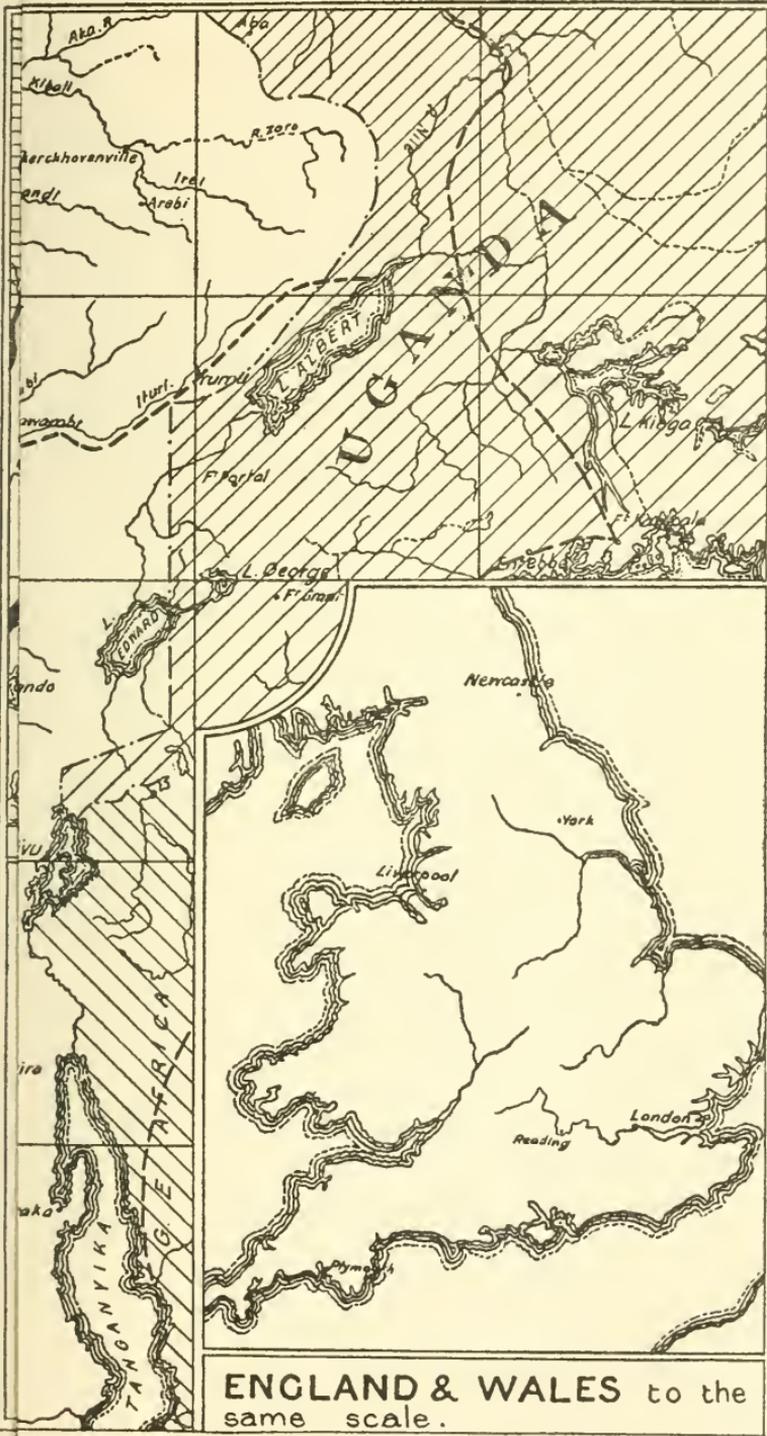
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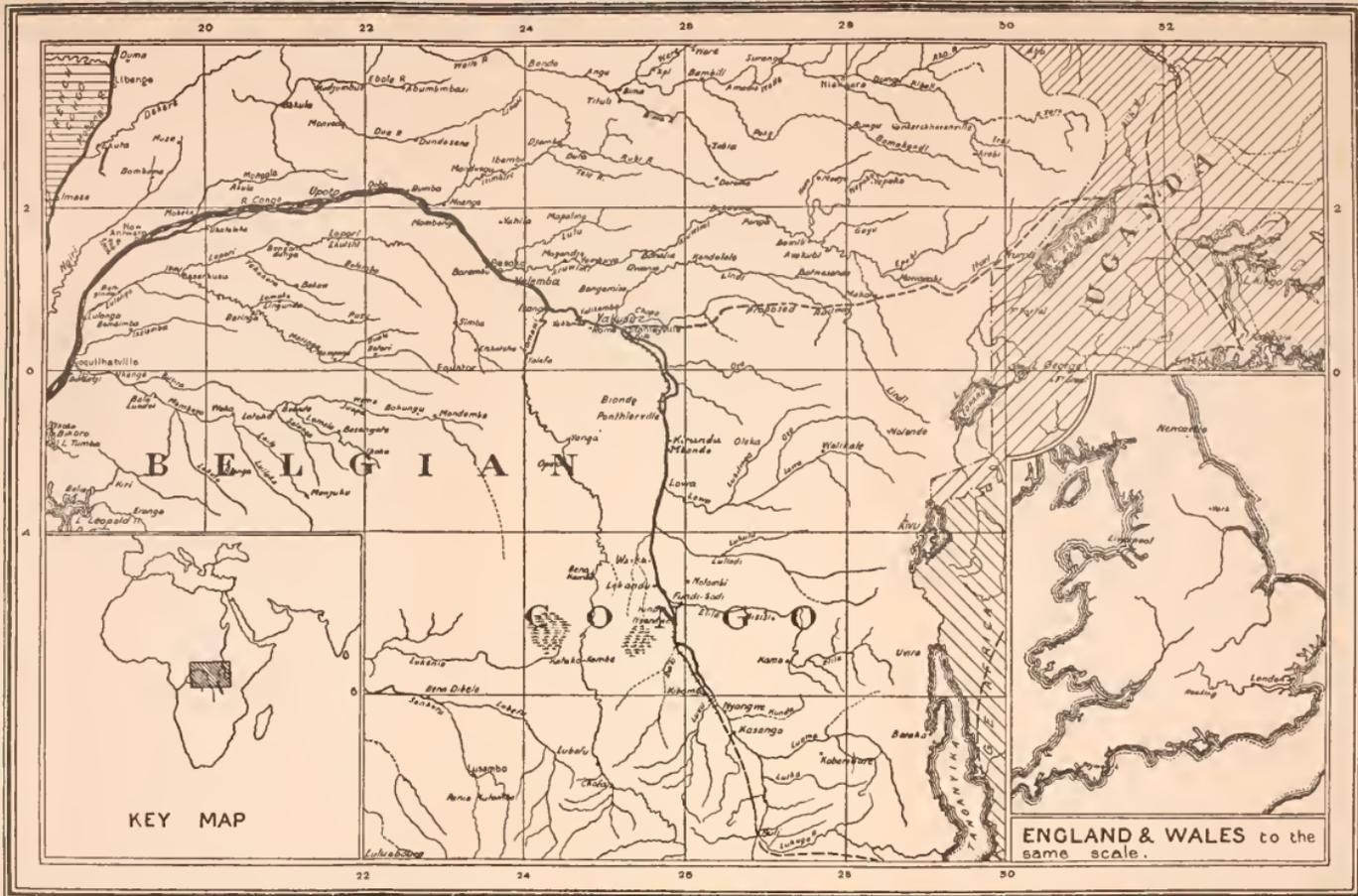


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