

CONGO CROSSES

Julia Lake Kellersberger

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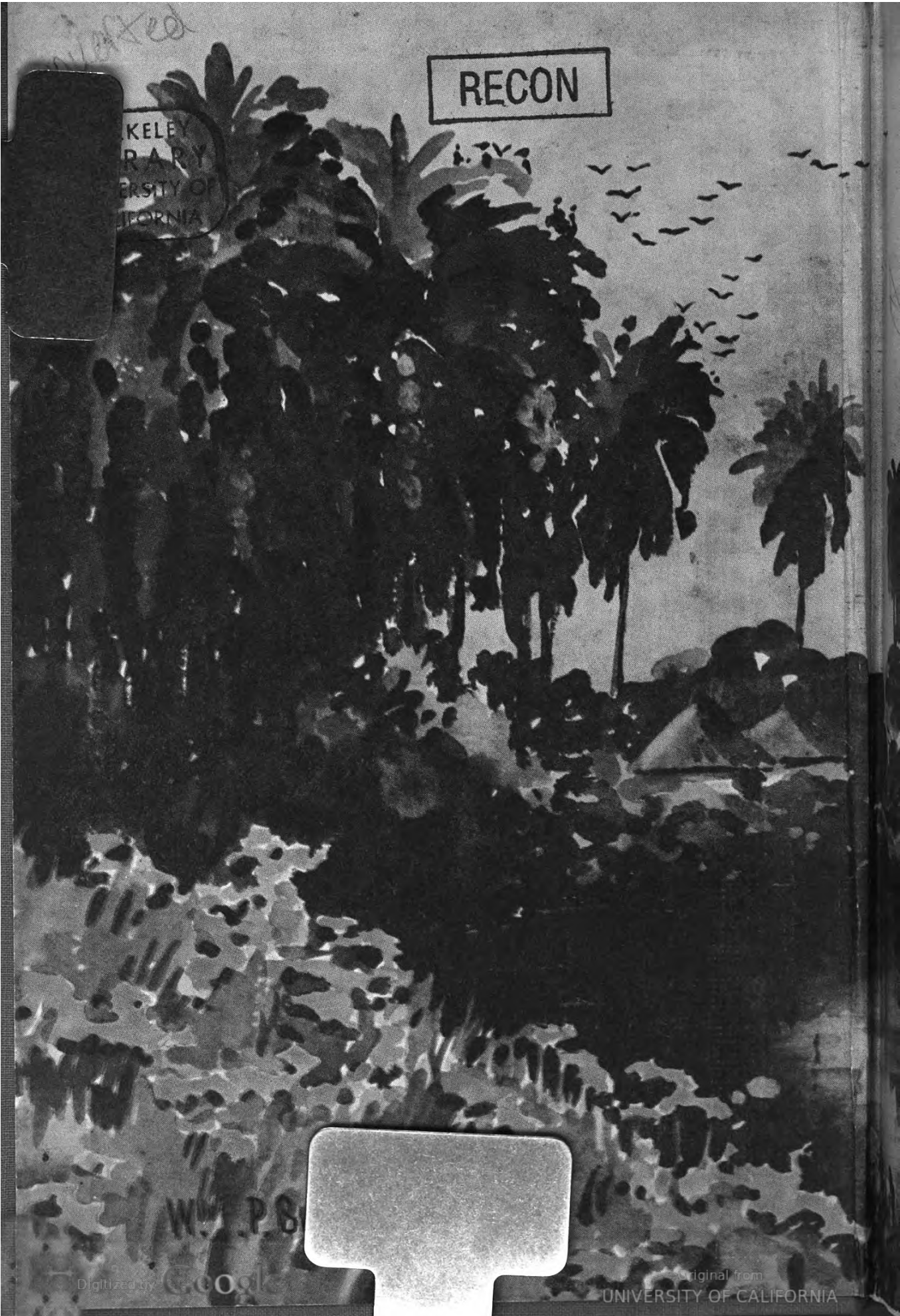
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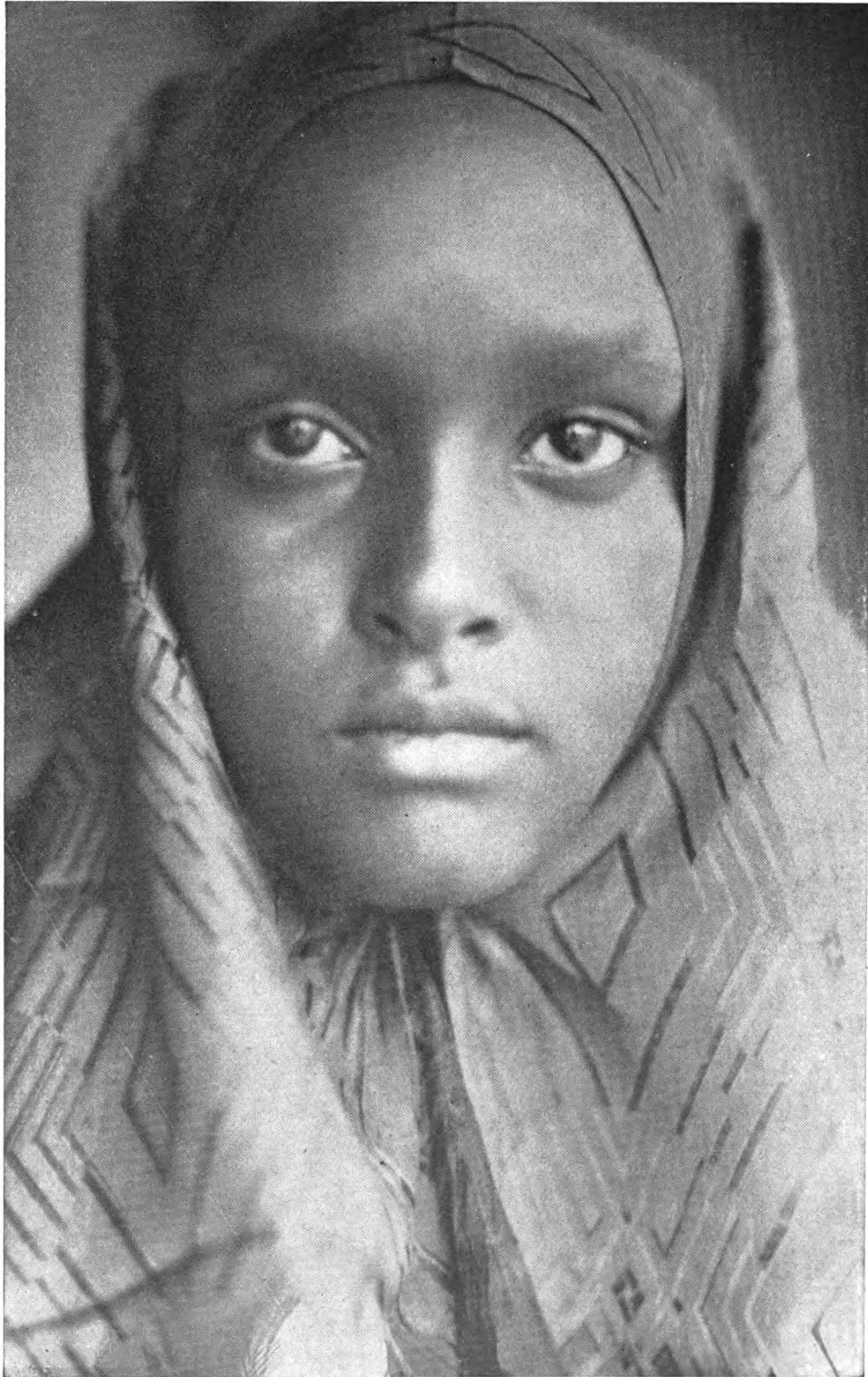


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Julia Lake Kallensdinger.





Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville

HALF ARAB—HALF BANTU
Moslem or Christian, which shall she be?

CONGO CROSSES

A Study of Congo Womanhood

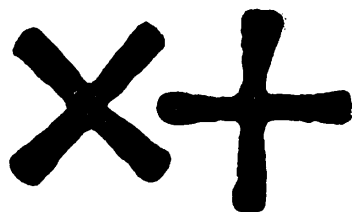
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CONGO CROSSES

A Study of Congo Womanhood

by

JULIA LAKE KELLERSBERGER



1936

Boston, Massachusetts

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

on the United Study of Foreign Missions

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MAIN

TO THE MEMORY OF
MRS. THOMAS J. COMBER
WHO DIED AUGUST 24TH, 1879,
THE FIRST WHITE WOMAN TO GIVE HER LIFE
FOR THE WOMEN OF CENTRAL AFRICA;
AND TO THE MANY OTHER WOMEN PIONEERS
WHO HAVE FOLLOWED IN HER TRAIN
THIS MISSION STUDY BOOK
ABOUT THEIR CONGO SISTERS
IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED

"CALMLY THEY SLEEP BY THE CONGO'S STREAM,
'MID THOSE THAT THEY YEARNED TO SAVE;
YET A VOICE STILL SPEAKS TO THE BLACK WOMAN'S HEART
AS SHE STANDS BY THE WHITE WOMAN'S GRAVE."

—*Adapted.*

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NOTE ON COVER PICTURE AND SKETCHES

The cover design was painted by Rev. William Burton, Congo Belge, especially for "Congo Crosses." This Congo woman is the wife of an African witch doctor, one of the leaders in the Secret Order which eats human flesh. Her mode of hair dressing takes sixty hours to complete and four hundred hours a year to keep in order. She has recently become a Christian and has put on modest dress. We are indebted to Rev. William Burton, the "Drum Call" and "L'illustration Congolaise" for the smaller pen and ink sketches

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FOREWORD

THE members of Central Committee take great pleasure in presenting to their constituents a book on the Women of the Belgian Congo. Never in the thirty-five years of our united study have we devoted ourselves exclusively to this section of the great continent of Africa,—that continent which has in the past months held the attention of the whole world.

It is a very significant fact that barely fifty years have passed since the beginning of Protestant mission work in the Belgian Congo. Only since 1900 have the wonderful results of this pioneer work under primitive conditions become increasingly apparent.

We feel that we have been particularly fortunate in securing as our author Mrs. Julia Lake Kellersberger, a missionary to the Congo under the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. In presenting Mrs. Kellersberger and her book to our readers and students, we are especially glad to pass on to them the introductory words written by the Reverend H. W. Coxill, General Secretary of the Congo Protestant Council. He writes as follows:—

“Your mission should concentrate more on work among the women.’ These words were addressed to the writer in 1934 by one of the highest government officials in the great Belgian Colony of Congo. The official added, —‘Your arduous and splendid efforts at helping the men and boys are often undone in an hour by some of these

women. It is they who generally hold most tightly to that which is evil of the past.'

"In these words, spoken by a man of wide Congo experience and large sympathy toward missionary enterprise, there is undoubtedly much truth. Congo women, no less than the women of other lands, exert a tremendous influence over the moral and spiritual life of the whole community, and the need is urgent that greater effort be put forth to win them for Christ. That magnificent and heroic work has been attempted for the women of Congo since the earliest pioneering days is evidenced by many stories told in this book; and the very success that has followed these efforts should be both encouragement and challenge for further consecration to the task.

"No one who knows Congo as it is today and who looks on her people with anything of the love of Christ in his eyes, would dare to say that the day of the foreign missionary is past. Probably the most pressing need of the hour is that more be done by them for the women and girls. New conditions have rapidly and dangerously changed many parts of Congo, through the great impact of white civilization, and these changes have brought new problems and responsibilities. It was not easy, with the few missionaries available and with inadequate accommodation, to conduct work for both sexes side by side, and all who have bravely attempted and accomplished it, have done so through much tribulation, disappointment and heartache. But this work must be done if we would have fit wives for our laymen and leaders, and Christian mothers for their children.

"The Congo Protestant Council rejoices that such a book as this is being published. It is timely; it is needed; and we are most happy over the choice of author that has been made. Mrs. Kellersberger with her graphic pen is singularly fitted for the task that has been given her. Not only has she an intimate and sympathetic knowledge of the things of which she writes with refreshing touches of humor; but she has not lost that power of perception that sees in the things that tend to become commonplace to experienced residents in Africa, incidents sparkling with attractive interest to those who live in other lands. Her husband, Dr. E. R. Kellersberger, is one of the most experienced, respected and loved physicians of Congo.

"And can we recommend this book to a wide public for a greater reason? Yes, I think so,—it is because the whole book radiates with love for the women of Congo for Christ's sake, and also for their own."

Central Committee gladly emphasizes these words and sends out this book with high hopes and earnest prayers for its success.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
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INTRODUCTION

MR. DAN CRAWFORD loved to twit newcomers to Africa about the book they were hastening home to write while they were still sure they knew it all. I am fully aware that a young missionary should be seen and not heard. She should be all ears but no mouth. She has, however, eyes through which, perchance, she may obtain a fresh point of view, and hands to write down for God and for the people whom she came to serve, some of the personal experiences and observations of more experienced workers. Such is this mission book. Its title should be "*W'e*" for it is the contribution of forty-four different Protestant missions of twelve different nationalities scattered over an area of one million square miles in the heart of Central Africa.

I am glad that I am writing to white women on behalf of the black women of Africa. As a delicate child my life was saved by the common sense and loving care of a faithful southern mammy. Through her I owe a debt to all black women which I hope this study will partly repay.

I am debtor to many: First of all to the co-workers on my own Mission whose prayers and interest stimulated me to undertake the compilation of this material; to the pioneer missionaries who have granted so freely their

time in consultation, laying aside their educational and evangelistic work for days, to give of their wisdom and ripe experience; to the many interested workers throughout the Congo who, with an already overcrowded schedule, made opportunity to answer so fully the questionnaire mailed to them, contributing valuable first hand material and pictures; to the artists, both missionary and native, who have helped with the illustrations for the book; and to the Congo Protestant Council for access to valuable mission files and statistics.

In studying this book let it be clearly kept in mind that the Belgian Congo is a territory of approximately 910,000 square miles and includes uncountable tribes and sub-tribes speaking many languages and dialects. Until recent years tribal and geographical barriers made interchange of ideas and customs impossible. Hence each section was a law unto itself. If life and traditions of the people of New England and the West are so different in a country of rapid transit, how vastly more intensified is the difference between tribal customs on the mountain slopes of the snow capped Ruwenzories and the west coast tribe of the lower Congo river, or among the industrial workers of the Katanga copper regions. Since this study seeks to include them all, no one statement of conditions and customs or beliefs of a certain tribe could be true of the region as a whole. I have conscientiously tried to portray, with truth, the conditions on the whole field as they have

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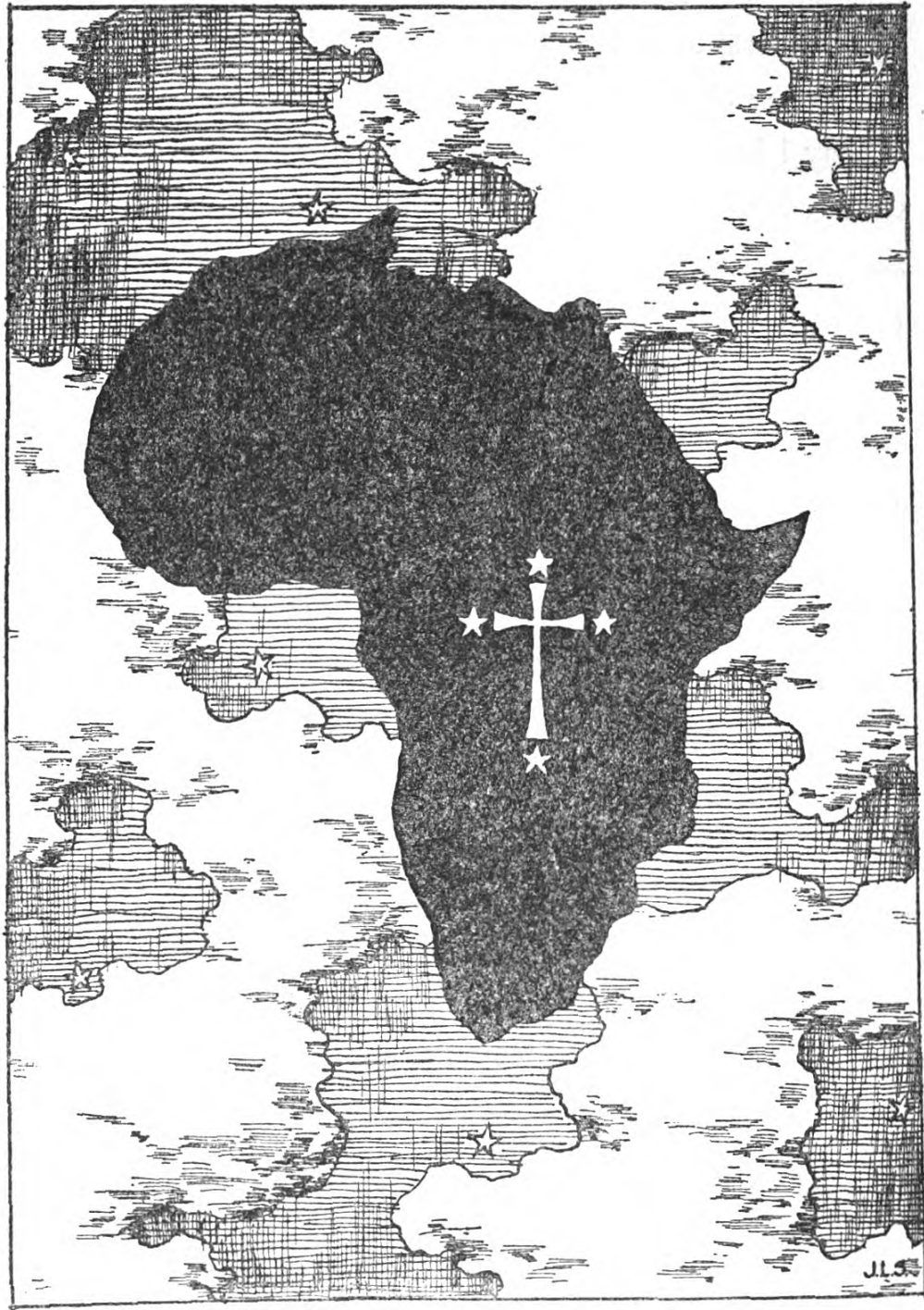
been presented to me in personal interviews, through a wide correspondence, in missionary journals and books and by my own investigations and observations.

May I be a worthy guardian of the many rich experiences of this, my first term in Africa, and may I be a sharpened pencil in God's hands to write them down, as His secretary, that I may share them with those who read.

JULIA LAKE KELLERSBERGER

Bibanga, Congo Belge

January 1, 1936



The stars are the lights which He has left burning upon the dark road that leads up to His city.

An African's version of the stars.

CONGO CROSSES

A Study of Congo Womanhood

CHAPTER ONE

THE CROSS IN THE SKY

The Southern Cross Shining in the Tropic Sky

POTENCY OF THE HEAVENS

NEPTUNE sat on his gilded throne, his tinselled crown tilted on gray locks, his gold-papered trident grasped with mock majesty in his withered hand, and his long white beard matching the foamy spray dashing against the ship's deck. Dancing and music vied with the sound of splashing waves. Gaily costumed couples did homage to the "Old Man of the Sea," for this night the Congo boat was passing the Equator, an occasion quite momentous enough to warrant a great celebration. To some the brilliant lights and laughter within held

little attraction, for without a perfect starlit night with new and wondrous constellations made the ocean world a place of awe and worship. The crossing of that mysterious, imaginary line for the first time was to most only an occasion for certain innocent initiation rites, but to the missionaries whose faces were set toward the Congo, it meant the boundary line between home and their chosen mission field, the entrance into an entirely new hemisphere. Forty-eight new constellations now twinkled overhead with strange brilliance and nearness. According to the ancients forty-eight new monsters were glaring down upon us with green, gold, and crimson eyes like twinkling lights on Christmas trees. The crescent and full moon, sunset and evening star, thunder and lightning, rainbows, eclipses, in fact all phenomena of the heavens are fraught with dire significance to primitive peoples, especially to the Africans.

All powerful to them is the sun. From him comes light and life. He must, therefore, be the creator of all things. The moon is his wife, and the stars are their children. The young morning star runs before her father, calling him to rule the day, while her sister, evening star, goes to rest with her mother, the moon. The sun and moon are judges of the earth, and the two settle many important affairs of men. When a halo appears around the sun some great but wicked man has died, and all the heavenly notables are gathered for his judgment and condemnation. The afterglow of sunset is the time when departed spirits of the night come from their cold haunts to catch a ray of

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warmth. The matchless colors painted on God's canvas at dawn and eventide are, in the mind of the savage, but pygmy's blood. Others see in these magic colors brilliant designs for the decoration of bright native cloth.

During an eclipse of the sun or moon all houses are tightly closed and the inmates safely sheltered within, for the spirit of a dead chief is overshadowing the earth and chickens must be sacrificed to him before the light can shine again.

As the first gleam of the crescent moon dispels the gloaming in the eastern sky, drums begin to beat and nude women dance. Witches, by its dim light, concoct panaceas for all ills. Beauty specialists mix strange formulas of white wash or red clay with which to adorn themselves in grotesque designs, magically transforming slick black bodies into ghastly ghosts or hideous red men. Learned doctors spread poultices of prickly leaves and fine nettles tightly about the tortured flesh. Sixty-two sticks from sixty-two bedposts, plus sixty-two water jugs grouped around one fetish pole, multiplied by the faith of many moon worshippers, equal the good graces of the gods upon the whole village, provided, of course, that these ceremonies and incantations are performed by the eerie light of an innocent baby moon. Perhaps something of this dim light enters temporarily into their darkened hearts for, before going to the dance, each takes a little fire in his hands and throws it into the cooking pot filled with water. Out goes the fire and out goes all hatred in their hearts for this magic night only.

Thanks be to the mother moon for all new-born babies, for is not a wee one born after ten moons and is she not the giver of it? So let the new child be kept within the darkened hut until her kindly face appears, then taken out and dedicated to this heavenly queen, within the safety of the village circle; but woe be to him who roams in the forest beneath the light of her full tropic splendor! Far safer to join the midnight revelries of those drunk with wine and dancing in the village than to venture into the sanctum of forest demons who are also celebrating the great event. If forced by circumstances into such a predicament, the unfortunate wanderer may grasp the stalk of a well-known forest plant and thus save himself from the power of the jungle spirits.

When the moon is dim, sparks fly upwards from the fire of a great sacrifice. Whole burnt offerings or the vital organs of a goat are cast upon the altar while the god of wind and air and breath is called upon to give protection to all maternity. The child of a slave woman was wont to be sacrificed at such a time in order that the moon might come to light again. For is not the moon of greater importance than the sun, since the sun shines only when it is light but the moon shines in the darkness? The efficacy of this human sacrifice was proven when the moon did reappear, hence a thanksgiving dance and additional revelries.

A MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Within the ship's ballroom electric fans were buzzing and merry feet were still dancing. Without, a soft breeze

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mingled with cold spray touched our faces as we leaned over the deck's rail and thought on these things. We dreamed a "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" of the future before us; of falling stars and of one who fell as a star from heaven; of monsters and dragons in sky and on earth, the fear of which had cast their spell for centuries upon the people whose land we were rapidly approaching; of the "big dipper" turned down in this new setting as if pouring out blessings upon a needy people; of the blackness of night and the brilliance of the heavens; of the darkness of Africa and the brightness of her righteous ones, shining as stars in the firmament; of eternal sleep and the awakening in the presence of the "bright and morning star"; and of the *southern cross*, visible over the whole of the Congo and now clearly discernible amid the larger constellations, outshining the monsters with which it is surrounded. Nineteen hundred years ago another cross was set upon a tiny hill, the gleam from which lights the darkness of the centuries until the coming of the perfect day. Shine on, oh *southern cross* in your southern sky, upon the least of these of all the earth. Dispel their monsters of superstition and be to them a symbol of the Light which shines from the Cross of Calvary!

The Southern Cross Shining Upon Tropic Travelers

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Before our arrival on Congo soil, we should learn something of sky and land and sea, for around the sun, moon and stars, rocks, rills and rivers, birds, beasts and forests,

center African life and superstitions. Without a knowledge of their environment there can be no sympathetic understanding of their need. So confident was an elderly Congo Christian that all the world knew his beloved white teacher, on furlough in White Man's Land, that he slipped into the post, inadequately stamped, a letter proudly addressed by his own hand. The address interpreted would read: "Teacher Stonelake, White Man's Country." That this precious letter, mailed with such childish faith, by one whose conception of world maps was limited to the boundaries of his own small horizon, actually reached its destination at a complicated address in the suburbs of London is a miracle left to the wise to solve. We laugh at the black man's conception of white man's domains, but what of the white man's conception of the black man's abode who addressed a letter merely to the name of a small mission station of twelve white residents, "Africa"! These white friends evidently did not realize that Africa is large enough to contain all of the United States, all of China, all of Europe, all of India, more than half of Australia, with a few Japans thrown in for good measure. The Belgian Colony alone contains nine hundred and ten thousand square miles with a population of ten million souls, and is eighty times as large as the small country which governs it. African maps no longer feature the "Dem-Dem, the Rem-Rem, and further east the Ghem-Ghem"; no longer is it written "*Hic sunt leones*" (There are lions here) in interior spaces where there was not a single other entry; no longer

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is the equator thought of as "a menagerie lion running around the earth"; no longer do

"Cartographers on Afric's maps
With savage pictures fill the gaps
And o'er the inhospitable downs
Place elephants instead of towns."
—Swift.

Livingstone and Stanley began to fill up the map in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the process of map making still goes on. Only a few weeks ago while walking through a moonlit forest into the dawn, with God's baptism of diamond dew dripping down upon us, after breaking through glittering spider webs hanging over mica-spangled rocks like artificial Christmas snow, we came suddenly out into the open where dawn seemed to break out of the ground instead of in the east. Sunrise colors of gold and rose sprang up at our feet—and out of the mire of the marshes, pale pink and golden lilies raised their slender stalks. After our morning watch in God's cathedral where He Himself had banked the altars, stained the windows, and lighted the starry candles, we suddenly saw on a distant hill-top silhouetted sharply against the colored sky, *a surveyor's beacon!* Our missionary guide informed us that many years before he had made a correct triangulation of the whole territory now being surveyed by the Colony and commercial organizations. Eternity alone will reveal what Africa owes to the pioneers of the Cross who broadened the narrow trails made by bare black feet, and whose bodies lie beside the

spot where they first planted the Christian flag along the widened road and claimed a continent for Jesus Christ.

William Carey kept a hand-made map of the world on the rough walls of his shoemaker's shop. Thinking in world terms made of him a world citizen. We are far more afraid of being a few months out-of-date in styles than of being out-of-date on the world's map which changes almost as rapidly as women's fashions. Wrote a typical college girl recently: "I can hardly wait to see your antiquated hat and dress when you arrive in New York after almost five years in the African 'bush.'" Though an educated young American she, evidently, did not realize that modern Pullman trains, with dining and sleeping cars, speed through forests and plains to large African cities where well-dressed women of many nations ride over paved roads in high-powered cars with liveried chauffeurs, and exclusive shops offer Parisian fashions to home-going travelers. Recently a consignment of dresses was dropped by an aeroplane upon a village on the West Coast, and more recently still, while I was traveling in this same "bush" of which my college girl wrote, a young native girl stepped forth clothed in a Montgomery Ward lavender frock, a duplicate of which I had in my own wardrobe.

The prophecy that "in the twentieth century Europe will make a world out of Africa" is now fact. Our home-going boat is just passing the English coast of West Africa; yesterday we investigated French territory; the day before we stood where we could see a Spanish Island

and Portuguese hills while our German ship waited for us outside the harbor. Over eight million square miles of this rich and beautiful land is partitioned among European powers. Dr. Donald Fraser's prophecy has already been fulfilled that "future generations will witness, in Africa, miles upon miles of roads and railways. There will be large European colonies on its highest plateaus. There will be great cities and large manufacturing centers on its rivers; wheat fields, cotton fields, and coffee plantations will be found everywhere. The great and valuable forests of timber will be coined into untold wealth. Thanks to Europe, trade has been encouraged, harbors have been improved, roads have been made, railways have been built, steamers have been floated on rivers and lakes."

A few hours more and our ocean vessel sailed serenely into a man-made twenty-million-dollar harbor. There a puffing train was ready to carry boat passengers five hundred miles to a large interior city. The shore line appeared, not as the proverbial barren African coast, but a miniature New York sky line with government and administrative buildings, palatial residences, tropical parks, race courses, cathedral spires, modern schools where educated Africans pass university examinations. Ships were flying the flags of many nations in the bay, and a band playing inspiring music gave us a royal welcome. Before us now lay the land of James E. K. Aggrey, one of the greatest Christian leaders Africa has yet produced. We saw no glittering gold nuggets sparkling beyond the merry break-

ers as they frothed and foamed their life away upon the hot sands of the Gold Coast; but who were these men rowing toward us, their sturdy boats piled high with sacks of rich cocoa beans, their stalwart bodies bared to the waist to give full play to rippling muscles, as with powerful, even strokes of short, trident-shaped oars, they conquered the heavy swell and arrived at the ship's side, singing lustily? They were the gold nuggets of the Gold Coast! They were other Aggreys in the making! Across the swells lay Achimota college, Aggrey's college, where the best is none too good for Africa's sons and daughters. "Nothing is too good for my people," he used to say, and he was right. Too long have Africa and her peoples been of second-rate importance; too long have we given her the left-overs of our thought and the dregs of our interest.

THE CONTINENT OF GOD'S ADVENTURE

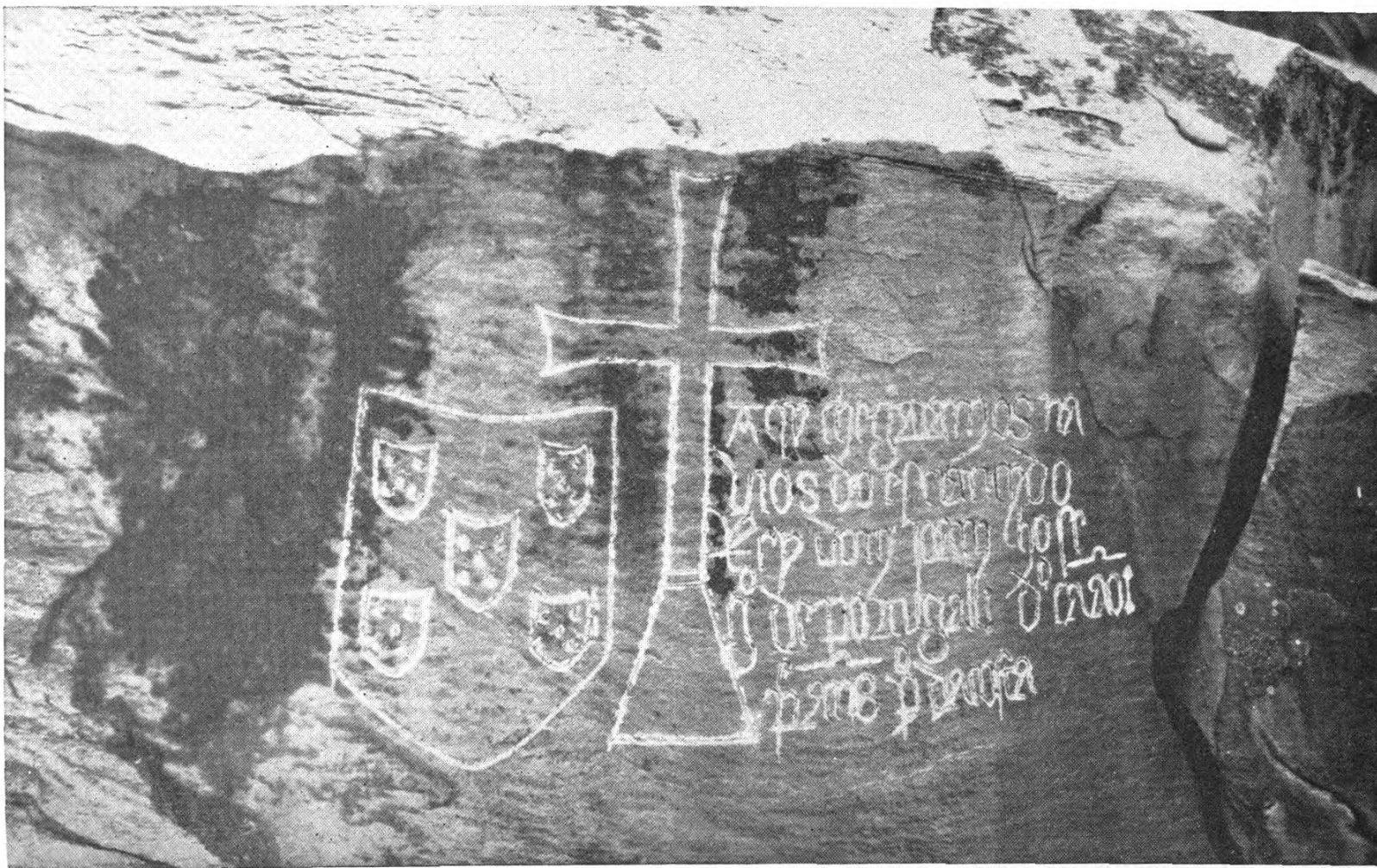
The silence of the continent is broken. Her people are beginning to speak. From forests and plains, from mountains and valleys, from river banks and ocean coasts that have hitherto been dumb, comes a murmur of desire—a desire to retain the best of the old and obtain the best of the new. "The Continent of God's Adventure" is waiting for God's adventurers; the continent of Moses is waiting for a leader to bring a bondage people to the Promised Land; the continent of the mines of Solomon is waiting for God's miners to dig the human nuggets; the continent to which Mary and Joseph fled with the young child Jesus, is waiting to give Him a place again in her bosom.

the ten 100 to 1000 ft. deep, the water is very turbulent and the rapids are very dangerous and difficult to navigate.



Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville
**THE CONGO RAPIDS WHICH IMPEDED THE PROGRESS OF A CONTINENT
FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS**

(see page 34)



Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville
FIRST CROSS CARVED BY DIOGO CAM ON THE BANKS OF THE CONGO RIVER 1586
(see page 33)

... ..

The Southern Cross Shining on Tropic Waters

DISCOVERY OF THE CONGO RIVER

Had young Prince Henry of Portugal not crossed over from Gibraltar to Ceuta on the African Coast in 1415 and captured the Moorish stronghold, he would never have learned from the Moslems there of the vast riches along the unexplored Western Coast. He would never have issued his royal edict to Diogo Cam to "*Plant the Cross on some new headland.*" Because of this command there was carved in 1486 upon a solid rock along the bank of the Congo River, a cross which stands to this day as a living testimony to the first white man to leave in Congo such a sacred symbol of the Rock of Ages upon enduring stone. One hundred and four days from Lisbon to the mouth of the great river in fifteenth-century sailing boats! Eighteen days of blue sky, rainbow spray, enchanting waves, and green waters, changing at times to angry black, bring our modern ship to where the green changes to orange, and the coffee-colored waters of this river of romance float out on the surface of the heavier sea water two hundred miles from its mouth to greet us. So mighty is the Congo that it drains more territory than all the rivers of Europe combined. Sprawling like a massive, fallen tree trunk with innumerable branches and twigs over a vast area of nearly a million square miles, it spells "life" to countless hidden hamlets, supplying food and water and transportation to an otherwise poverty-stricken and secluded people. As we sailed into its seven-mile-wide mouth and eighty-five miles down its estuary throat, at times becom-

ing a nine-hundred-foot ravenous canyon, we felt as if we were slipping over the tongue of a mighty dragon, at once to be feared, admired, and respected.

CONGO RAPIDS

Where the Congo has fought its way through the Crystal Mountains, running parallel with the coast for seventy-five miles, begins the series of famous cataracts which impeded the progress of a continent for four hundred years. Taking a modern railway around this barrier, every hour of our speed representing one hard day's march of by-gone days, we stood, at sunset, on the spot of Stanley's camp and overlooked the pool called by his name, a lake-like extension of the river, twenty miles long and fourteen miles broad. We gazed in awe and wonder as the roar of the rapids deafened our ears. Here was a current of not less than six hundred feet a minute, falling eight hundred feet over thirty main cataracts in a distance of two hundred and fifteen miles, and dashing from six to eight feet high over massive rocks. Our thoughts turned towards the strange providence of God, who, in His infinite wisdom, had thus locked the gates of Central Africa's interior for four centuries before handing the keys over to the worthy receiver, Henry M. Stanley, and his followers.

One dare not probe too curiously into the might have-beens, but, gazing down on fishing nets caught in the swirl of these innocent-looking currents, one's imagination is caught in the net of speculation. Had the river run

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a smooth course, would not, perhaps, the energies of intrepid explorers who entered her mouth before Columbus dreamed of his westward voyage been directed toward the opening up of this old, old continent instead of discovering the new? If so, then might not Christian Africa be sending missionaries to pagan America? Who can say?

SECRET OF THE SOURCE

Great doors often swing upon small hinges! The destinies of nations sometimes hang upon a spider's web, for "Little is much when God is in it." Had there not been an ant hill on the watershed between the present territory of Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo, perhaps two small streams, only a few yards apart, would not have issued from its center, one flowing southward into the Zambesi over Victoria Falls while the other flowed north into what? Had David Livingstone not been a man filled with the curiosity of an explorer and eager to discover the original sources of the Nile, he would never have been concerned about the brook which the natives called the "Lualaba" flowing from that little ant hill, first ankle-deep and easily jumped, but rapidly gathering volume like Ezekiel's vision "up to the loins and then a river that could not be passed over for the waters were risen." He would never have voiced to Stanley his desire to explore this strange phenomenon had he not felt assured that the secret which he longed to ferret out lay locked within her maiden breast.

Had Stanley not been a worthy pupil of so illustrious a

teacher he would never have returned to the unknown to solve the unfinished riddle. On which side of the ant hill should he follow the stream? "Let's toss up," he said to his young companion. "Toss away, Frank. Here's a rupee. Heads for the north and the Lualaba; tails for the south and the Zambesi." Frank tossed again and again. Tails won six times in succession. **TAILS FOR THE SOUTH AND THE ZAMBESI.** With the perversity of human nature Stanley turned north. Again the hinges swing! Suppose he had accepted the omen of the coin! After a march of two hundred and twenty miles from the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, he reached the Lualaba, which here, in the very center of the continent, was already fourteen hundred yards wide. There was no martial music to spur him on his dangerous course, only the beat of tom-toms or the ominous rhythm of war drums. With crude and clumsy dug-outs over which floated his banner, a gold star on a background of blue, like a knight of old out for adventure, floated the intrepid leader. That he found enough adventures to satisfy even a knight of the round table is ably proven by his own history of the journey.

From the time of Stanley's arrival at Boma he never lost conviction that he had discovered a continent, or at least the largest and most important part of a continent. He had laid open a tract comparable in extent and resources to the basin of the Amazon or the Mississippi. Livingstone would probably have been disappointed had he known that the Lualaba was not the head waters of the Nile but of the Congo. The greatness of the Congo,

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however, makes the discovery of Stanley comparable to that of Columbus, for by it the shadows which enshrouded the "Dark Continent" were chased away by the limelight of scientific discovery.

WATERY ABODE OF SPIRITS

To the African, waters are not merely utilitarian. To be sure, they furnish for him means of livelihood and transportation, agencies of body and mind, but they also are aids in the spirit world of which the black man is ever painfully conscious. There is nothing to him which is not endowed with an unseen presence, mostly menacing and unkind. As the Southern Cross twinkles down on beating surfs, whirling pools, treacherous torrents and rocky reefs, perhaps its seeing eyes are able to discern the sub-gods who have set up housekeeping there. To some, every dangerous and awesome spot is the residence of a god. A cloud-capped mountain, a windy corner, the misty flats or a bubbling spring, instead of inspiring wonder and worship, are haunted spots to be visited only under the spell of a powerful charm. Many natural elements, including rivers, are personified. The spirits of all rivers teach some lesson. The Congo is the personification of love and knowledge. Floods which cause the upper Congo to rise as high as twenty feet and put under water every village in her wake, making the fisher folk to sleep on racks in their huts, are sent by a great serpent which spews out of its mouth all the water to be found in rivers and oceans. You can hear his weird call at times in the for-

est. To those who have witnessed a tropical storm where noon heat forms angry clouds with ever-darkening shades, while blue sheets of rain swirl over the hills making the world of lush green for the moment a blinding sheet of blending blues;—to those who have heard the mighty crash of angry clouds in battle formation and been blinded by the dazzling bolt which, all too frequently, sets aflame the grassy roof of native huts; to those, how welcome is that bow of promise stretched across the cleared heavens! A promise that the day is coming when He who is the Water of Life will dispel all fears and superstitions and make of His own in Africa those from whom will flow rivers of living waters!

The Southern Cross Shining on Tropic Soil

COUNTRY OF CONTRASTS

Congo is a country of contrasts: a land of light and darkness, of love and hate, reverence and revenge, sunny songs and weird wails, flood and drought, feasting and famine, cold dawns and blazing noons, snow-capped peaks and stifling valleys, giants and pygmies, Aggreys and Mushidis, Christianity and paganism. It is a topsyturvy land of people who sleep while we are awake; whose sheep have no wool; many of whose leaves turn red and then green and whose trees shed their bark instead of their leaves. Here "time is measured by the number of moons, or high- and low-water seasons, and distance by the number of days' trek. Here no one but missionaries have birthdays and there is no such thing as an

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old maid; gray hair is desired and respected; eyelashes instead of eyebrows are plucked; teeth are filed and not filled; styles are cut in skin as well as in cloth, and one points with lips instead of fingers."

COUNTRY OF COLOR

Congo is a country of colors: Had God endowed me with an artist's brush, I fear much of my time would have been spent in seeking to put on canvas the brilliant blues of feathered songsters singing over blue eggs in tiny nests; blue morning-glories dew-jewelled at dawn; blue dusk when purple butterflies are poised in expectancy over opal and sapphire flowers at one's feet; golden sun kissing golden fruit hanging heavy on laden trees; yellow daisies and wild orchids peeping through the bronze of ripe seed-grasses; red ant hills, crimson seed pods, the tender green of young palms washed by rain; the pale pink of baby leaves; black and blue landscapes of seared fields after fire; noon shadows; moonlight on white mists, and the flames of camp fires against crimson evening skies.

COUNTRY OF SOUND

Congo is a country of sounds: Winds whispering through tips of tall trees; ants rustling beneath dry brush; the running water of a nearby stream; wild parrots whistling in freedom; lean dogs slinking stealthily after their masters; chickens fluttering; sheep pulling at their tethers; the wails of baby blacks and baby goats, strangely

similar; earthen jars jostling jovially together; crackling fires beneath black pots; monotonous drumming; constant dancing; hilarious laughter; and an indistinguishable murmur of voices, like mutterings of thunder, growing louder and louder until one recognizes the screaming of children, the gossip of women, and angry voices settling some village palaver.

COUNTRY OF ODORS

Congo is a country of odors: The smell of burned grass; of warm earth steaming after rain; of dried roots and herbs; of marsh grass; of fresh fruits and roasted nuts; of parched corn; of palm oil and strong soap; of corn whiskey and pipe smoke; of poultry and livestock; of "ripe" meat kept too long; of unwashed bodies close together.

UTILITY OF ALL NATURE

The acute senses of civilized races are more keenly conscious of these colors, sounds, and smells, but neither the beauties of them nor the disagreeable aspects of them are noticeable to the children of Congo soil, unless they deal directly with the material aspects of their everyday life. Utilitarianism is the end towards which all nature furnishes the means. To admire a wild iris surely must mean that it is good for eating; violet beds furnish a new variety of spinach for these funny white people; a hill-top view is good for seeing game, but mountains are of no value, for they are obstacles to barefoot journeys; a bird call at

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dawn is superfluous for have not the cocks already aroused the sleeping village? After seeing a picture of an American city with telegraph wire stretched along the streets, a young Congolaise exclaimed: "You must have many clothes to need so many clotheslines." A sentry, having watched the strange wonder of a white woman exclaiming in ecstasy over each glorious sunset, evidently feeling that, had she been accustomed to so common an event in her own country, it would cease to make any impression, innocently asked, "Does the sun shine in your country, too?"

SAUNTERING THROUGH CONGO FORESTS

Our English word "saunter" is derived from two French words, "Sante Terre," which means HOLY LAND. Crusaders on their way to Palestine were called "Santeterrers" or Saunterers. We, too, may make of every "saunter" a real pilgrimage. If our eyes, ears, and hearts are open to God's messages of color, sound, and sight, each walk that we take can lead us straight to the Holy Land of God's presence. Let us take such a "saunter" through Congo forests, which in the equatorial belt cover twenty-five thousand square miles.

Three unforgettable weeks were spent on the edge of this primeval jungle about five degrees below the equator on the shores of a miniature lake, where parrots whistled at all hours during the day and night, making it difficult to distinguish human calls. It was a monkey paradise with vine swings festooned from branch to branch as if nature

had intentionally made a playground for her frisky children. Mahogany, ebony, and teakwood were there, reserve treasure stores for future furniture fans; wild dates, figs, and olives, perhaps some day to be domesticated in bottles; rubber trees and vines with their sad past history; palms to the right of us, palms to the left of us, palms in front of us waving and sighing, palms for dresses, palms for houses, palms for eating, palms for baskets—an indescribable mixture of wealth and beauty and grace; and at their feet were moss, lichens, and tree ferns. Out of this grandeur peep wild violets and blue forget-me-nots, teaching again the lesson that God does not forget the little things and that not even the honey bird, whose note is a sure sign that a sweet morsel awaits those who heed his illusive calls and follow his trail to the wild bee's hive, can be caught in little black hands without His knowledge. We sailed over twinkling stars reflected in the sparkling waters of our forest pool, where fire-ants dropped down upon us from overhanging brush, where fireflies lighted our way and ducks' nests filled with eggs drifted towards us on floating islands of dead leaves and twigs.

To us, such a "*saunter*" meant refreshment in body, mind, and spirit, but what is the meaning of the forest to the men of the forest? Is it a place of worship or a place of worry? What are the emotions of the black man when he sees a mighty tree or hears the call of the wild? Worship is indeed invoked. It is not the worship of love, however, but of fear. Silver poplars and all trees with white

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bark, standing like ghosts among dark witches, are especially the haunted place of spirits, the bark from which is efficacious in the preparation of many medicines to keep them away. Many trees and herbs are sacred and form a strict "Tabu." No woman still capable of becoming a mother would dare eat certain nuts or berries. Hammock men running lightly with their burdens over sun-flecked trails will secretly pile up small mounds of earth at the foot of certain trees, and place leaves and offerings upon them to insure a propitious trip. Occasionally one comes upon a "Tree of the King" in the dark underbrush, carved like a hideous image, ostensibly resembling his royal highness. If this tree dies, the king, too, will die. Wood lasting from two to three hundred years is sagaciously selected, so royalty has nothing to fear from this superstition. If certain trees, the abode of especially favored spirits, are cut down, the first one to swing the axe will surely die before night. One mission hospital is built of such spirit trees. Strangely enough the cutters did not die, for the white man's "medicine" was evidently too strong for the enraged indwellers. If the bat or the jackal call at night it is because the spirits of the dead are sending their warning to the living. The hooting of the horned owl is a sure sign of death. So great is the psychic effect of fear upon these simple folk that death has been known to ensue from sheer terror at the thought.

And so amidst the crash of falling forest trees, the sudden breaking of brush by the feet of hunted, haunted animals, the whisper of leaves, the sighing of the winds,

the falling of the nuts and the croaking of frogs, come the cries of unhappy, wandering spirits seeking revenge, and woe betide the victim of their anger!

SAUNTERING OVER HILLS AND PLAINS

Perhaps a "*saunter*" over hills and plains would better suit the taste of many readers. In the north-eastern corner of the Congo, along the Equator, lie the "Mountains of the Moon" with snow-clad heights. Parallel to the western coast are the "Crystal Mountains." Their very names bring refreshment in a hot country and remembrances of times when the majesties of creation have brought us close to the mightiness of the Creator. The French word for hill country is "Accidenté." There are no accidents in God's plans, either for His world of people or His world of nature. He takes the "accidents" and makes them into altars. The great central zone between these western and eastern mountains is a country of alluvial plains, rolling hills, and well-watered tablelands, a paradise for wild-game hunters. In the flood valleys of the upper rivers are lush marshes where water birds, gorged on fish, soar lazily, and large eagles flap their wings defiantly at passing boats. Flocks of tiny colored birds swinging ecstatically on tips of slender, golden grass blades resemble gardens of brilliant flowers all singing together. Their miniature nests hang on bending reeds over the water's edge. I counted forty-seven on one small bush as we passed. Papyrus swamps line the banks mile upon mile, the same bulrushes as in Moses' day. We could easily

imagine his little basket hidden among the six-foot stalks, each topped by giant powder puffs and shaving brushes, with long-necked birds on many a fluff. Islands of white flowers take wings and fly away at our approach. These are a species of Egyptian Ibis, the sacred bird of the natives which they will never kill.

Along the banks topsy-turvy huts with peaked caps like tipsy brownies on a drunk sprawl in every direction on the hot sand beaches, knowing that they have only a few months to live before the annual overflow. In the distance, bronze villages are silhouetted against the blue hills, while thousands of graceful antelope graze like cattle for miles in this rich game preserve, entirely unconscious of the telephone line stretching above their haunts. Two lions stand within a few hundred yards of these antelope, perhaps so gorged with the night's feast that they are no longer a disturbing element, while a mother elephant and her several-hundred-pound infant, wagging their absurdly small tails, wander leisurely to their nearby waterhole. In the waters, Congo salmon, perch, and bream flirt audaciously with hippopotami and crocodiles. Are we approaching Venice or a Florida aisle of palms? The river here narrows and deepens and winds like a canal through more than a mile of regal palms lining both banks, the shadows of their graceful fronds playing hide-and-seek in the shining waters. We are not far from the "Great Lakes" region, for Africa, too, boasts a chain of worthy lakes, now connected by railways and rivers, forming a part of the Cape-to-Cairo route by which

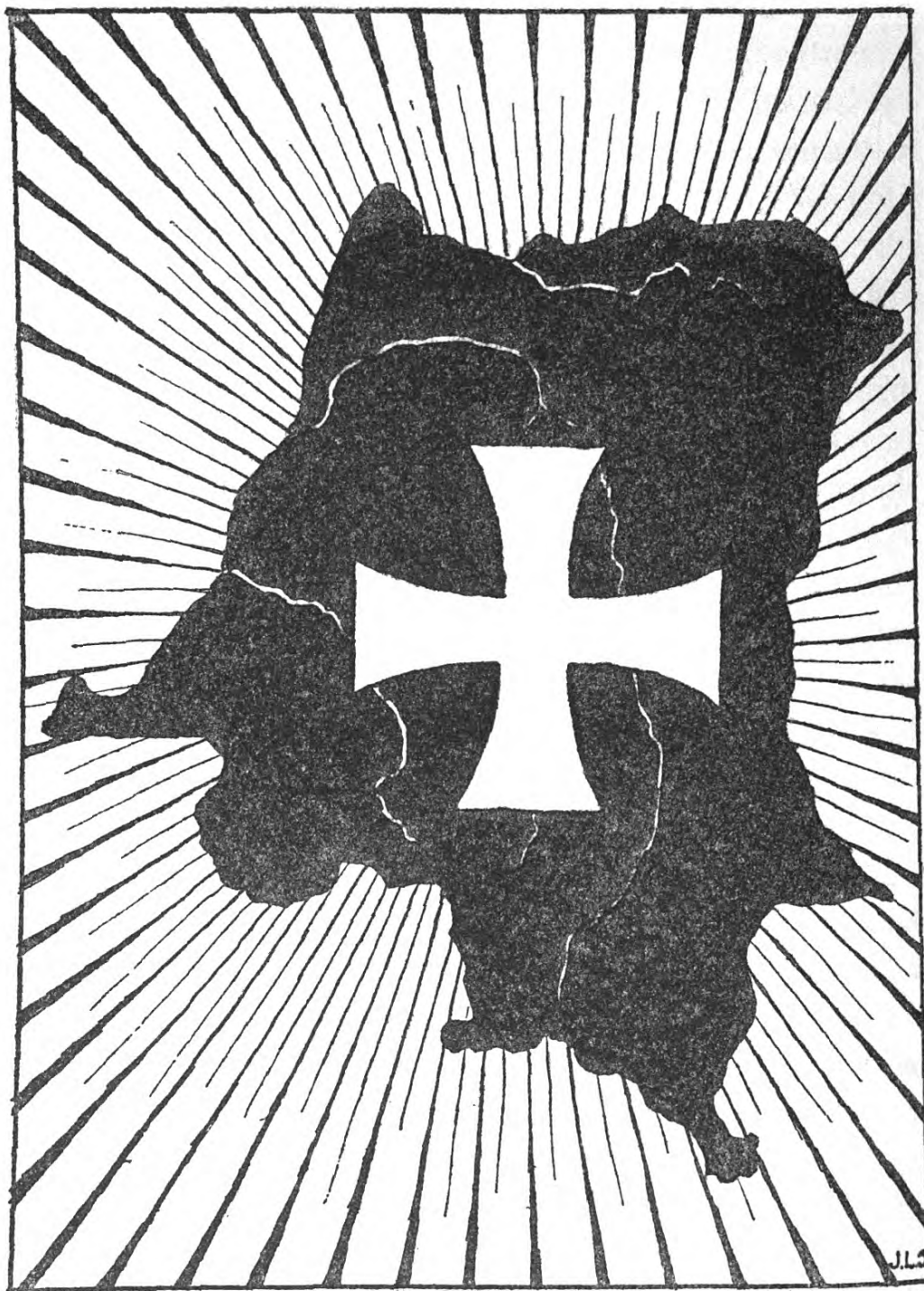
one may traverse the whole length of the continent. The deepest impression left upon us in all this beauty is a view of the beacon lights of missionary camp fires that shine out into the darkness for miles and miles upon the distant hills. In the midst of the human squalor and the degradation of those who fear to climb these lofty peaks lest the giant of the hills throw down his victims to destruction on the rocks below, God's torches are lit and His disciples among the mountains, the plains and the river courses are still fishing for men.

SAUNTERING THROUGH OLD AND NEW AFRICA

Perhaps a view of one of the early State posts as it now stands might give us a more intimate conception of the old and the new mingled as it is so inseparably today. As I sauntered along a broad avenue of gnarled mangoes, temptingly hanging their rosy-cheeked fruit over the path, on my right the marriage of two rivers was being glitteringly consummated at high noon as they joined their sparkling waters and began their long life journey to the western sea. Over their waters mingled modern commercial boats, graceful canoes of native build, and iron *pirogues* filled with cotton from interior regions on lesser waterways. During the dry season, white sand banks, like sprawling sea monsters, mysteriously emerge from the murky water, and fisher sheds spring up like mushrooms. On the left are coffee and cocoa plantations, and palm forests in even rows, their orange nuts, rich in precious oils, clinging in clusters to the mother trunk,

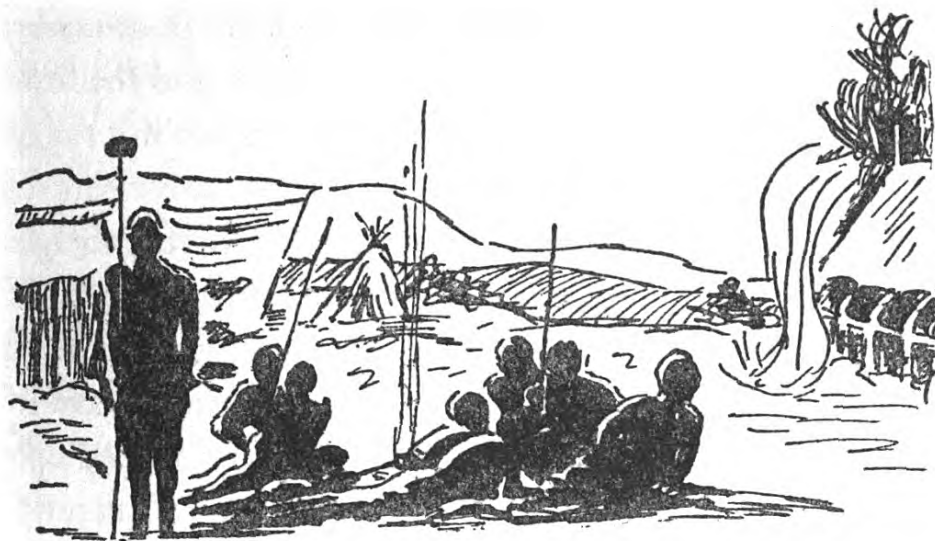
potential cakes of faintly scented soaps for my lady's toilet table. Taller than the tallest, rose a wireless station from their midst, where constant communication is kept with the interior and the outside world. Overhead, at regular intervals, is heard the drone of air motors bringing passengers and fresh fish from the Atlantic. In the background stretch forty miles of devastated forests, like skeletons of by-gone days, their stark arms reaching up to God in wordless agony. From their ghostly depths emerge burdened women laden with firewood, for sale in the village market. Modern homes of beautiful Spanish architecture, so suitable for the tropics, line the river banks. Bright European flags flutter in the slight breeze. Black soldiers in sleek uniforms keep guard in dignified silence except for the lock step of prisoners, their chains clanging as they carry, balanced on flat heads, great buckets of water to white homes from a spring several miles away. Many white traders, having left the Father's house for a far country and squandered their heritage in riotous living, are eating the husks which the pigs had left while their half-caste children play around the dirty door steps. In some busy shops, European wares, oriental goods and native produce are sold side by side. Lining the upper shelves are bottles of imported wines with a picture of a weeping Christ upon each label. The name of this brand, translated, is "The Tears of Christ." The only glimpse that many hungry souls have ever had of our Savior is this sad image of Him stamped upon a wine jug. How tragic the picture but how true the symbolism! Christ is indeed weeping over Central Africa.

Suddenly a solemn procession appeared in the streets—no blare of trumpets or beating of drums, no martial music or dress parade, but a bare bier on the bare backs of blacks being carried to its last resting place. With not a flower, not a prayer, not even a woman's tears was the body lowered to its grave. The thud of earth, the song of birds, the honk of automobiles were the only sounds that broke the sad silence. Another fortune hunter had lost his game and was being buried in a pauper's grave. Lives are launched and wrecked; souls are bought and sold; people live and die; the sun rises and sets; and the same Congo river keeps rolling along. Early morning fogs frequently hang low over her waters shutting off the surrounding hills. The work of the day can hardly be begun until the sun lifts his depressing blanket. Already at the dawn of Congo's modern history, mists are beginning to appear, obscuring the hill tops of vision and seriously hindering the work of Christian Missions. Until the Sun of Righteousness rises in full glory, tropic storms of race hatred and avarice can never be chased away. To the African who queried, "Does the sun shine in your country, too?" we would make reply: "He shines in the hearts of those who have opened their windows, but many doors are barred and darkness is therein. He must light up the west with renewed glory before He can again arise in the east with the old power."



Look on the anguish, the sorrow, the sighing,
Give to us peace in Thy time, O Lord.

H. F. Chorley.



CHAPTER TWO

THE CROSS ON THE LAND

Past Crosses

THE CROSS OF SLAVERY

A WELL-KNOWN picture of the Christ Child portrays Him with arms outstretched, running towards His waiting mother. Noon shadows cause the warning form of a cross to appear behind His boyish figure. Young Africa, too, has her arms up-raised, but sinister shadows make weird crosses upon her weary land. To those who have had the privilege of gazing upon the "Mount of the Holy Cross" in Colorado, whose seared sides are filled with spotless snow, and upon whose heights a great white cross is visible, can never forget

the sacred symbolism. African hills, too, are pock-marked and scarred with the rush of many waters and the forms of crude crosses sprawl here and there upon her rugged breast. Two great transportation routes, traversing the length and breadth of the land, meet in the Belgian Congo, forming a massive, man-made crucifix, hung, as it were, upon the surface of the whole continent. The torrents of civilization, with their mighty onrush, have left crosses not only seared upon the soil, but tattooed upon the hearts of many who still wear the scars. Recently I beheld an old African with part of his ear lobe cut away by his tribal chief, a certain sign of slavery in former days. Scarred Africa will always wear the ear-marks of her past crosses. White men look with just pride upon the new railway recently completed between the west coast and the Cape Town route. May they never forget, however, that this largely follows the old slave route into the heart of the continent and that the longest road in Africa was not made by the white man but by a wily old African, Mushidi, who opened a trail from coast to coast to dispose of his ever-increasing wealth. It was, at first, merely a path, but as greed for human souls increased, it widened like a hungry monster's mouth, vomiting its pernicious contents at the western port where the railway now begins. Two million slaves were imported into the English and American colonies between the reigns of Charles II and George III, many of them embarking here. Crossing near Bukama this famous trail between Zanzibar and the west coast, I looked down upon the modern highway

which had once been this bloody path, paved with human bones. Here had marched, perhaps, the ancestors of the faithful American black woman who had saved my life as a child. How indescribable were my emotions! Was all this a matter of chance? Aggrey of Africa himself answers: "God sent the black man to America. You who are philosophers know that there is no such thing as chance. *He meant for America to play a special part in the history of Africa.*"¹

THE CROSS OF POLITICAL DESPOTISM

In 1876 "The International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Africa" was created. The United States was the first great power to recognize this Association as an independent state of the Congo. The new state suppressed cannibalism and broke the power of the Arab slave raiders. On the other hand, trade received little encouragement and native rights were slighted. Calico and gunpowder were given in exchange for rubber. Often this was bartered for poisonous rum distilled by the Portuguese. This formed a vicious circle. Rubber was obtained, frequently at the price of death. If not death, then the price was paid in goods which ultimately meant death to the victim. Due to much agitation over these and other abuses, Belgium took over the administration of the Colony in 1908 with the determination that as a Colonial possession the Congo territory should be honestly governed according to humanitarian principles. That these good resolutions were not merely made but have been

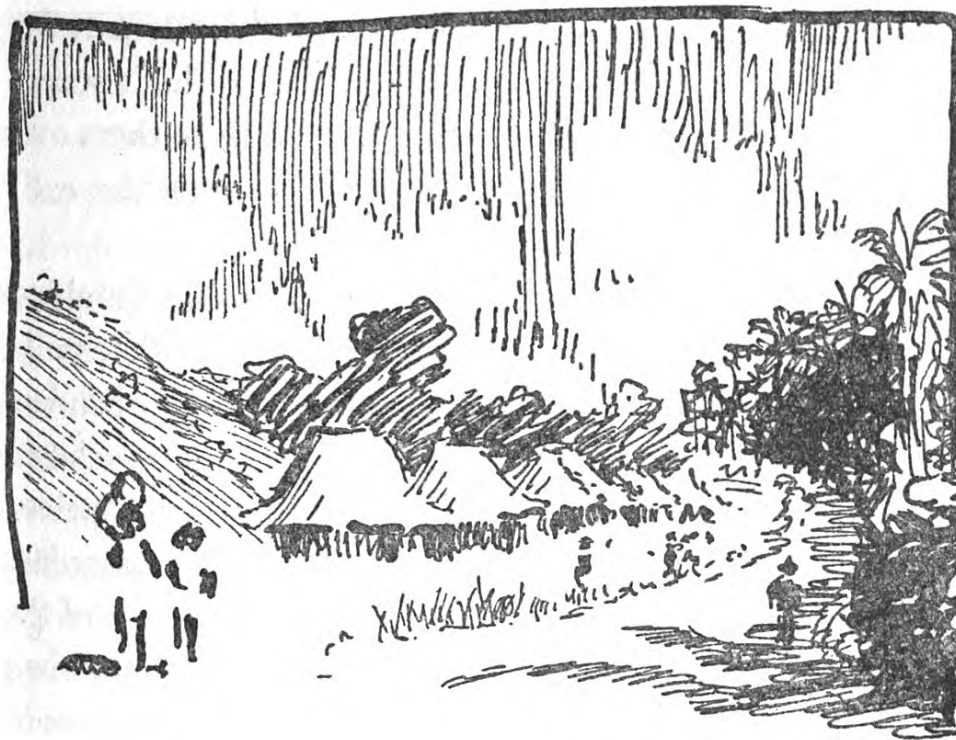
conscientiously kept is proven in the words of her newest Governor General, appointed by King Leopold III in September, 1934: "To rule is to serve. This is the only excuse for colonial conquest and it is also its full justification. To serve Africa means to civilize her. To be able to serve, one must know. To be willing to serve, one must love. And it is in learning to know the natives that one learns to love them."²

Passing Crosses

THE PASSING OF GEOGRAPHICAL BARRIERS

The days of isolation are over. A fellow missionary sat in his office listening to a popular school song, in the vernacular, sung to the tune of "Coming Through the Rye." "*Is this Africa or Scotland?*" he queried. A few minutes later, from the throats of several hundred young African hopefuls, to the tune of "Ach! du lieber Augustine" burst a torrent of native words to the effect that "At our mission station it is very good and we are very happy." Again the question, "*Is this Africa or Germany?*" With black, gold, and crimson flags flying and feet marching to the rhythm of beating drums, comes the sound of the "Brabançonne" in good French. "*Is this Africa or Belgium?*" From the living room, over the radio, is heard the striking of "Big Ben" in London, by which the missionary in the center of Africa may get the correct time. "*Is this Africa or England?*" Picking up the *Daily News*, printed each morning in French in the nearest Congo city, and brought weekly into the interior by fast trains

or boats, the modern Congolaise may read the story of an American party, recently visiting the Congo "who traveled in a motor caravan, in cars fitted with electric cookers and shower baths, with their own private physicians, who chartered a barge, drove their motors aboard and



anchored in the middle of Lake Albert for a few days of fishing. With the recent creation of hundreds of miles of graveled roads and with the newest modeled car, in a single day and with no pressure—except upon the accelerator and the pocket book—the fifteen-mile-a-day penetration has theoretically changed to thirty miles per hour.”³ “*Is this Africa or America?*” The dinner bell rings and for those who can afford it, the menu may con-

sist of fresh butter from Australia, apples and grapes from South Africa, fish and fresh oysters from the Atlantic and ice cream frozen in a petroleum-heated refrigerator. "*Is this Africa or the Waldorf?*" On a recent evangelistic trip in the hill country, the car of those itinerating gave an apologetic cough and stopped. Calling for a runner to the nearest white settlement twenty-five miles away, they received the reply: "Why don't you go to the railway station a mile back and talk to them over the telephone? They can send gas down on the early morning train." "*Is this truly Africa?*"⁴

Coming towards us is a father carrying on his shoulders the lifeless body of his little one while the mother walks behind and beats her breast, screaming in utter abandon, as only a heathen woman can do. Those who have heard the mourning wail can never forget it. It is a hopeless, wordless cry for the lost, whose agonizing, discordant notes rise in sickening contrast to the loud laughs of the market women who pass by unheeding. This father had carried his sick son for sixty sun-baked miles, oblivious of heat and weariness, hunger and thirst, for a great hope welling within him was his meat and drink. His wife had followed, stoically, a dull pain in her heart. Just as they passed into the shadow of the hospital door, even before the doctor had been called, the spirit of their little one passed into the light of eternal day. Turning, without even an hour's rest, they retraced their weary way with their sad burden and sad hearts. "*Yes, this is Africa!*" African transportation for the African, and African bur-

dens for those who have not yet heard Him say, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Though the days of isolation are drawing to a close, the days of hardships and heartaches are not ended for missionaries who are bearing others' burdens, not seeking easy places and well-beaten tracks, but who are still blazing new trails and conquering new spiritual worlds.

THE PASSING OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language constitutes a difficult barrier against spiritual and intellectual development. It is expensive, for much time and labor has to be spent in mastering the vernacular, for only thus can the Gospel be effectively transmitted, and it is discouraging to those, who, after learning to speak the language in one section, find that it is not understood by a neighboring tribe. The difficulties of such a situation are vividly demonstrated at any mission center in the heart of the bigger cities and in the industrial regions where thousands of natives have congregated from all over the Congo. Here, on Sundays, as many as eight different services are held in one Church, each in a different dialect, requiring different Christian leaders. One group enters as another leaves. Perhaps several languages are used in one service, making a very vivid impression upon those who are privileged to attend. I shall never forget such an experience in Leopoldville, the capital city of the Congo. In the heart of the native city, just around the corner from beer gardens and dance halls where native drums were beating and several thousand blacks

were returning from a Sunday football game, stood a Protestant chapel. On the greensward sat a quiet, attentive group of brightly dressed women and European-clothed men. The brilliant colors of their turbans blended harmoniously with the tropical flowers nodding in the setting sun. A well-trained native band played the great old hymns of the Church, attracting an additional crowd of white traders, Arabs, and half-castes around the fence corners. A familiar tune was selected and each group sang simultaneously in its own language. The strange polyglot of words mingled together in an harmonious medley which ascended as acceptable incense to the God of all tongues. Three native Christians preached, each in his own dialect, the last message being delivered in good French by a highly trained government employee, half Arab, a convert of the mission, and a mighty power for good among the heterogeneous crowds which surge into this cosmopolitan city.

French is the official language of the Colony. Since Belgium is a bi-lingual nation, her people speaking both French and Flemish, it is accordingly more difficult to unify the language to the same extent as the French and Portuguese Colonies do to the north and south of the Congo. As French is being taught in the schools, the time will come when this will be a common medium of communication for all educated blacks. The beauty and the educational value of the vernacular, however, is understood, appreciated, and conserved. There are four principal language groups within which, in each case, has

been evolved a medium sufficiently understood throughout the particular language area.

THE PASSING OF INTER-TRIBAL WARS

Along with the passing of geographical and language barriers has also gone petty guerrilla warring between people of different sections. An individual used to be held responsible for any offense, real or imaginary, done by anyone in his village. Innocent strangers have been fatally wounded with spears and arrows because it was thought that a man from their town had stolen a canoe belonging to another place. Two women were fatally wounded with barbed arrows because a slave from another vicinity had found refuge in their village. The State severely punished such offenses, and, fortunately, they are at an end. During this term of service we heard strange rumors of a large cave near our mission station. Thirty-five years ago cannibals from the Batetela people made raids upon our section. Those who did not surrender were killed and feasted upon. Several hundred warriors and their families took refuge in this great cave. They brought their fire and cooking utensils and lived in this dark cavern until they were starved to death, for the enemy guarded every entrance. Weird stories were told of skeletons which remained and the wild animals which dwelt therein. No native dared enter until recently a Catholic priest boldly made his way into the dark entrance and came out *alive*. We were eager to do the same. We improvised hammocks out of blankets and poles and took turns riding and

walking over the hot plains. With gasoline lights and screaming natives waving flaming torches, we felt like real explorers of the lower regions. We felt more like it still when we groped through the slippery labyrinth and saw cool, dark waters with fish splashing and human skulls lying at the water's edge. Skeletons were bleaching everywhere in this massive tomb and native pots and other possessions were scattered lavishly about. It was a terrible sight and our hearts were heavy as our weary feet retraced their slippery path back to the gleam of light which formed the entrance. It solemnly symbolized to us the spiritual death all about, but thank God there is always the gleam of light which leads to the perfect day.

THE CROSS OF SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT

"Witchcraft Present, Not Past" is an arresting article printed in the *Congo Mission News*. The Rev. J. Davidson of the Baptist Missionary Society writes: "Sometimes in reading African literature you may get the idea that heathenism is not so bad. Travelers tell you of the romantic tropic moonlight, the equatorial forest with its ferns, palms and orchids, and extol the glories of primitive man, but soon hurry back to civilization. One would require an extensive vocabulary to describe the working of witchcraft in detail. Every village has its members of the craft, whose functions are to cause illness or death, or failure or success in any venture. You who know the witches' scene in Macbeth may be able to visualize a somewhat similar scene in the eerie Congo forest at night.

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There they gather to evoke the spirits, to cast their spells and curses, to sing their incantations, to dance and to feast on the body of a man who has died at their hands. This is not folklore, it is fact; neither is it of the long ago, but in 1929. Witchcraft may be to you an interesting study, but to us it is a veritable power of darkness, instilling into the hearts and minds of a people fear and dread, impeding progress like a pall of darkness and enslaving multitudes who should be standing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.”⁵

The Gospel of Christ is painting bright colors into this dark picture. Rev. Edward Holmes of Kibokolo tells the story of how, in 1930, nine chiefs, including the chief of the worst village in the district, came forward and renounced their fetishes and sorceries. Day after day the fire spread until nearly eighty villages had brought in thousands of fetishes and idols to be burned. From some of the villages it required as many as thirty people to bring them in, grotesque images, rubbish, sticks, baskets, tins, boxes of witch-doctor paraphernalia, masks, dried birds and animals, skins of snakes and lizards, all of them crude and paltry Satanic absurdities. “They have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone; therefore have they destroyed them.” II Kings. 19:18.⁶

THE CROSS OF CANNIBALISM

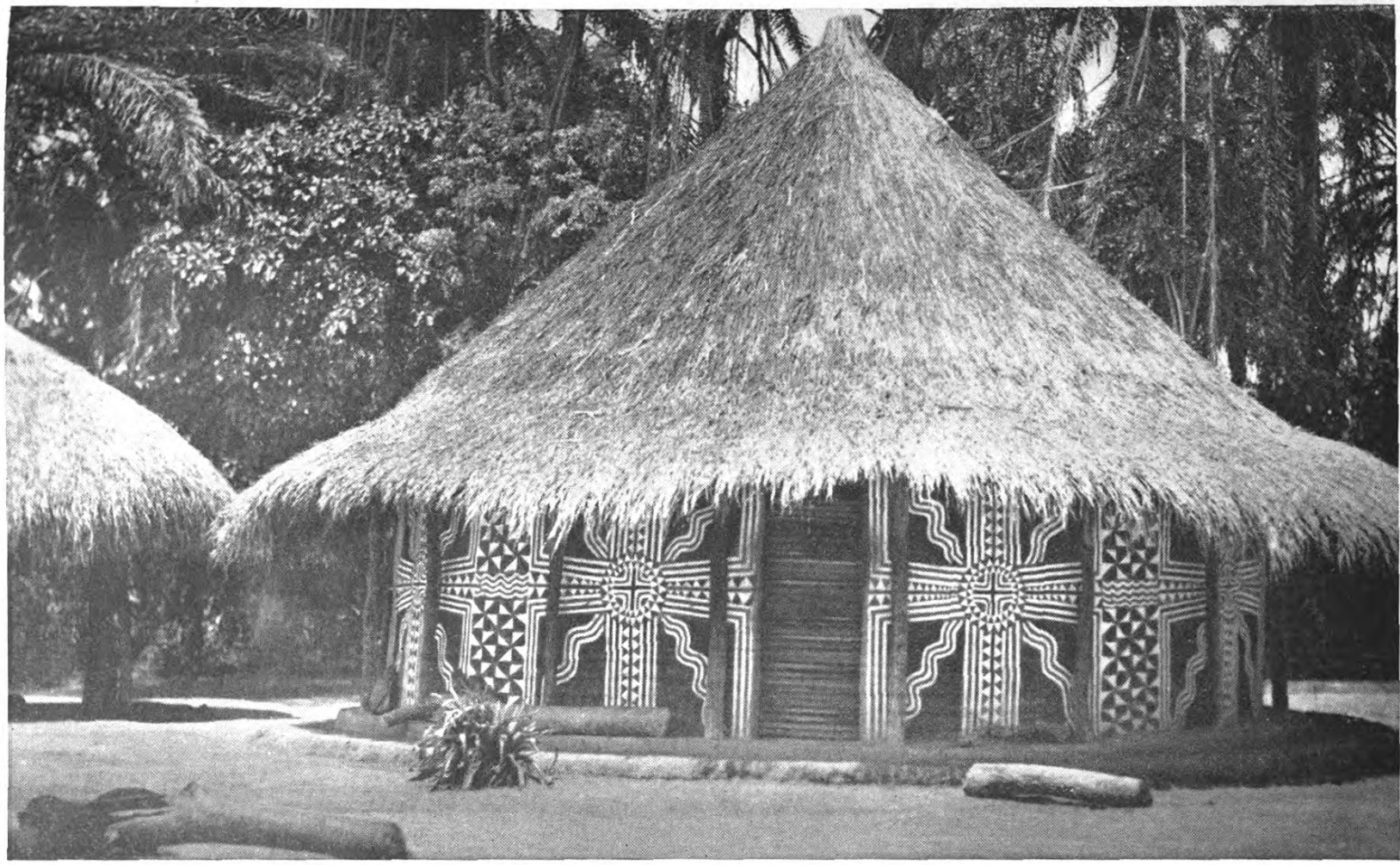
Human flesh is rarely eaten merely to satisfy the desire for meat, but to transmit the desired qualities of the eaten

to the eater. The brain of a great chief, for example, is most efficacious medicine. For fear that witch doctors will disinter the bodies of great leaders to obtain this ingredient, instances have been known where the whole course of a river has been temporarily turned, the chief buried in its former bed and the river turned back again to flow serenely over him. If any calamity arises, witch doctors of the order are called and medicine is made, mostly of human bones. When the necromancer discovers the spirit of the dead which is tormenting the living, a patch is cleared around the grave and in the dead of night uncanny incantations and inhuman human feasts are begun. It is hard to believe that on moonlight nights, along certain new highways over which we have passed, negroes walking alone are in danger of being killed and their blood sprinkled upon the human skulls decorating the grave of a great chief in that vicinity. If this gruesome ceremony is not performed at stated intervals, the displeased spirit of the dead chief might take away the power of the reigning heir—hard to believe, but modern history just the same.

THE CROSS OF SECRET ORDERS

Other secret orders, not so carnal in their appetites, but just as dangerous in their purposes and methods, are constantly springing up, gaining power, wreaking damage, and waning in influence again. Were the government not so vigilant in suppressing all such, their number would

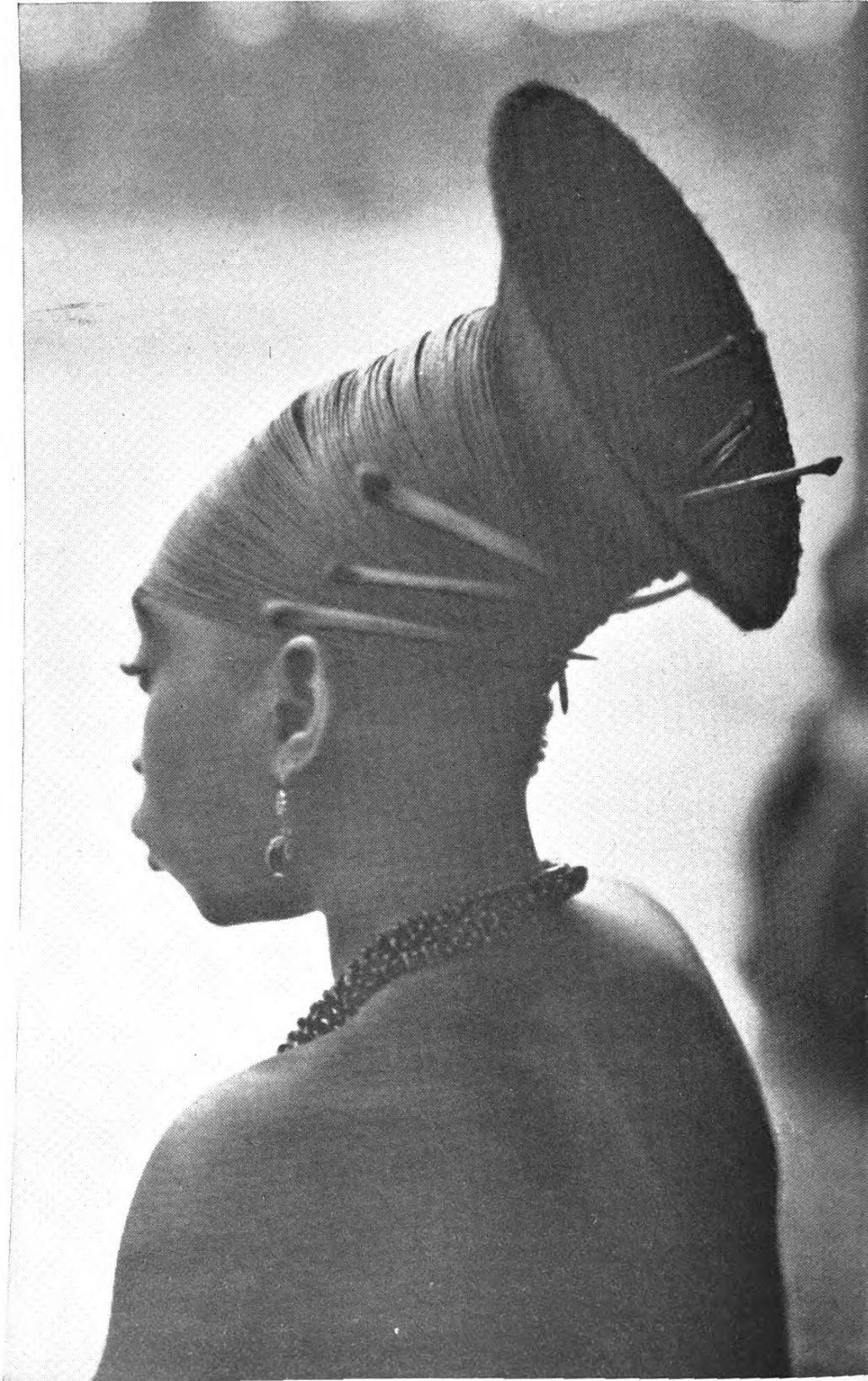
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A COMBINATION OF CONGO ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville
A BELLE OF THE CONGO

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be legion. Some are communistic in tendency, having as their main tenet a "community of possessions," including wives. They furnish for the members mutual defense, protection, and burial. The chief aim of another group is to impersonate the white man. Those wishing to become members must condemn one of their own relatives to be killed by the poison cup. Still another "lodge," around which a dangerous superstition clings, has for its real object the obtaining of the white man's goods. Certain stores of coveted supplies form the center of their activity. Several pieces of money or cloth are given to a woman to take to the local market. She purposely drops the money by the wayside and lures the one who picks it up into her hut. Here strands of his hair, and small parings of nail are cut from his body as payment for what he has stolen. The African Shylock does not demand a pound of flesh but a bag of nail parings and hair clippings, in which (they believe) the whole strength of the body is stored and by the possession of which power can be obtained over the owner. With these parts of his anatomy they make "medicine" to kill him,—*and he never fails to die.* If he does not die from fear, as many do, matters are hastened in other ways known only to members of the lodge. They believe that at his death a boa constrictor will go into the store of the white man and loot his wares. A heinous branch of the same group believes that if a man will remain a bachelor and will make medicine from flowers picked from a white woman's grave, the spirit of the white woman will bring him wealth. In the coveting of

possessions the members of the black race seem to be no different from other races under the sun.⁷

THE CROSS OF THE POISON CUP

Perhaps the most virulent of fatal superstitions now in existence is the poison cup. It is almost universally practiced, but so secretly that it seems impossible to stamp it out. A young girl was called into a hut by two old women. After shutting the door they calmly told her, "We want to poison your husband and you must give him this to drink." When she refused, they said, "Very well, you must drink it yourself," and they forced it down her throat. She escaped from the hut, told what had happened, was taken violently ill and died within a few hours.

A young American mission doctor received news that the poison cup was to be given to the father of one of the native evangelists of his station. This old man had been accused of practicing witchcraft, thereby causing disaster to befall some important family in the village. The offended insisted that the accused be given the poison test. The defendant must pay for the privilege of drinking the poison. So firm are they always in their belief that the drug will not harm them in their innocence that they usually drink it without the slightest fear. This aged father dressed himself in his best beads and anklets and drank the poison with great calm and dignity. He had just swallowed it and was stoically awaiting the result when the doctor arrived in haste. With prompt medical aid, he was

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none the worse for his experience, but there are times when as many as twenty and twenty-five persons, usually old men and women, are made to drink "the hemlock" in a single morning with no mission doctor near to save them. Such cases are brought to the attention of the State, which is doing all in its power to stop these evil practices. This is just another proof that missions, in cooperation with humane governments, still have hard and great tasks before them.⁸

THE PASSING OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES

The population of the Belgian Congo is now estimated at ten million. The country was heavily depopulated during the dark years of the slave trade and the rubber traffic. Tribal warfare, resulting in famine and sickness, added its large quota. Ignorance and disregard of infectious disease, before modern medicine intervened, caused the death toll to reach appalling numbers. The death rate became greater than the birth rate and the African was known as a dying race. Drinking cups, cooking utensils, and community pipes were the property of all. Scraps of clothing were promiscuously exchanged. Polluted water from any source was freely used, the muddier the better, for clear water, in their opinion, was not strong enough. They bathed the feet first, next the face, then the teeth, and afterwards drank the remaining drops of the same water. Finding his drinking water muddy, one missionary strongly reprimanded his water carrier, reminding him that he had been repeatedly warned not to bathe in the

spring. "I have not disobeyed you, sir," he replied, "I have never bathed in the spring. I always bathe in the water bucket." Under such conditions it is a wonder that either the missionary or the native survives to tell the tale. That they have survived is a miracle of grace. Now that improved methods of sanitation, close colonial supervision, and the modern medical profession have arrived, the birth rate is increasing slowly over the death rate. The government is spending millions of francs on modern hospitals, sanitary inspectors, and research laboratories. Mission hospitals do not have as much to spend, but are making a valiant fight for the same cause. At the first hint of epidemics that formerly laid the whole land low, strict quarantines are kept and this danger is being rapidly annihilated.

THE PASSING OF IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION

In making a recent study of "African Physiology" a Congo missionary came to the conclusion that "no sausage was ever more a mystery to its eater than the African's body is to himself. He contends that he has no stomach, for if he did possess one he would be able to hide things, to be eaten later, as a monkey uses his pouch. The discovery that he has a heart beating under his ribs will cause him sleepless nights for he has no liking for anything so restless within him. The pulsation in a baby's head is a source of awe and wonder. The young life is supposedly having a struggle with the spirits which are trying to exert their power on his head. All pains in the in-

terior must be due to an indwelling menagerie. These animals can pass from one organ to another, and the scratches they give when journeying, they believe, can be distinctly felt. Friends are said to be 'as close as the nose and the eye,' for the 'little hole which runs through the corner of the eye into the nose makes the eye weep when the nose is sorry, and makes the nose run when the eye is inflamed.' ”⁹

Remedies for these bodily ailments are just as pathetic and as dangerous as their beliefs about them. The jaw-bone of a coney, if tied to the arm of a sufferer will cure an abscess. A monkey bone, worn on a string around the waist, will cure pain in the hips. Bits of bark and grass, the feet and the tongue of a dried bird pulverized and mixed with fine powder from the root of a tree, was medicine made to cure an old body which was "sick all over." Five live beetles, five brass rings, a small goat's horn and a rat skin sausage were all given to one sleeping-sickness patient to eat to effect his cure. In one small mission hospital alone, with one American doctor, one mission nurse and thirty native assistants comprising the total staff, during the last decade thirty-nine thousand, one hundred and eight new patients have been registered from twenty-one different tribes and sub-tribes, and over four hundred thousand treatments given for almost every type of tropical disease. The fact that this is only one of many Christian medical centers doing a similar work proves that ignorance and superstition concerning the cause and cure of disease are being rooted out, and

health and practical laws of sanitation and hygiene are taking their place. Christian education is proving that "reading is not the cause of sore eyes in the village," that "washing often and wearing clothes will not bring the 'itch,' " and that "modern straight highways, instead of crooked trails, will not reveal to the spirits the way into their tiny huts." Christ, through evangelical missions, is revealing to them the Way, the Truth, and the Light. Old things are passing away. Behold, many things are becoming new.

Present Crosses

THE CROSS OF CLIMATE

Visitors in Central Africa, remaining only a short time, return with favorable reports of sunny skies, tropic balm, and eternal springtime. They have dined, as guests, upon the best of food which their host has been saving for special occasions, and traveled with the greatest ease which the country offers. They return with roses still in their cheeks and the sparkle still in their eyes, to deny that there is any such thing as a "deadly climate" near the equator. Perhaps they have never left the beaten tracks nor lived for years, as hundreds of missionaries are now doing, amid the hot plains and sultry river marshes, in small forest clearings, or at the end of the trail leading into the bush where no white visitors are seen for months on end. It is in these hidden places, far from medical aid, that the step begins to lag and the cheek grows pale and the greatest fatalities occur. How many unknown graves

are hidden in such recesses, only eternity will reveal! There are favorable districts where whites can live in comparative comfort and health, with cool nights and fresh breezes, but, in general, the land is bearing the cross of a monotonous climate gradually sapping the vitality of the whites and affecting the characteristics of the blacks. So often they are branded as "indolent" or "incompetent" without a charitable thought of the fact that they and their fathers have lived for centuries where the white man seems able to live for only a few years. Many so-called dull children, in civilized countries, have been branded as such because of certain physical handicaps. When these are remedied they come into their rightful heritage. It is time that we realized the physical and climatic crosses under which the black man labors.

THE PERIL OF THE PARASITE

A doctor after practicing medicine for nineteen years in tropical Africa has made the statement that every Congolaise is a pathological laboratory, filled with malaria enough to kill a white man. From childhood those who live in the tropics have built up an immunity which stands them in good stead until other diseases weaken their resistance and then they succumb with amazing and distressing quickness. The white man is a dead man if he does not take quinine in Central Africa. Africans have no quinine. Only a very small percentage have ever been within reach of a mission hospital. They sleep anywhere and are constantly being bitten by infected mosquitoes

and the tsetse flies which cause the dreaded sleeping sickness. They walk bare footed and are thus infected and reinfected with many varieties of intestinal parasites. Their heads are spacious apartment houses, many apartments filled with non-paying guests, actively engaged in keeping house in the most approved African fashion and raising large families with incredible speed. When the patience of a fellow worker had been almost exhausted by a group of giggling, irresponsible Congo school girls who were entirely oblivious to several clear instructions, he sternly demanded: "Haven't you anything in your heads?" Being a new missionary he had not yet come to realize that *every African girl always had!* Their feet are occupied in the same fashion with another species of human parasite, which bores beneath the skin and gradually eats away the toes unless constant vigilance is kept. The eggs of these parasites fall into the warm sand and when hatched are ready to occupy other feet. A third parasite, covering the hands and body, is known in America as "the seven-year variety," but in Africa it is usually a life-time affliction. How can we expect much of a people who are infested with little creatures without and little parasites within, until their bodies are made clean and healthy temples, worthy of the Holy Spirit's indwelling?

THE PERIL OF PESTS AND PLAGUES

"The Grim Society of Termites" is ever present with us. Those who have read "The Life of the White Ant" by

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Maurice Maeterlinck have an adequate conception of what destruction lies in the wake of their path. The African version of Matthew 6:19 should read: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where *white ants* break through and steal." A great Congo chief placed one hundred thousand Belgian francs in paper bills (about five thousand American dollars at that time) within a tin trunk on the mud floor of an inner room of his "palace." White ants entered through a small rust hole and ate the money. It must have been a good dinner. Money often goes up in smoke but is rarely eaten up. Instead of a bank failure, it was a trunk failure. White ants work only in the dark. They digest the intellectual insides of a book, leaving the cover intact so that one does not suspect that his whole library is being devoured until he picks up a treasured volume—Pff! the dust falls out and the book caves in. They build mud tunnels along the walls in order to arrive in the dark and often dynamite has to be used to eradicate them. Both the driver ants and the red ants are additional pests and often houses have to be evacuated to give them occupancy.

Driving one day over the plains, we saw a black cloud form suddenly on the horizon. A cyclone seemed rapidly approaching. Before we could realize what was actually occurring, we were in the midst of a swarm of locusts, estimated by a scientist to contain one hundred billion of them. The road and fields were black with them, the car was filled with them, and the sky overhead was dark with living clouds and the road with polka dots of fleet-

ing shadows. The sound of rushing wings was like that of a mighty wind. The glitter of the sun on each bronzed body made a dazzling snow storm, each flake winged and



singing. For five hours they passed in never-ending succession, leaving desolation and devastation in their wake, like the Egyptian plague of old. It meant feasting for the moment but fasting on the morrow. The food of John the Baptist forms the food of these people as well. At night there will be hundreds of fires in the valleys and on the

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hills—natives waiting to catch their prey while the dew lies heavy on their wings. As if by an enchanted wand, quiet fields become like streets of a great metropolis, cities of light and color and noise and feasting. On the morrow, at least ten per cent of the harvest of each visited area will be destroyed. The damage caused by locusts in Africa has been estimated at over seven billion dollars annually.

In a land where there should be plenty, there is often hunger. One herd of elephants can destroy in one night the gardens of a whole season. Lions may drive off all the wild pigs and antelope, so that four hundred men hunting all day may bring home nothing with which to feed a hungry village. Disease, unchecked, can kill all domesticated fowls and animals of a whole territory. Insects may eat the corn of a large area. Floods, drought, or fire added to other disasters, have caused famines so great that slaves have been bought for food and people have sold themselves for a mess of pottage. A Christian evangelist, still living, remembers the day when a little child was sold for one cassava root, the equivalent of one loaf of bread.

THE PERIL OF POLYGAMY

Polygamy is felt by many to be the greatest curse in the Congo today. It is almost universally practiced, except among Christians, and it is very difficult for a polygamist to give up his wives to become a Christian for they constitute, for him, his wealth and his prestige and make

possible for him, so he believes, a large family of children. The average man has two or three wives. Only the wealthy can afford them by the hundred. It seems useless to argue that it is a foolish investment of wealth; that the more wives there are, the more there are to feed and to clothe; that only the favorite wives have enough to eat and to wear, bringing shame upon the others and jealousy within the harem. They cling to the belief that many wives bring prestige, oblivious of the fact that the King of the Belgians has more power than all of their chiefs put together, and yet he, and all others like him, have entered monogamous marriages. The desire for many children is the greatest factor in polygamy, but it defeats its own end. Time and again statistics have proven that the monogamous marriage is the God-approved one, and that polygamy leads to sterility. There were as many as one thousand wives in one rotating harem, with only seventy-two children. In one polygamous village there were only twenty-five children to each one hundred women. A chief and every one of his twenty-four wives were treated at the same time for the same dread disease. On the other hand, one hundred Christian evangelists had three hundred and fifty living children. Polygamy leads to child marriage, for children are cheaper than grown women. Many children eight and ten years of age are married to grown men, thus blighting their hopes for children long before they are of child-bearing age. A man may inherit any number of wives from almost any male relative in his large and complicated family. They may be

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children or aged women, but it makes no difference. They are his property, to be brought into his harem and to be disposed of at will. A heathen may hold the right to sell in marriage the children of so distant a relative as a cousin, while the Christian parents have no word at all in the matter.¹⁰

I have visited the "harum-scarum-harems" of two of the greatest chiefs in the Congo. The first one wore a new attire each time we called to pay our respects; once in skins and feathers and costly ivory ornaments, again in a tri-colored skirt, representing the Belgian flag, and the third time in a white European suit trimmed in brass buttons and decorated by a huge medal, symbol of his great rank. Four new automobiles were in his yard and a new brick house was being built for him. His aged mother, wrinkled with almost a century of African barbarism, wore a parrot's crimson feather in her hair, and a beautiful collar of embroidered shells with heavy brass anklets and armlets that weighted her down. No doubt she has eaten human flesh and when she dies they would like to bury live women in the grave with her to keep her company in the spirit world, a custom universally practiced until the State put an end to it. The next most picturesque figure was the "Head Wife" weighing at least three hundred pounds. Since cloth and women constitute the wealth of the people here, she must have been an expensive luxury, for she was dressed in gaudy European cloth and cheap ornaments. The modern five-and-ten would make a quick fortune in such harems. The heavy hand of

this leading spirit placed upon the shoulders of the less favored wives caused their laziness to drop off as a garment (which the rest of them did not seem to possess) and the evening meal for the three hundred wives and unnumbered children was soon under way.

Mr. Conway Wharton describes in "The Leopard Hunts Alone"¹¹ the second great chief and his harem. It was our privilege, too, to see "The Leopard" and to be received in "royal splendor." We were allowed to enter, with a guide, into the enclosure where fifteen hundred people, including seven hundred wives, were practically imprisoned within several closely guarded fences. The climax of the day came when we entered the presence of the king, who is a helpless paralytic, and listened to several hundred of his wives chant the history of their proud race, interspersed by the perfect rhythm of gourds beaten on the hard earth. Woe be to the woman who forgets the name of a single king or the order of a single verse, for they have memorized the names and deeds of all their kings for centuries past. This historical song takes several hours to complete and only the king can shorten it. The worst disgrace a king can have is for his name to be left out of this musical history. As the stars appeared, one by one, and the name of the present king was sung with loud and increasing enthusiasm, he raised his hand and spoke. Instantly there was perfect silence. Was he thanking them for this praise of him or adding another verse to their illustrious history? No! He was asking that the evangelist lead in prayer. This great king is friendly to Christianity

and has opened up a territory of perhaps one hundred thousand people to the spread of the Gospel.



THE PERIL OF CIVILIZATION

Civilization does not always bring untarnished blessings. "Henry M. Stanley had opened up Central Africa to world trade with childlike faith in the good that the white man would do the black man. André Gide, a man of wide experience, visited the same territory a half a century later and was shocked to see that in the wake of conquest by civilized races had come speedy degeneration, white man's diseases, decreased value of native produce, forced labor and distilled spirits."¹² A famous African Christian chief wrote to a high government official that he dreaded the white man's drink more than a fight against demons. The black man learned from the white man to distill whiskey through gun pipes, a potion so poisonous that one-half bottle recently killed a Congolaise. This practice is strictly forbidden by the State but is still practiced in secret.

Where the black man used to ask the white man for the Gospel, he now asks him for a cigarette. At many bush-railway stations we saw small children, young boys and girls and sophisticated black women, gaudily clothed by some white man, smoking stubs of cigarettes dropped by a white man or a white woman from the train window. Once the taste is acquired, then small earnings are spent in the open markets for cheap European tobacco which is invariably sold there, instead of for wholesome food or essential clothing.

The Australian Press Association received a cable from a well-known touring agency to the effect that passengers were seriously disappointed at the refusal of missionaries to allow the performance of certain ceremonies on Sunday. The company wished to appeal to the government to get these dances arranged for the Sabbath. The *Australian Christian World* suggested that it would be well for the agency to remember that if its shipload of tourists had arrived on ANY DAY in pre-missionary times they would most certainly have witnessed a "ceremony," the completion of which they would not have survived. So it is in the Congo. Sunday football games, open beer saloons, and tribal dancing make it hard for Christians to uphold the standards of the Fourth Commandment.

It was a rainy afternoon. A young father, hands in pockets, was pacing his porch with long strides, impatiently waiting for cleared skies. His little four-year-old walked at his heels, small hands, too, in wee trouser pockets, striving breathlessly to place his fat little foot in

each big print left by the elder. Looking into his father's face, he explained: "Daddy, I am following you." James Aggrey truthfully said that America's peculiar responsibility was the African. They look to us for leadership and whether we wish it or not—THEY ARE FOLLOWING US WHERE?

Future Crosses

RACE RELATIONS

In all ages, among all peoples, where godless men and women of different races mingle together without the moral restraint which Christianity alone gives, there has been and always will be, until the millennium upon earth, a mixed race bearing the blame resulting from personal indulgence and the brunt of social injustice. So it is in the Belgian Congo where the alliance of white and black people is only of a temporary nature and the personal gratification of the former brings sorrow and suffering down upon the neglected mulatto offspring. A sadder sight even than the lowliest black is the proud half-caste, who finds it difficult to define his place in the social strata. One such Christian nurse in a mission hospital gave himself the Biblical name of Ishmael, for said he, "I am not wanted by either race and have been cast out by my people." There is an increasing number of both mulattos and nationals in the Congo who are being educated either in European or in local professional schools, and holding many responsible positions in government and industry. Protestant missions in session at Elizabethville, in 1934,

under the leadership of Dr. John R. Mott passed the following significant resolutions:

"1. We urge both Europeans and natives continually to seek a genuine understanding of the life and problems of the other race.

"2. To missionaries we would say that every feeling of superiority must be purged out of the heart in order that all their relationships with others may be controlled by love.

"3. We call upon all Christians to seek by all means to make quality and achievement, not race, the basis of human estimation.

"4. We recommend the support of all agencies which promote right race relationships. We favor the use of all means possible to remove misunderstandings and to encourage sympathetic appreciation of the best in both European and African cultures."

If such resolutions were truly written upon the hearts of all Christian people and not merely on paper, there would be no race problem in Central Africa.

ADVANCE OF ISLAM

Many books have been written on the advance of Islam and the peril of Mohammedan invasion of Central Africa. Only those who have made a thorough study of the subject can fully realize the danger of having even a few converts of this faith mingling freely among the crowds in large industrial centers and trading posts. Each Moslem

is an ardent missionary. He believes his fatalistic religion implicitly and propagates it with fanatic zeal. His white robes, bright turbans, prayers, and ritualism all appeal vividly to the primitive mind. His talent for trade is leading him into remote corners. Hitherto he had not penetrated the Congo, but now, in the larger cities, mosques are being built. The Arab is marrying the members of the Bantu race and a new strain with Moslem tendencies is the result. I watched, with pitying heart, a young Arab trading his wares on the Sabbath day. Suddenly he stopped, put down his bundle, took off his shoes, beat his head upon the ground with his face turned towards Mecca, after which he continued his Sunday trading assured that Allah would bless his wares, for "the better the day, the better the deed," it seems. Islam has never built a bridge, nor a road, nor a school, nor a hospital for her converts. Aggrey sees in Africa "from north to south, from east to west, bridges and roads and hospitals and schools and thousands of men and women living a new life. *All of that comes from Christ,*" he says. "Islam is not good enough for my people. *Only the best is good enough for Africa.*"¹⁸

THE ROMAN CHURCH

The present secretary of the Congo Protestant Council in a thought-provoking article published in "The World Dominion," July, 1934, writes the following: "During the past decade the Roman Church has grown most amazingly and her magnificent buildings are in evidence everywhere. This has been made possible, not only by the

powerful financial support of the Pope, but also by the almost unbelievable support given to Roman Catholic missions by the Congo Government. Roman Catholic missionaries now working in the Congo number over two thousand. In June, 1930, there were 749,902 Roman Catholic Christians and 508,167 catechumens. In June, 1933, there were 1,081,957 Christians and 754,058 catechumens. 350,000 colored children frequently attend the classes of about 5000 schools. We will not tell all that this great increase in Roman Catholic power and influence in the Belgian Congo has meant to Protestant missions. Students of history and those who have lived in Roman Catholic countries can form a very fair idea of what is going on, for many of the old methods have been repeated in the Congo. Missions and missionaries are seeking at the present time through the Congo Protestant Council, by prayerful consideration and wise action, to safeguard the work that has been done at such great cost. All that is sought is fair and equitable treatment for all, and the protection of African Christians from religious and other forms of persecution."¹⁴

DISPROPORTIONATE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS

Christianity has not kept pace with the influx of non-Christian influences. At one time they were in the van, but they are hardly abreast now, if not actually in arrears, of forces that have wealth and power and are using these to accomplish their selfish purposes. "Protestant Missions are now, relatively speaking, at a standstill compared with

the other influences—economic, political, governmental—which are changing the whole life of Africa. We see no black discouragement in this. We see a challenge, and an opportunity. We hear a call of trumpets. The Spirit of God waits only upon the faith, the vision, the courage of its human instruments. The Church in the homeland waits as well. If Congo missions have the wisdom to analyze their position today, and the simple but transcendent faith that will remove mountains, Christianity need lag no longer behind commerce in the Congo.”¹⁵ There is increasingly encouraging news of progress since this article was written.

In comparing mission progress, however, with economic, political and governmental influences, it must be recognized that they can and do receive votes of money from governments and banks impossible to missions. So such comparison is ostensibly unfair. The mission cause can never compete with material forces. We are not dealing with statistics, but with principalities and powers. We are not judging by quantity, but by quality. Said a Belgian judge recently to a Congo doctor, “I prefer your Protestant Christians. They may not be as numerous as those of other faiths, but *they can be trusted*.” If this statement were really true of every Christian in the homeland, if they could really be *trusted* to fulfill to the utmost their obligations and responsibilities to those races with lesser privileges, then mission books about mission needs would no longer have to be written.

It happened in an African village. Idols, many of them

skillfully made, had been brought to be burned, and were lined up according to size in a long even row. Black boys and girls were playing about, laughing and talking. Suddenly one little girl reached forward and gave a push to the largest idol. It tumbled forward, knocking all the others down like ninepins. Roaring with laughter, they rearranged them in order, and knocked them down again and again. Are they the only ones playing with idols? They have knocked their idols down! **WHAT WILL THEY PUT IN THEIR PLACE?**





Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CROSS UPON THE BACK

African Women, Cross Bearers

THE AFRICAN WOMAN, A MODERN GIBEONITE

LONG ago God created one man and one woman and saw that they were good. To the woman He gave a hoe and a water jar and told her to go to the field and find food and water for the man. To the man He gave a good pipe and a mat and told him to sit under a palm tree and smoke until his wife came with food and water." Thus reads a Congo version of the creation. "Will there be any women in heaven?" recently asked an old chief. "Why do you ask that?" the missionary replied. "If there are no gardens to tend, no flour to pound, no food to

cook, no work for them to do, then why have women in heaven?" he innocently demanded. The girls and women of Africa are modern Gibeonites, hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are the builders of roads, cultivators of fields, and the bearers of babies. They are the centers of controversy, the barter goods of trade, and the cause of jealousy. They are the hub of the wheel around which turns the African machinery of life. No army can advance any faster than its sick or wounded, and because African women are sick and heavy laden, African advance has been slow and painful.

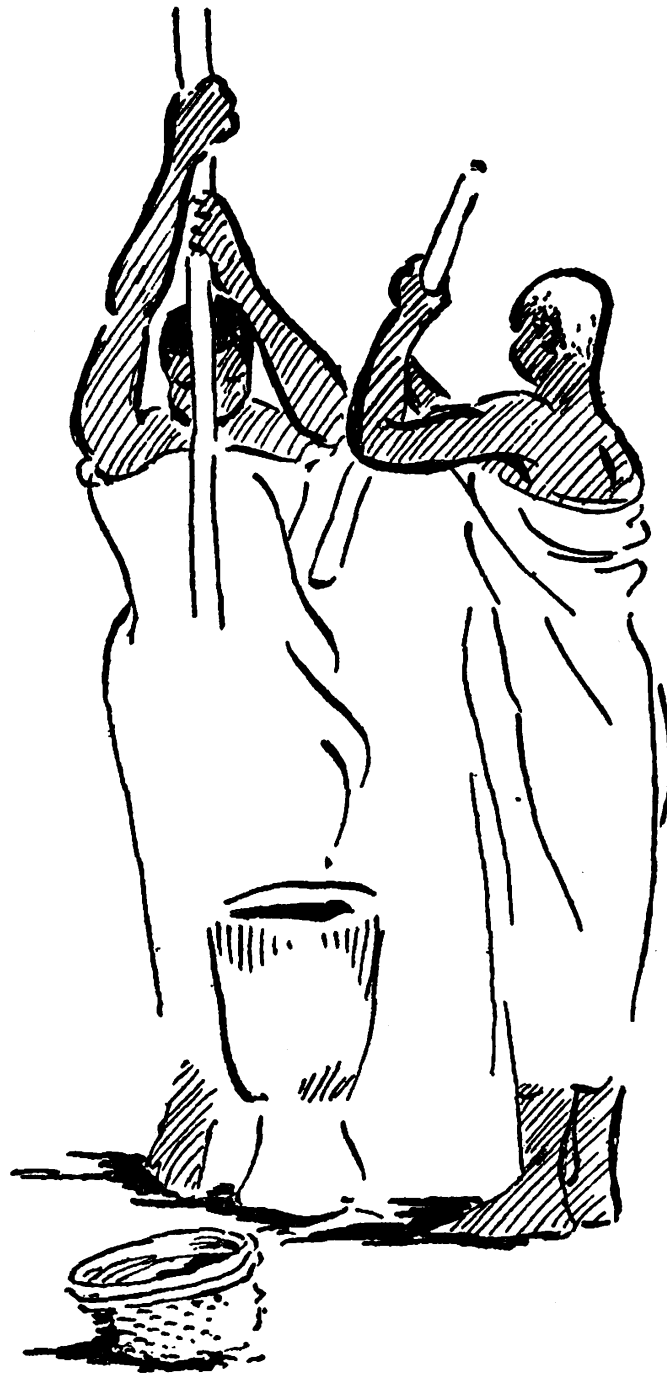
I have seen a woman heavily laden with firewood coming from the forest with her tired four or five-year-old



child astride her hip, upon whose tiny head another bundle was balanced. Great buckets of water or baskets of maize are balanced on women's heads so carefully that not a drop of water is spilled and not a grain of corn lost. I have often wondered, unscientifically I am sure, if the reason for their proverbial stupidity might not be found in the flattening of their heads under so heavy a load.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN KEEPING HOUSE

Judging from the few clay pots, simple reed mats and the flickering camp fire which is the center of every grass and mud hut, the housekeeping of the African woman appears a simple matter. It is difficult to realize in our highly civilized land the vast amount of machine labor involved and through how many hands passes each article we buy, and each particle of food we eat. When one tastes the simple African "greens" cooked in palm oil, and the starchy pudding of the cassava root (from which tapioca is made, and which forms their staff of life) one little dreams of the long hours of drudgery which are necessary for the preparation of so simple a repast. These heavy roots must be dug, soaked in water for three days, placed on the roof to dry, and beaten into flour by real woman-power. As many as six women pound together, one clumsy pestle after another going into the hollowed out tree trunk in rhythmic succession to the tune of a native song. This flour is then sifted through hand-made sieves of finely woven reeds, and poured into a pot of boiling



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water. The end is not yet. Salt must be had for seasoning. Eggs, chickens, or garden produce may now be sold to the white man in exchange for a handful of these precious, coarse grains of salt, but it is more often produced by a long drawn out process of burning and sifting the saline ashes of the flower of the palm tree or the grass which grows on the river bank. Water must be brought from the spring or river, often several miles away. Palm oil must be extracted from the palm nuts obtained at the native markets. This necessitates another barefoot journey from five to twenty miles, camping at night with no shelter, bitten by mosquitoes, carrying market baskets filled with produce of exchange and accompanied by a baby in arms, and others tugging at the skirts.

No, African housekeeping is a complicated affair. It is a "big palaver" as her women would say. To accomplish all her tasks the African woman must arise at dawn from her mat, which is usually placed on a wooden frame several inches from the floor to keep the chickens and guinea pigs which also inhabit the one room from running over her face while she is asleep, and to keep the rats from biting her toes. She shakes the wrinkles out of her one dress, for there is no change of clothing, and hastily sweeps the ashes and rubbish out of her tiny yard with a long brush broom. With a small clay brazier of red hot coals to keep her fingers warm in the cold dawn and to roast a few potatoes, she sets out to her field of manioc, corn, peas, peanuts, potatoes, or sugar cane, several miles away, where she plants and hoes until the sun is hot. Filling her basket

for the evening meal with firewood, edible leaves, caterpillars, frog legs, grasshoppers or ants to add flavor to the repast and with perspiration streaming down her face and her body, she returns to her baby, screaming from hunger and neglect. After remedying this condition, the mother spends her noon hours making clay pots, reed mats or baskets, and when the heat of the day is over she goes to the spring for her bath and the daily supply of water. Thank God that there is in Africa a spring at the end of almost every steep, down-hill trail. Its clear, cool, and cleansing waters spell *life* to hot, dusty, weary workers. As Jacob's well meant relief to wandering nomads in the desert, so does the bubbling spring of the Congo bring refreshment to barefoot women as they walk single file to this oasis, with water jugs perfectly poised on weary heads. Bathing in its cool depths, as did Pharaoh's daughter of old, washing their only garment on its shady banks with the sun as their disinfectant soap, and drinking deep of its life-giving liquid, they return, cool and refreshed, with the day's supply of water, to begin, in mid-afternoon, the equivalent of another hard day's labor, the preparation of their one "square meal" a day. In this case it happens to be a "round meal" for their starchy pudding is molded into one, huge, round ball from which smaller balls are pinched, dipped into the oily greens and gravy and stuffed without ceremony into the mouth. Hands suffice for knives and forks and wooly heads for napkins. At least the African woman is saved the drudgery of dish-washing!

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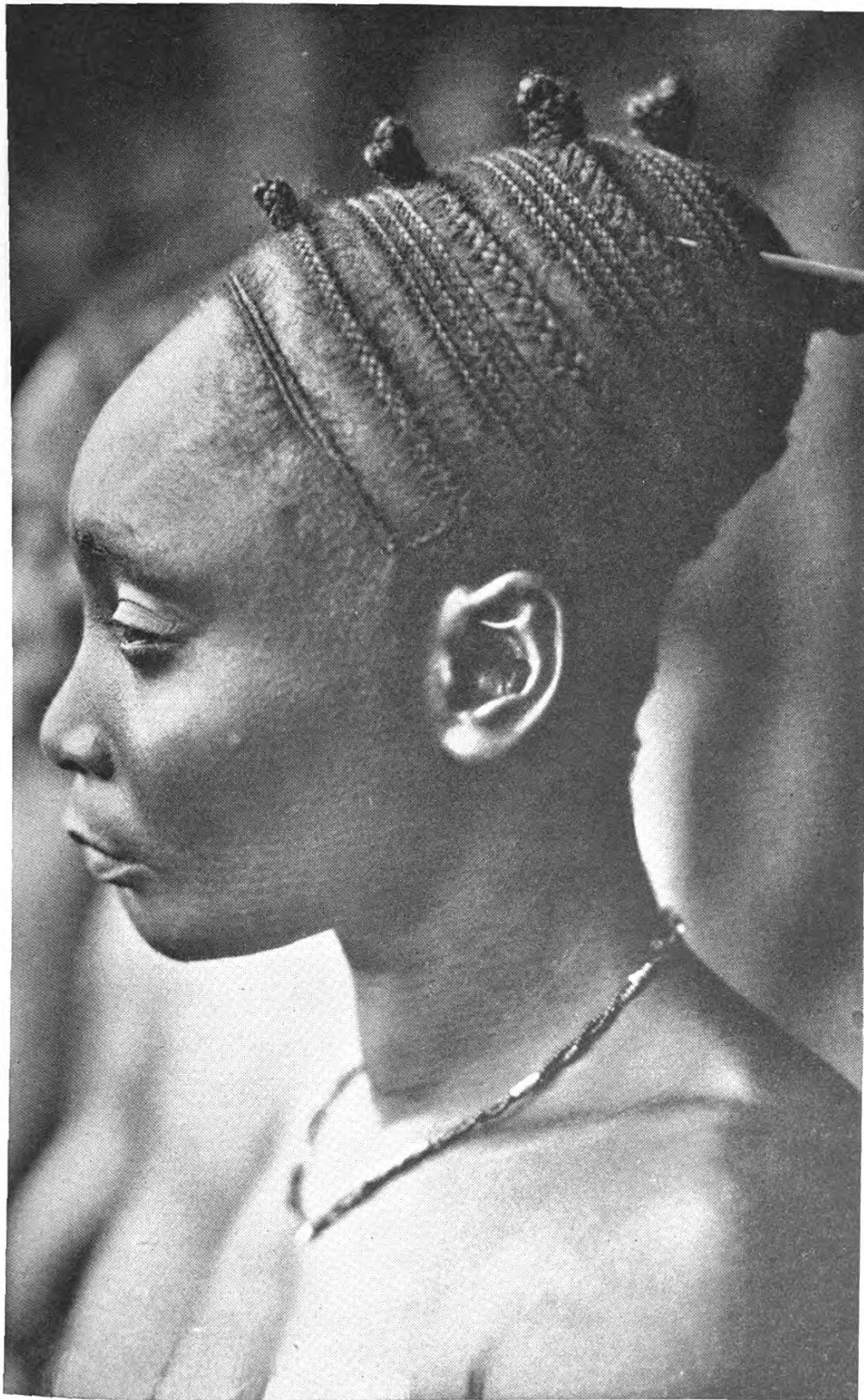
THE AFRICAN WOMAN'S TOILET TABLE

If housekeeping is a "big palaver," the matter of dress-making is not! Sun suits are the rage and styles in this respect give no evidence of change in the near future. For the total of a few cents, a co-worker bought two suits and four dresses, all of which he slipped into one envelope. Babies keep the same clothes with which they were born into the world, except for a string tied around the waist, at birth, to prevent their backs from growing too long. What they lack in silks and laces they make up in jewelry. Safety pins make lovely earrings, and buttons do well through a hole in one's nose. Mason-jar rings suffice for a new style in bracelets and round cardboard milk-bottle stoppers hung around the neck make appropriate lockets, especially when the words "Wash and Return" are printed upon them. White women do not have a monopoly of beauty parlors, for the black women spend much time at their own toilets, with their own hair dressers, anointers, and barbers. The style of coiffure worn by the woman whose portrait is painted on the cover of this book takes sixty hours to complete and this must be repeated every three or four months. To keep from mussing it at night, they sleep with their necks pillowed on a hollowed-out wooden stool. Eyelashes instead of eye brows are pulled; front teeth are chipped away for beauty's sake, and tribal markings are cut in the skin instead of designed on cloth. These cicatrices are formed by cutting the pattern on the skin with a sharp knife and rubbing red pepper into the wounds to prevent their rapid healing

and to cause the formation of scars in the desired designs. The bodies of girls and women, accustomed to out-door labor and carrying heavy loads with head erect, are perfectly poised, lithe, and graceful. "Diet" and "reducing" are words not needed in their vocabulary. Many of the Bantu women have fine, clear-cut features; their skin is not black, but ranges from dark brown to a light tan, and they anoint it with pure and healing palm oil, the foundation oil of our finest toilet soaps. When they are physically well their skin is like soft velvet and their hair like shiny silk; but when racked with disease, their skin becomes parched and dry and their hair a dusty gray.

Styles are not static but what there is of them vary as tantalizingly as in more civilized countries: the side on which the bow of the turban is tied; the ruffles which adorn the bride's dress; the length and breadth of the new cotton skirt. Men take the lead in styles and ludicrous clothing is often worn: pyjamas, cast-off thin voile dresses with no underwear, shredded rags with a new felt hat, horn-rimmed spectacles without the glasses, shirts worn with the tail out to exhibit the amount of cloth possessed or worn as pants, with the legs in the armholes. One young leper, at a Christmas service, filed into Church with a real dress shirt and dinner jacket, run-down black shoes laced with white strings and no socks. He was entirely unconscious of how incongruous was his appearance. Christianity not only makes a difference in character, it makes a difference in clothes, as well. What a contrast between the primitive woman, caked in red clay or

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Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville

A WOMAN OF THE CONGO



Courtesy of Dr. P. K. Dixon, Congo Belge

KAKU—THE GRANDMOTHER
(see page 113)

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smear'd with white-wash as a sign of mourning, remaining unbathed for months, and the Christian girl whose body and hair are clean and who is clothed with inexpensive European cloth, whose bright colors find a most harmonious setting among the dark green of the palms and the varied hues of tropical plants!

THE AFRICAN WOMAN, HER CHARACTERISTICS

Those who have lived among the negro people in the South or who have been closely associated with the American black "mammies," know also the negro woman in Africa. I was amazed at the similarity of their characteristics. Stopping, on our homeward journey, at Freetown in Sierra Leone where so many of the freed American slaves were sent before and after the Civil War, I saw the first generation of their descendants selling wares in the street. Being in an English colony, they addressed me in English, something that the Congo native cannot do. I immediately felt as if I were back in my own southern home talking to the happy-hearted, generous-minded friendly negroes on an Alabama farm. "America" could not get "Africa" out of their blood, neither could "Africa" keep them from seeming "American" in their village life and habits. Only last week, home again in the "Sunny South" a friend told me of a colored man who was "hoodooing" another with the proverbial rabbit's foot plus other ingredients so similar to the fetishes of Africa, that this time I thought I was back again in the dark continent. I felt immediately kin to them in spirit, when I first

arrived ten thousand miles from home, to find that the letter "R" is not in their vocabulary. Neither is it in mine! We have even found several words brought by them to America generations ago, still in use in the South. Combine the loyalty and fidelity, the grace and charm, the hospitality and gift of ready speech with the tantalizing unwillingness to "hurry," the frequent breaking, under stress of temptation, of the seventh, eighth, and tenth commandments and the patience and loveliness of the Southern negro,—and you have the African, speaking, of course, of the finer Christian and educated types. Those who have no training which the Gospel gives, lack almost every grace of life.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN, HER SOCIAL LIFE

African women are naturally light-hearted. God tempers the winds to the shorn lambs, and, since they are so laden with care, it is fortunate that they can easily forget their troubles and laugh and talk together like little children. They do not seek to solve the problems of the universe, but sit in the moonlight for hours talking of the trivial occurrences of the day or gossiping about the latest news beaten on the drum from a neighboring village. I have walked on Broadway at night when the theatre lights were shining brightest, but I have never seen any sights nor heard any sounds more enthralling than one hears and sees in an African village when the tropic moon is full. Listen to the rhythm of the ever-beating drum calling the villagers to the dance; the merry voices

of children playing tag games beneath the palms; the chatter of women on their door steps, talking loudly in a language vivid with colorful expressions; see tiny fires flickering before every hut; and babies sprawling around on the sand or asleep on their mothers' laps.

The African woman's chief delight is travel. The packing of her suit case is so simple a matter, since she hasn't any, and the buying of her ticket is so economical a process, since she walks on foot, that she takes a journey to see her parents or her friends, to markets, or to the nearest trading center on the slightest pretext. The following story is a typical example of the involved family relationships which must be untangled by personal journeys:

Bolumbu had just been on a journey. When asked the reason why she wished to go on another one immediately, she braced her feet apart and counted off the following reasons on her fingers: "Well, Bahe has been very sick and when she recovered her family gave her a goat. She gave the goat to her husband, who is the son of my brother. He gave the goat to his father. My brother says I may have the goat if I come and get it. I shall give it to my daughter, who will give it to her husband. He will give the goat to his sister and she will take it to her husband's family to pay on a debt, for he is in prison just now because of that debt."¹ Needless to say that Bolumbu took this journey, incidently being entertained along the way by her hospitable friends and remaining with her family, enjoying their society, long after the "goat palaver" was finished.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN THE MARKET

Village markets, held weekly in the larger native centers, serve the double purpose of supplying the week's rations and furnishing subjects of social conversation to be rolled under the tongue until next market day comes around. A description of such a market might be appropriate at this time.

Laden women, carrying heavy baskets; black madonnas nursing their babies; expectant mothers; wrinkled hags; witch doctors adorned with charms and medicines to keep away evil spirits; women, daubed with crimson palm oil and red clay, a sign of recent childbirth; a trader nodding over his wares, a victim of sleeping sickness; a red-capped soldier, strong and straight; a leper here and there! This is the personnel of an African market. The meat market is where one's nose is held and one's appetite is lost. Ripe meat is displayed in tempting arrays plus strings of dried fish and hippo meat, the older the better; shriveled rats; juicy caterpillars; fat frog legs; skinny crabs; fried ants; cat and dog steaks; luscious locusts. This is woman's strange taste, for which she will spend her last hard-earned penny.

In our saunter through this African market we see a group squatting on the ground around a huge gourd filled with home-grown tobacco. One suck of this community pipe costs one tenth of a cent. It is passed from one buyer to another around the circle and back again, until the smokers become drugged with its fumes and often fall into the fire and are fearfully burned. Woe to him or her

who steals one single breath of smoke without paying the price! Another market group is drinking corn beer or palm wine. Their laughter becomes louder and their voices are rasping.

Bundles of fuel, fresh cut from the forests, are lying at the feet of tired wood-cutters. It is friendly wood, ready to kindle flickering fires on mud thresholds, to cook warm mush for hungry little mouths, or to light a torch in the darkness to reveal the narrow trail.

European cloth in rainbow colors and menagerie designs, glass earrings and beads, safety pins, needles, thread and buttons, bright tin cups and saucers and cheap cigarettes are all displayed at Vanity Fair and show the influence of the white trader.

Surely it was of such multitudes as gather at these African markets that Christ spoke when He said they were as sheep without a Shepherd. "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers" into every African market.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN OLD AGE

She was old, old! What her name was, where she came from, or how she arrived we never knew. She was forlorn, forsaken, forgotten! Her wrinkled skin fell in flabby folds over a skeleton of a tiny body. She hovered over a few sticks unlighted, and stretched her bony fingers over an imaginary fire, while her glazed eyes looked eagerly into what she thought were glowing coals. We put her in a

warm bed, wrapped her in a warm blanket, and fed her with soft food, suitable for her toothless gums. She tore the blanket to shreds, went out into the dark, damp night and dug for herself, with long, uncut nails, a narrow trench in the earth for her chilly body. We gave her water to bathe her unwashed body, but she covered herself with defiled dust. We told her of the Christ, but not a spark of recognition lit up her emaciated features. For days she built imaginary fires and dug imaginary graves with her bony claws. One morning when orange blossoms scented the air and all creation seemed in harmony with the purposes of God, we missed her! For four days a search was made. Hospital nurses stopped their routine and hunted for a lost soul. They found her body in a deep hole where she had slipped and fallen. Too feeble to call for help, she had entered eternity alone. Alone? As the air is filled with unheard music for ears that are not tuned to catch the right sound waves, so, had our ears been in harmony with the infinities of God, surely we would have heard the soft rustle of angel wings as they hovered over the tragic spot. Who knows but that the just Judge of all the earth sent His kindest and most gentle minister, in purest white, to take her weary spirit to the Father's bosom. Who knows?

There are many like her in the Congo. No longer able to work, they are often thrust out from the home and die from neglect. The nameless one came to a Christian refuge too late, but Grandmother Queen-Ant did not. She, too, was exceedingly old and plain. She had recently

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ground to powder the last discolored, solitary tooth which had been sticking out of her otherwise toothless gums and mixed it in the baby's porridge to make his little teeth come out straight and strong.

Her children and grandchildren treated her shamefully. Once the missionaries gave her a piece of cloth to hide her rags and wrinkled body, but a few days later one of the village imps was wearing it. The people said it was too good to be worn by an old hag. She came to the mission station, where, in gentle patience, the old, old story was repeated to old, old ears. The old lips prayed a little child's prayer with a little child's faith and God did all the rest. Grandmother Queen-Ant's growth in grace was amazing. She went back to the village with a new lease on life, but her children made life unbearable for her. The day of baptism was the happiest day of her life she said, but when she returned to her village after the sacred covenant, it was as if hell were let loose upon her. They thrust her leg through with a spear and she was brought to her missionary friends wounded and bleeding. There she remained until death drew near. She showed undisguised delight at the prospect. This amazed her relatives, for to them death was a king of terrors. She even smiled feebly with her last breath and said: "This is the day that I am to see Jesus. I shall take His hand and squeeze it, and I shall say, 'Thank you, Jesus, for dying to save old Grandmother Queen-Ant.'"²

Other Grandmother Queen-Ants are being cared for in other Christian homes. Other nameless ones are dying

without His love. A favorite name given to such is "The one-who-cannot-renew-her-youth." Those who know Him have the promise that their youth shall be renewed like the eagle's. Which shall it be for them?

Younger women, too, their days drab with drudgery, are bearing burdens heavy to be borne. Mingling among the market crowd, I found three women with heavy copper yokes hammered together, around their necks. One woman had two of these worn at one time. It was with difficulty that I lifted them even an inch. I counted twenty-two cumbersome brass bracelets on another woman's arm. Heavy anklets on their feet, heavy baskets on their heads, heavy babies on their hips—but the heaviest burden of all is carried in their hearts, for they have no solace for their sorrow, no healing for their wounds, no knowledge for their ignorance, and no light for their darkness. How can they run with patience the hard race of life set before them when the physical weights and the sin which doth so easily beset them hinder them on every hand, unless their American sisters share with them their burdens and bear with them their loads?

African Girls, Cross Bearers

ADOLESCENT AFRICA

Driving hurriedly one Sunday morning towards the leper camp where five hundred unfortunates were waiting for a message of love, we were stopped by two small boys waving a white flag of peace. This proved to be a bunch of exquisite water lilies with golden hearts. Out of

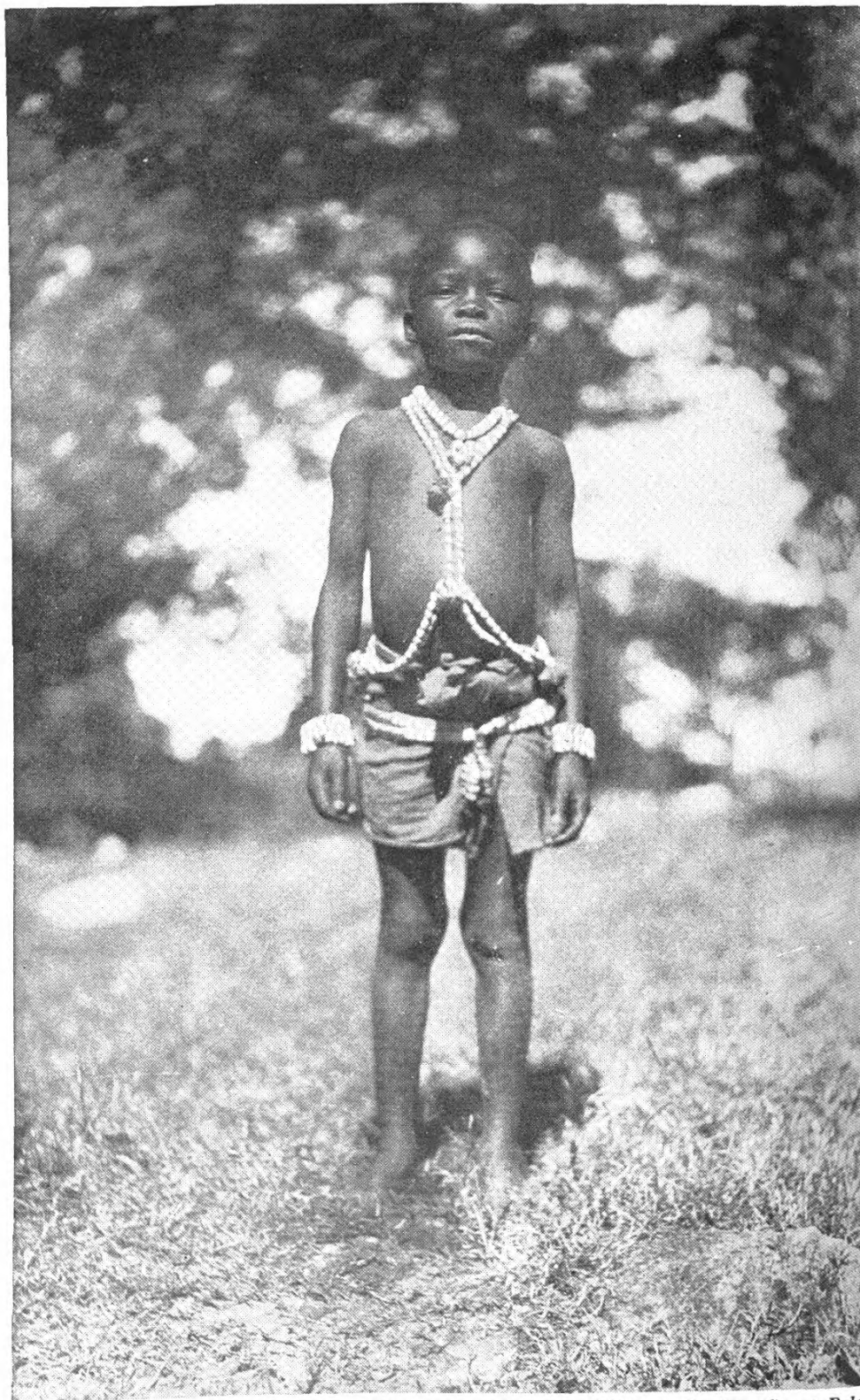


BURDEN BEARERS

Courtesy of the Rev. Edward Karlman, Congo Belge

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Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Courtesy of the Rev. William Burton, Congo Belge

**ADOLESCENT INITIATION RITES AT THE END OF
BUTANDA CEREMONY**

(see page 106)

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the mud of the marshes they had been plucked, each a miracle of the divine Creator. So out of the mire of heathen superstition and immorality, many young African girls are growing, whom God intended to be as white of soul and as pure of heart as His lovely lilies which have held their heads high above murky waters. The saving and training of girlhood in Africa is Missions' opportunity and challenge. The word seems erroneous, for there is hardly such a thing as girlhood in that country. They jump from babyhood to womanhood, going into marriage with their little wooden dolls hugged closely to their childish hearts. Their young eyes have already beheld, their young minds have already comprehended, and their girl bodies have already endured enough of life's stern realities to make of them old women in experience, long before they have even entered womanhood. They live with large families in small huts or unprotected in houses set aside for the young girls of the village, in a land where there is no such thing as privacy, and where the most sacred things in life are publicly discussed. Diabolical dances are especially arranged by older men for younger girls, and among many tribes, illicit relations between boys and girls before the age of puberty are encouraged in the belief that this is the proper preparation for marriage and fertility.

ADOLESCENT RITES

Many tribes still retain heathen initiation rites for girls on the verge of womanhood. Unless a young woman is

prepared in this way for motherhood, they believe that she will either be barren or bear a child of misfortune. There are many variations of these rites, but a description of one will be sufficient to disprove the argument that "The Africans' religion is good enough for them. Leave them alone." This ceremony is called "The Butanda" ceremony and the girl in question is called "The Mutanda." At the first signs of adolescence, the girl is placed on a mat outside of her hut. A big pot of beer is brewed and her friends drink and dance about her. In the morning the raw heart of a fowl is given her to eat, that she may acquire a woman's heart. She must eat the rest of the chicken without breaking its bones. If she accidentally does so, then the bones of her offspring will be broken. A young man broke the engagement with the young girl whom he had chosen when he heard that she had broken a bone of her butanda fowl. The carcass of the fowl must be buried, pillowed on its own feathers. During the year following this ceremony, the girl is not allowed to do any work. Food is cooked for her and she is fed, bathed, and dressed like a baby. After giving evidence of her maturity, she is decorated with beads and ornaments, smeared with whitewash and is then ready for marriage. Small boys and girls of some tribes live together in play marriage. If they wish to marry when grown, the regular marriage dowry must be paid.³

THE GIRL STANDARD—NOT THE GOLD STANDARD

Fortunately the degeneration of morals among adolescents in Africa does not universally prevail. Among a few

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tribes, especially noted for their morality and virility, the girl standard instead of the gold standard prevails. The daughters are loved more than their dowries. Girls must remain virgins until the day of marriage. If the husband finds that his wife is not a virgin, there is mourning as if she were dead and she is sold into slavery. If he finds that she has kept herself pure, he sends to her parents a prolific goat as a thank offering. Well do I remember the pride in a Christian mother's eyes when she told me of this honored gift received from her son-in-law as a thank offering for raising her daughter right.

CITIES OF REFUGE

Much is being done for young women in the Congo. There are "Cities of Refuge" on almost every mission station. Girls unwilling to be sold into harems and heathen marriages may come here for protection. One such young woman, for whom marriage dowry had been paid by a middle-aged man who already had three wives, is an illustration of this. After she became a Christian, her parents feared that her new ideas would interfere with her suitability as a bride. They sent for her husband, a day's journey up the river, to come and get her. He, with the three wives, tied her hand and foot and threw her into the bottom of the canoe. When they arrived at their destination they placed her in a dark hut and tied the door on the outside. At night she broke her way through the mud wall of the hut and swam the crocodile-infested river. Beyond the river lay a vast plain filled

with lions. For two days, without food or drink, she crossed the plain, traveling at night and hiding among the ant hills during the day before she arrived at the city of refuge. In this protected haven, the Congo maiden received a thorough rudimentary education, with lessons in hygiene and sewing and special emphasis on mother craft, gardening, and cooking. She was prepared to meet every emergency of a home-maker. A practical application of Bible knowledge to character formation is the chief aim of all Christian education, so all her teaching was Bibliocentric. Character and intelligence, skill and handcraft, physical health and hygiene were emphasized, along with service for others and Christian fellowship. She is now happily married to a Christian minister and is living a life of joy and service among her people. Many others, as brands plucked from the burning, are having the same experience in Christian homes and boarding schools throughout the Congo.

PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES

One sees very few deformed children in Africa, which leads to the belief that they are purposely done away with as infants, or are intentionally neglected so that they will die. A crippled girl who did survive her unfortunate childhood lived near us. There were only two baptized young women in her village and she was one of them. We longed for a Christian marriage for her, but she could carry no water from the far-distant spring, neither could she hoe the fields, hence she was not wanted in a legiti-

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mate marriage. Advantage was taken of her helplessness, and it was too difficult for even this Christian girl to withstand the temptations that beset her. We heard the news of her fall and went into her dark hut to see the wee baby. She held him up with real pride and very little conception of her own wrong and said, "I want my baby to grow up to be a real Christian." How thankful we are that we are not her judges, but that the just Judge of all the earth can purify her and her babe in His cleansing blood and that eternity will reveal upon whom the real blame rests. Another sweet young Christian girl of my acquaintance, too tall to be desired in marriage, suffered the same sad fate.

Albino children in the Congo are sad spectacles, for the pigment in their skin is lacking. The tropic sun blisters their bodies, leaving terrible sores, and the noon glare so affects their eyes that they can see with difficulty. Some tribes look upon them as white witches and send them to be understudies of the witch doctors; other tribes do not permit them to marry, hence they fall into temptation; some have asked the white man for medicine to make the albino black while others have sought to marry their "white girls" to the white men, thinking they were of the same stock.

"I tell you she is a witch and her presence will bring the wrath of the whole village down upon us and endanger the lives of our children," screamed an old man in the village council. Other members nodded in vehement assent. The cause of their terror was a tiny child, three or four years of age, who had been blind from birth. The

mother had died and the father had deserted her. Since abnormal children are filled with evil spirits, and, if allowed to live, will bring terrible calamity upon them all, the whole village was in an uproar. Hence the council gathering, and their decision to place the child in a deserted forest hut and leave her there, hoping that the leopards or jackals would finish their work. A missionary, returning home on a dark and stormy night, saw by a flash of lightning, a tiny form under the trees. The old leaf hut had been blown down and the child was without shelter and protection. He took her where she could find the loving care that her starved soul and blinded body had missed during her babyhood.⁴ I thought as a child that Africa was called "The Dark Continent" because the skin of her people was black. I know now that it is rightly named because of the centuries of ignorance and superstition which have so blinded the minds and hearts of these people that many of them, like the fish blinded by dark cave waters, do not care to see. When the first white man entered this country, the natives thought he acquired his color by much washing. Only the birth of a white baby could convince them of their error. It will take much washing by the Holy Spirit of God and a spiritual re-birth to change the color of their hearts and the nature of their habits.

African Babies, Cross Bearers

AFRICAN BABYHOOD

Short babies, tall babies,
Smile babies, bawl babies,

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Thin babies, round babies,
 Black babies, brown babies,
 Babies to right of us,
 Babies to left of us,
 Babies in front of us
 Crowing and crying—
 at the "Better Bantu Baby Clinics" in Central Africa.

Dainty pink frills and blue ribbons? No, indeed! Only sunshine suits sent by the kind Father as a warm covering for tender black skins and a woolly black cap that nature herself provided to cover wee heads, make up their infant trousseau. Yet African babyhood is just like all other babyhood when it comes to sweet baby smiles, tottering baby feet, hungry little mouths, eager little hands reaching for their bottles, and sleepy little heads nodding for the sandman. How many little mouths have cried to be fed only to be stuffed full of improperly cooked food? How many tiny wabby feet have crawled over rough, earthen clods in the heat of the sun to reach their mothers on the other side of the garden? How many little woolly heads have fallen asleep on dirty mats in a poorly ventilated hut? How many naked, shivering bodies have been carried into the raw damp of early morning? With no mosquito nets and no precaution, every child is bitten by infected mosquitoes, and this exposure frequently results in malarial convulsions or pneumonia, which cause the little life to flicker out like a candle.⁵

One tiny life after another had come and gone within the dark interior of his humble hut—wee lights that flick-

ered and burned feebly for a few short hours and then went out, leaving the darkness more intense than ever. The girl mother would sit with empty arms, motionless and silent. No wail of heathen anguish escaped her suffering lips, only low moans, while the father stood stolidly, with folded hands keeping guard outside her door. Soon another hope and another nameless dread! Another miracle in the shadows; another wee cry to break the silence! This time the light seemed stronger and for several years it chased away the gloom. I saw the father playing with this child upon his knee, a lovelight in his eyes, a tenderness in his voice that I had never seen before in one so primitive. He took the little one in his arms, singing strange lullabys and clasped him to his breast. A warmth came into my own heart and a new insight into the love depth of this kindly race. A tremor shook the frame of the little body in the father's arms. One convulsion after another followed. The same old story of empty arms and silence in the stricken home. Again the young wife sat motionless; again the father stood by the door step, not in a clean shirt, as formerly, but this time in soiled rags. When we asked him where his good clothes were, he replied: "Mama, I buried everything I had in that little grave."

Nineteen hundred years ago the world buried everything it had in a grave and out of this grave came the Light and Life of the universe. Out of the buried hopes of an African father's and mother's hearts, may there arise the Eternal Hope that will light up forever the gloom that

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now penetrates into innumerable childless huts of this sad land.

INFANT MORTALITY DUE TO HEATHEN CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS

Upon tiny bodies falls all too soon that sinister shadow of the Cross of sickness, suffering, and death. One can not get accurate statistics of infant mortality, as they vary in different districts. Figures range from 50-75%, but even at the lowest estimate there is an appalling death rate due to heathen customs and superstitions. We will let "Kaku," an old Congo grandmother explain why, in her own words:

"I am Kaku, the grandmother. About the raising of babies, no one can tell me anything. Have I not had twelve babies of my own and raised five of them? White women do not love their babies for they let them cry. We hold ours in our arms from the day of birth until they can walk. This proves that we love ours more. Don't you see my gray hair, wrinkled face, and stooped form? I have been taking care of babies since I carried my younger brothers and sisters on my hips and I have a great reputation for doctoring them. When their blood becomes watery, I know that the only thing to do is to draw off cups of this watery blood. When a child has spasms, I tie a string of peanuts around its neck. I do not believe in medicines in bottles. I know the plants that grow in the jungle and the chants that make the herbs effective. My father paid an old woman five goats to teach me these

things and I will teach them to my grandchildren. I never miss a funeral and I have joined my cracked voice in the death wail for hundreds of babies. That is why I know so much about them. When a child is born, I roll its body in ashes taken from the sacred fire that never goes out in the village, and in dirt that has been taken from the grave of the child's nearest woman relative. Ashes from this fire will satisfy the demons and the dirt will keep the child's dead relatives from coming to claim him. There is no use to put clothing on a baby, for cloth costs money and why should we spend money on a child until we are sure it is going to live? Just think how much cloth it would have taken had we clothed all of those babies whom I have buried! Nobody but a foolish foreigner would think of raising a baby without charms around its neck, wrists, and ankles, and charms on the mother, grandmother, brothers and sisters and all who nurse the baby. I saw one of those young girls at the mission and her three fat children, all without a single charm. It is an outrage that these young people no longer respect the wisdom of my gray hairs.

"Do tell me how a child is going to get strong enough to walk if it has only milk? When mothers raised at the mission return from the fields to nurse their babies, they are simply using this as an excuse for their laziness. When my babies were three weeks old, I worked in the fields all day and fed my baby on stiff cornmeal mush that I cooked the night before in an old gourd which the dog had licked clean from the last feeding. We tied a string

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loosely around its little stomach, poked the food down its throat with our fingers, and when the string became tight we knew he had enough. If he became sick I fed him on peanuts that I had chewed up myself. Didn't five of my twelve grow up? It was because I daubed the soft spot over their heads thickly with mud, so that they would be protected from sun and danger. When I weaned them, I always killed and cooked a frog and gave them to eat. One of my neighbors did not clean the frog and almost killed her baby in this way, but I knew better than she how to fix them. If a mother continually loses her babies, then the mother-in-law is to blame and only the medicine man can save the next baby from harm, by making a sacred mat with charms on each corner on which the new baby must sit until he is weaned. One child died while sitting on the mat, but it must have been that the medicines tied to each corner had lost their strength.

"How can that nurse at the hospital feed and care for babies? She has never had a baby of her own and yet the babies who are taken there walk sooner and seem healthier than the babies I have raised. What kind of a charm do they have to raise babies by? If I could learn how to mix it and learn the songs they sing about this 'Jesus' who must be a great Medicine Man, I could make a lot of money selling it to the other women in the village."⁶

INFANT MORTALITY DUE TO THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE MOTHER

So great is the mortality of the first-born that there is a Congo proverb to the effect that the first baby is a loan

from the great God and must be given back to Him at once. This is due to the fact that many African girls become mothers between fourteen and sixteen years of age. They have had no prenatal care and these little ones are born under the most primitive and unhygienic conditions. Many premature births are caused by the mother's carrying heavy burdens for long distances and having long hours of ceaseless drudgery during the time of expectancy. After her child is born she waits only a few days to begin her labors again. She has no delicacies to give her strength or to whet her appetite. She continues to nurse her children at any time during the day or night for a period of three or four years, more as a panacea for all wails than anything else. I have seen two children of the same mother, of different ages, nursing her at the same time. This saps all of her strength for the bearing of the next child. The mothers are horrified at the thought of milking a goat to obtain nourishment, or feeding the baby on a soft egg, and yet they think nothing of giving it fried ants or locusts. Is it any wonder then that measles, whooping cough, and all children's diseases demand a heavy toll of innocent little lives?

BABY WELFARE WORK⁷

Since everybody loves a baby and working with babies brings such satisfying results and is the greatest door into the heart of the parents, much is being done in baby welfare work, baby clinics, and kindergarten classes by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries and by the govern-

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ment. Mothers are given prenatal care; native women are being trained for maternity work; healthy babies are given prophylactic care; and sick babies are treated. Mothers are trained in how to care for their little ones properly. There are sewing classes where simple garments are made, and demonstration classes where babies are washed and clothed and fed. Miniature cakes of soap are given to mothers making the greatest progress in these essential arts. Sometimes the cake is eaten for candy instead of used for its original purpose. There are very few women nurses in the Congo, due to the economic stress of the mother, for every woman in the Congo, unless she is abnormal or living in sin or has lost her husband, is a married woman, and due to the pressure of home duties she has little time for vocational work. Some hospitals, however, are training the wives of the native nurses and of the evangelists to go out into the districts with their husbands to give elementary instruction to prospective mothers and simple demonstrations in feeding, clothing, and bathing the baby. Formerly the mother held her baby by one arm in mid-air while she dashed cold water into his eyes and ears and then blew into them to get the water out. While he was still howling and shivering, she splashed more cold water over his dusty body, every big water drop causing the black to shine through in a startling polka dot design. On "Commencement Day" in the baby clinics when the babies are ready to "graduate" into the regular hospital service, each of the babies whose mother has brought him regularly, if possible, receives

a plain little white garment. This must be of heavy cloth, so that the black mother can take it to the spring and pound it upon the rocks to get it clean. By this time she has learned to give him a proper bath. She then anoints him with oil until his soft skin is like velvet. Now this little wonder garment is slipped over his head and he is ready to be cuddled, this bonny black baby from Bantu land.

The new missionary longed for something to do that would not require the strenuous gymnastics of a tongue-twisting new language. From each mother's meeting, after vainly striving for new words to express her feelings, she would return home with dizzy brain and lagging step. After one of these discouraging experiences she found on her door step an answer to the unspoken longing of her heart. Was it possible that this bundle of bones was still breathing? And yet the father was holding it in his arms as gently as a nursing mother would her babe. A little note from the hospital accompanied the father and the starving child. "Please feed this baby," it said, simply. Soon a few drops of warm milk were placed on the little red tongue. A low, gurgling sound was heard, the sweet music of a babe's contented cry, and the wee head sank on the father's shoulders. The mother was insane from sleeping sickness and in a wild frenzy had tried to kill her own little one. While the mother was receiving treatment at the hospital, the child was getting milk at the missionary's home, and the father, so faithful himself, was learning the faithfulness of the Father God. In a few weeks

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dimples began to appear; the wild wails ceased; the dusky skin became shiny and soft and the eyes bright. Little arms began to stretch out to white friends and the little black baby became dear to the whole household. The day came when the mother recognized and received her child. Her health had returned. The baby, too, was fat and well. The three came to say goodbye as they turned their happy faces towards their distant home. Again the missionary had no words, in their language, to express her joy and gratitude, but this time it was not necessary. The ministry to one of the least of these had been done as unto Him and no words were necessary to see the result.

ORPHAN HOMES AND KINDERGARTENS

In times past orphan babies were destroyed or buried with their dead mothers. Now they are frequently brought to the missions for adoption. The best results with them are not obtained by taking them out of their natural environment and bringing them up in a mission home among whites. They are sometimes kept by childless Christian native women and raised by them in the village, thus insuring a natural African home life. Homeless babies are at times raised by girls in a Christian boarding school, with careful supervision. So many girls have charge of each baby and take turns in bathing him, sewing for him, cooking for him and feeding him. This has proved a practical and effective way of training both the child and the girls at the same time.

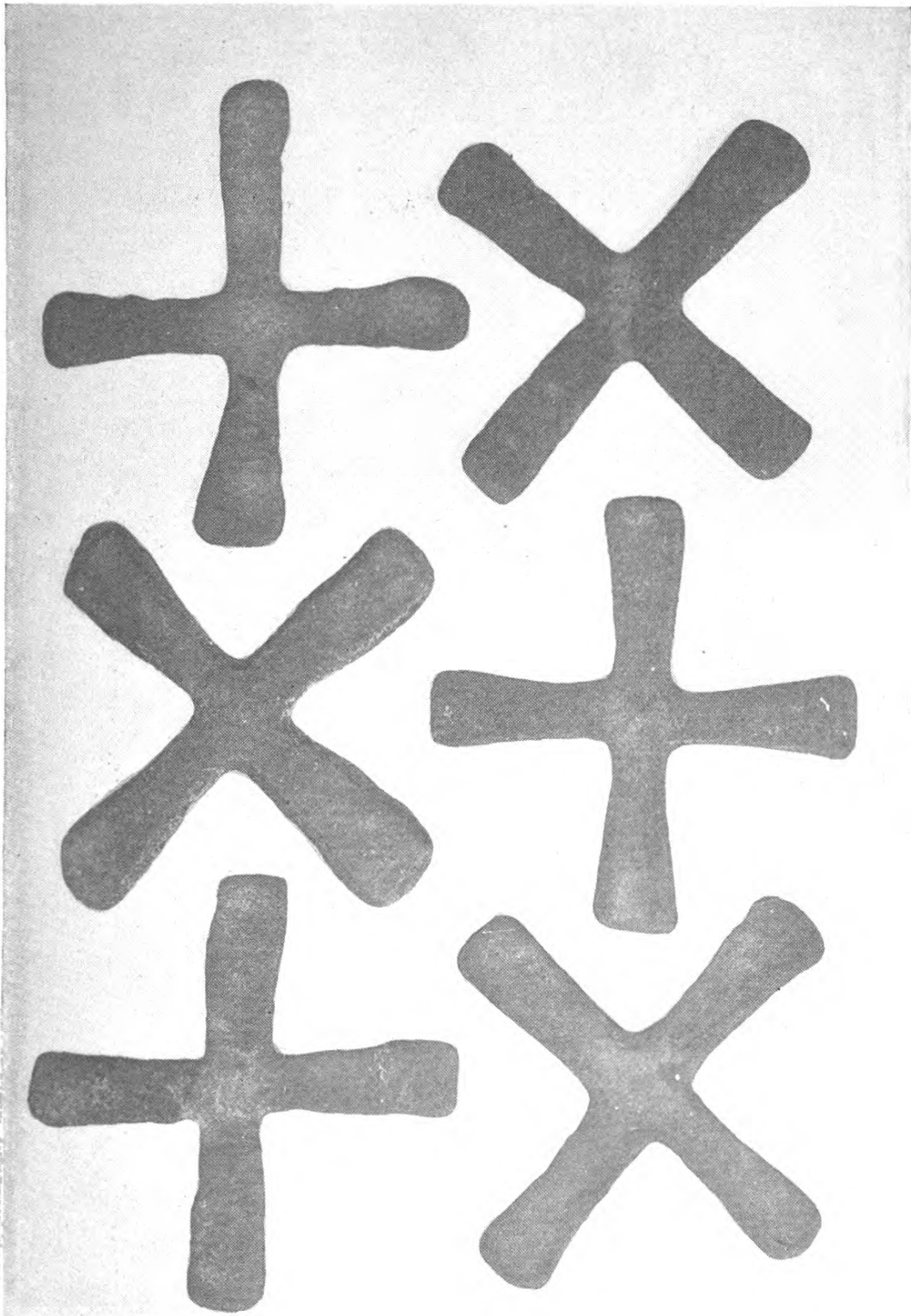
The young King Leopold of Belgium, then the Crown

Prince, made the following statement before the Belgian Senate in July, 1933: "The native is the basis of the wealth of any colony. The improvement of his moral and material conditions of living is the very first task we must carry out in Africa."

NOT COLOR, BUT CHARACTER

These are the babies of today but the women of tomorrow. Were we not babies, too, only yesterday it seems, and did we not play with our hands and react in our minds in much the same way that these children of Africa do, these children whose mothers also have hearts beating in their breasts and the same emotions controlling their actions? Since the days when Ham, the father of the black race, and Japheth, the father of the Gentile race, were brothers, have we not been kin? It is not the color of the face that makes the difference between us. God gave to them a black skin to protect them from the sun while ours gets blistered under the same heat. He makes one egg white and another a rich brown. It is the inside that counts! It is their knowledge or lack of knowledge of a Savior from sin that marks the distinction. Those without Christ act as do those without Him at home. Those who do know Him are often as real saints, filled with faith and good works, as the most godly Christian in the homeland. The difference is not of race nor of color, but of *character*.

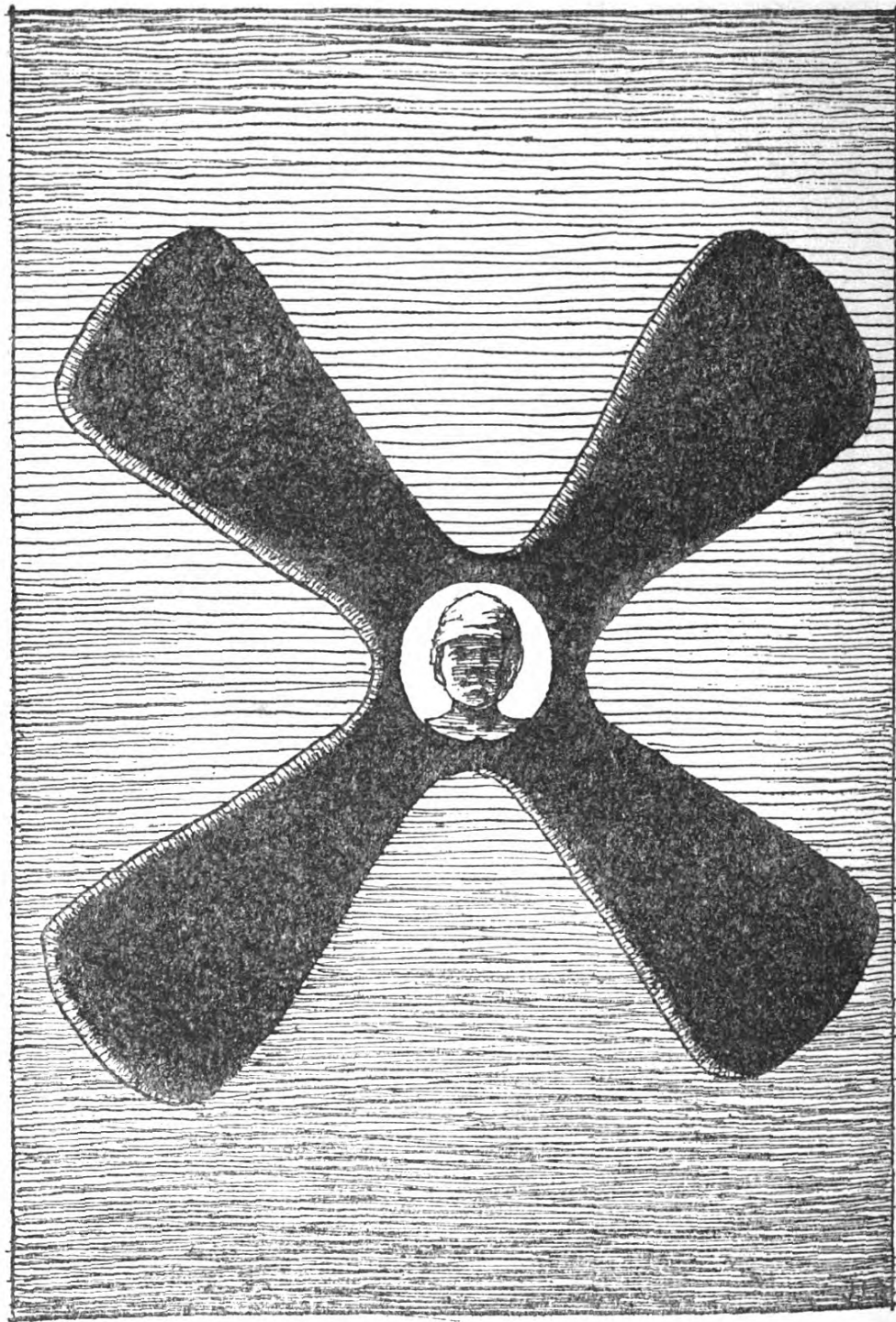
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Courtesy of Rev. J. H. Longenecker, Congo Belge
COPPER CROSSES USED FOR MARRIAGE DOWRY
(see page 124)



Courtesy of the Rev. William Burton, Congo Belge
THE BRIDE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE BUBBLING WATERS
(see page 136)



No wife is she, but slave, for naught debars
Her being sold for fifty copper bars.

H. Wilson, Congo Belge.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CROSS WITHIN THE HEART

The Copper Cross a Symbol of Marriage

COPPER CROSSES

WITHIN a trunk of valued curios from Africa, containing weird masks, peaked hats, beaded belts, ivory ornaments, woven mats and bright cloth, there is a tiny copper cross, green and moldy with age, of more historic value than all of the other contents put together. It was recently found buried in the grave of a person of rare importance, judging from the valued possessions buried with him, at least two hundred and fifty years ago. None of my contemporaries had seen a cross so small. Only in the memory of the oldest living inhabitants were they in use for the marriage dowry. Those

still in vogue today are very large and very heavy, but similarly shaped, as illustrated on a previous page, and used for the same purpose of securing a wife. I remember, while far from home, in the hill country of another region, meeting a man carrying in a basket on his arm eight or ten of these heavy symbols of marriage. We tried to barter with him for the possession of one, but he, evidently, had the exact number for the wife he desired and no offer was as attractive as the bride he had in mind. I have not been able to ascertain the origin of so strange a custom as securing a life partner with crosses. It is natural that copper, which is so plentiful in the Congo region, and which the natives learned early to value, should be used as a medium of exchange, but was it only chance that caused them to smelt the ore in so sacred a design? I can not think so. Over four hundred years ago Portuguese Catholics claimed the west coast, at the mouth of the Congo river, for Christ. On a great rock overhanging the bank the first white man to enter carved a crude cross, similar in shape to the ones in question. Crucifixes have been unearthed in ancient villages. They were later used as fetishes to bring good luck in the hunt or on the chase. Who knows but what they might have been thought of as bringing "Good Luck" in the marital relations as well? At any rate, we shall take the cross, as they, too, have done, as a symbol of marriage. Strange that where sin abides unchecked, the most sacred things of life have always become the most degraded. The day that a young girl enters the marriage relationship should be the most

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holy and ever-to-be-remembered of her life. This is often the opposite in Africa. Instead of a crown of orange blossoms in her hair, the maiden has a cross to bear upon her heart.

The story is told of an old Congo chief, who, after his memory began to fail, became an earnest Christian. Upon hearing the beautiful story of Christ's love for him, he asked that the symbol of the cross might be cauterized upon his right hand. His people wondered at so strange a request until he explained that with the cross ever present on his body, he could never forget what the Savior had done for him. Another cross is seared upon the hearts of Congo women and they can never forget the awful scars until the knowledge of the Cross of Christ and His shed blood washes them entirely away.

CHILD MARRIAGE

Only Christ said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." The Christian religion is the only one in the world that honors and cares for little children. Without the love of Christ in the heart, even parents consider their children as property to be used in the payment of debts and the acquirement of wealth. Hence child marriage is universal in pagan lands. So it is in the Congo. Thousands of little lives are subjected to men's most primitive passions without a voice raised in their behalf. Thousands of others are being rescued by Christian men and women in the name of Him who took the little ones in His arms and blessed

and made of all such His Kingdom. Such a case was Kahinga, a winsome child of twelve years, who came running to a missionary friend, weeping bitterly. In her distress she sobbed out: "I am being married to an old man. This is the sixth time that I have been sold. My parents sold me when I was seven in payment of a debt of six dollars, to a man who already had four wives. I fell sick," she continued, "and was resold for a smaller sum. Since I became well I have been sold three times. Now I am going to be sent far away and I don't know what to do. I heard that the mission took care of little girls and so I have come to you."¹ Thank God for Christian missions in Africa which do take care of little girls and to whom Kahinga could go in her distressing need.

A consecrated young American missionary, in charge of a Christian home for girls in the Congo, writes: "One wee girlie came to me, her big, dark eyes filled with fright as she looked into my face. She wore a string around her waist which held in place a cloth about the width of one's hand. Her body was so thin that her ribs could be counted and her skin was unwashed and diseased. With her were three other people, her old father, an aged woman, and a very young man. The latter was the child's betrothed husband, to whom she had been sold by the father in infancy. He had already paid dowry sufficient to make her his legal wife. He was a young theological student, soon to become an evangelist. Because of overwhelming temptations to unmarried youth far removed from Christian influences, it has seemed wise for most missions to make the rule that

all evangelists must be married before beginning active mission work in heathen villages. Hence this young man had to be married before he could be employed by the mission. He realized that this girl was too young but the father had used her marriage dowry to secure another wife for himself, the same woman who now accompanied



them, so he could not refund the dowry and the boy had no other with which to get a suitable companion. This was the "palaver" which they asked the mission to solve for the four of them. The child was redeemed; the young man was given this money to obtain a Christian wife. The father left his child in the Girl's Home to be educated and trained and promised to repay the debt with her dowry when she became of marriageable age. From a distance the other girls in the school saw the little girl coming to

join them. The children dropped their work and ran, calling, "A new child, a new child," until fifty little black girls had proclaimed the glad news. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," the word had come. How little did they fully realize that "*a new child*" indeed had come.²

It is only the power of Christian missions that can make such a solution possible. So strong is tribal custom that, though many individuals within the family clan may oppose wrong treatment of those whom they love, they have little to say about the matter. Especially is this true of the mothers of the little girls in question. Though they do all the work in the home, till the soil, plant the crops, harvest the grain, grind the flour, bring in the wood and split it, make the fire, cook the meals, bear the children and nourish them, still they have nothing to say about the destiny of that child for whom they have passed through the shadow of death. Upon examining a woman for church membership, deep scars were noticed around her wrists. Her husband was dead and his heathen brother wished to take her beloved little girl and sell her in marriage in order to receive the dowry at once. When she protested they took a rope and tied it around her two wrists, threw it over a limb of the tree and pulled her up until her feet were free from the ground. Then she was lashed until she became unconscious. As soon as she regained consciousness she was made to walk to the village and tell the other women what would happen to them if they tried to meddle with the affairs of men.³

As we watch a group of happy, sweet-faced Christian

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girls, dressed in clean blue uniforms, marching into the school chapel with books under their arms, or see them as they quietly enter the morning church service in their snow white dresses, made of plain, heavy cloth, it is difficult for us to imagine the fate from which each has been saved. Let those who oppose Christian missions visit the homes of thousands of "Kahingas" and see for themselves the contrast between them and the Christian homes and schools that are seeking to save future African womanhood for Christ.

SLAVE MARRIAGE⁴

Slave marriage starts with a debt, perhaps of a goat or two chickens. If the debtor fails to pay, the creditor, in the presence of the village chiefs, demands an immediate payment of the debt or a slave wife in its place. The debtor then gives to the creditor his sister, or niece, or distant cousin. The girl has nothing to say about the matter, but often she will take her own life before entering such slavery. She has no husband but is rented by her owner to make gain for himself. There is little escape for a woman in slave marriage. Even her family cannot buy her back, if her owners refuse.

Mikobi, the son of Kueta, was young and still sowing his wild oats. Found guilty of estranging the affections of the chief's wife, he was fined ten goats. Rather than use his own money, he promised to pay over to be a slave wife the first girl baby born to his family. A few months later a little girl was born to his sister, by name, Mboshi. When

she was twelve years of age, the man who had advanced the money for Mikobi's debt came and demanded his slave wife. Mboshi had never been told *that she had been sold before birth to be a slave wife*. She wept and protested, but she was taken by her own uncle, Mikobi, to her future owner's house and tied there with her hands to the ceiling and her toes just touching the earth until she promised to be obedient. For fifteen years she was a source of income to her owner, but her life was shortened by the life she lived. When she died, *before she could be buried, her successor had to be appointed*. Slave marriage does not stop with death. It is a *perpetual marriage*, for as soon as one slave dies another from the same family group must take her place, preferably another young girl. If there is no girl at the time they must promise the first girl born, just as in the case of Mboshi. This goes on for generations, *long after the original debt is forgotten*, girl after girl being swallowed up in this whirlpool of iniquity. Mboshi had a younger sister who was named to take her place. She followed in her sad sister's footsteps until the disease of leprosy made of her an outcast from her lovers. Then it was that she found refuge in a mission leper asylum where her body was treated, and her soul was saved from the leprosy of sin.

Let us listen to a noble pioneer missionary who has a right to speak with authority on the subject; "I have told the chiefs of more than two hundred villages; I have told three kings and all the heirs to the throne, that as long as the Lord permits me to live I will fight two customs of

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this country; namely, the poison cup and *slave marriage*. I have seen as many as twenty women freed from this hell. I have forced the king himself to release one of them before a crowd of not less than three hundred witnesses in the public square of the capitol. That one case took me two years and I spent not less than five hundred francs worth of gasoline traveling back and forth, tormenting the king until he did free her. She lives now on our station and is married to one of our Christian school teachers and has two beautiful children. I pray that God will let me see many more scores like her not only saved from their present life, but saved for the life to come." Other men and women of God are fighting the same evil, against great odds. It is a task that challenges the best of Christian courage, faith, and perseverance.

REPLACEMENT OR PERPETUAL MARRIAGE

Like the slave marriage, the replacement marriage is a perpetual one. In some sections a man will pay a larger dowry for his wife, with the stipulation that she be "replaced" in case of death or the dowry returned. This insured him a "perpetual wife" until the day of his own death. If his wife dies, he argues that the tribe from which she came gave him a feeble woman or had cast a spell upon her. I was told recently of the case of an old man whose wife had lived with him faithfully for twenty years and borne him many children. She had slaved and made a comfortable home for him and yet at her death he demanded the original dowry from her family. They had

long ago used the money, perhaps in buying a wife for a son in the family, so a young girl had to be given him instead. After all, they reason, what is a little girl? Such a custom leads to murder in secret, for a man, tired of his wife, and realizing that he can get another, will poison her or so illtreat her in her weakness, that she will die. There are too many deaths among this sad race to arouse suspicion, so a little maid of six or seven is sometimes delivered into the hands of a murderer. Two hundred and eighty marriages of this kind were found a year or two ago in the villages surrounding a large State Post.

TRIAL OR COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

America is not the only country where there are advocates of companionate marriage. In Africa, marriages are rarely consummated until after the man and woman have been living together. When one seeks to teach against this evil, he is confronted with the question, "Would you buy a gun before looking into the lock to see if it would shoot? It would be bad bargaining!" Among some tribes, marriage is definitely arranged, but no dowry is paid until one or two children are born. Then the woman is considered a "good bargain," is paid for, and goes to live permanently in her husband's home. If there is no child, then she is not wanted and is sent "on trial" to another prospective buyer. This type of marriage might be called "Marriage Insurance," since the husband takes care to protect himself against a childless marriage. We might

also think of it as a "C.O.D." purchase, for until the baby arrives, the dowry is not paid. Those who know the sacredness of Christian home life can hardly comprehend the low standards involved in the formation of such a "trial home" in Central Africa.

PLANTATION MARRIAGE

Among the Bakete tribe, especially, there is a strange marriage custom which might rightly be called a "Plantation Marriage." A young man with no home goes to live in a home which has a daughter. She may be as young as two years of age. He gives the mother a small payment, stating that he wishes to marry the child. He lives and eats in this home, bringing the mother, from time to time, palm wine or the spoils from the hunt to aid in her house-keeping. When the dry season comes, he clears the field for her planting at the first rain. This plantation, when once cleared, belongs to the mother or the girl and never reverts to the man, even though the marriage agreement between them may later be broken. This leads to the practice of the "Plantation Marriage," for a mother will send her daughter into a marriage merely for the purpose of having a field cleared. The young man, fooled by the eagerness of the girl and the mother, enters into the marriage and clears the forests, only to find that after several months of hard work, his wife is taken away. He can do nothing about it, for the tribal law, that the field belongs to the woman, cannot be broken.

POLYGAMY OR OLD AGE INSURANCE

The subject of polygamy has already been mentioned, but since the practice is so universal and forms the warp and woof of the entire social fabric, it is wise to call attention to it again in this chapter. A monogamous man of power and influence is rare. It is easier for a "camel to go through the eye of a needle" than for an African rich man to give up his many wives. His people will not permit it, for, to them, he would lose his power and prestige, and besides, when white officials come to visit the kingdom, who would cook food for them? When Christians speak to them of this evil practice, they argue: "If I give up my wives, what old age insurance will I have? What safer investment can I make? If I save my money or hide it, the white ants will eat it up or someone will steal it. (There are no banks in rural sections.) If I buy a sewing machine or a bicycle, they will wear out before I die. But if I invest my money in women, they will wait upon me and take care of me in my old age." Many a woman prefers being the wife of a polygamist to being the only wife, for there is a division of labor in a big harem and she does not have as much individual responsibility for home making. When their overlord dies, the wives are often inherited by his sons or divided among his relatives. One woman is known to have outlived seven husbands in this way. One is reminded of the Sadducaic parable of the Resurrection. The African woman surely must be glad that there is no giving of marriage in Heaven.

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ROYAL MARRIAGE

Every year is "Leap Year" in a Congo royal household. It has long been the custom of the women of the royal family to pick their husbands for themselves. Though the chosen one may be already a married man, that is of minor importance, if a royal maiden admires his strength and prowess. The basis of choice is not royal lineage but physical strength, that the royal offspring may be strong in body. Brawn, not brain, is first to be desired by them. A man must come, on pain of death, when the princess calls. If he be married, his wife is left in loneliness and suspense until a contrary whim from the palace returns him to his legal companion. He must remain true to this royal woman as long as he is retained by her. There is no regular marriage of the two and she returns him at will, often making him go to call his successor. In one royal household a young Christian princess had the courage to break this age-old custom of her ancestors. She demanded that she be legally married to one man and that a dowry be paid for her like any other woman in her kingdom. She lived with this husband until his death. Because of her loyalty to Christ, a lovely mission station has been named for her. So great was her authority that she had the power to remove from the reigning king the anklet which served in place of crown and sceptre. During a fearful scourge of dysentery which invaded the royal household, Bulape went to the king, removed his anklet and sent it, by a royal messenger, to a missionary who had rendered unselfish service for long years in the kingdom. In so doing,

she conveyed to him the authority of the kingdom, making him a dictator for this time of emergency. This assured absolute obedience to him from every subject, as he waged war and conducted a successful sanitary campaign against the disease. This wise exercise of her absolute authority meant the saving of multitudes of lives in the kingdom. Incidentally, it shows that a wise princess, even in Africa, may have good judgment in other matters besides the choice of a husband, and also that the work of Christian missions is wide in scope and deep in intensity.

SPIRIT MARRIAGE

Would you like to be married to someone who does not exist? To be married to *nothing*? Some twenty miles from a lovely Christian center in the heart of the tropical forests is a spring of boiling hot water bubbling out of the ground. Deposits of sulphur all along the edge of the boiling stream prove its volcanic origin. When natives see any natural phenomenon they believe it must be the work of the spirits. Hundreds of fights have been waged between great chiefs hoping to own the great spirit which inhabits this famous spring and which is supposed to bring health and blessing to those who bathe in its waters. They bring presents to him of food, cloth, and arrows. One, hoping perhaps for special favors, gave to the spirit of the bubbling spring—a *wife*! A young woman was dressed in beautiful beads and cloth and taken to live with the spirit. Many girls envied her the privilege of being the wife of the mighty spirit of the bubbling spring, of

the boiling waters. A hut was built for her and food taken to her each day. No mere man would dare marry the wife of a great spirit, so she sits in loneliness and rarely ever speaks. What must be her thoughts as she listens to the waters, to the dancing, singing waters? What must be the thought of many like her, in this land of spirits, who have dedicated their lives to the powers of darkness? May the Great Spirit Himself, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, take possession of such, that they may be married to Him, in truth.

DIVORCE

There are not many girls in this land as old as eighteen years who have not already been divorced. When missionaries first entered the region of the upper Kasai waters, they found that a girl could not continue to live year after year with the same husband and be accepted in the highest social circles. Surely there was something wrong with her or the other men in the village would be wanting her, so she was ostracized by the other women. They would not beat meal with her, nor go fishing with her. Should she bathe in the stream, they would bathe higher up in purer waters, an insult to native minds. She became a social outcast. Her only remedy was to leave her present husband, marry another, and she would be received, at once, into the inner sanctum. A group of Christian girls brought these troubles to their missionary friends who advised them, in this extreme emergency, to form their own "clique" and to ostracize the other women. Only



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those who lived with one husband could join this Christian "society" which they were forming. New pestles and mortars were given these girls and placed in a shady spot. A divorced woman was not allowed to beat her meal in them. This created such a stir that the divorced women came to the mission to see what it was all about, thus giving the very opportunity desired for constructive teaching on the subject.

THE DOWRY SYSTEM, OR "THE BRIDE PRICE"

The payment of dowry is the basis of Congo marriage. Much has been said pro and con on the subject and still the debate has not been settled. It is a system not exclusively African, but is prevalent in highly organized European countries subject to many variations. There are variations in Africa, as well. "The Bride Price" is a more acceptable name, to many, for the sum given in legal marriage for the bride. It varies from two hundred Belgian francs to two thousand, payment being made at par value, in goats, copper crosses, cowry shells, cloth, brass anklets, bracelets, beads, farming implements and franks, according to the community and to the worth of the girl. Her education, beauty, strength, age, and disposition to work are all considered in her price.

Even the lowest price is hard to obtain. When one considers that twenty-five centimes (one fourth of a franc) is the average salary that one church member is able to pay the village teacher a month, to get together several hundred francs or several thousand is an almost insur-

mountable obstacle to legal marriage. Even when it is paid in full at the beginning, constant installments have to be added at the birth of each child and to appease the "in-laws" for any slight which may have been imagined. Otherwise, the irate parents will persuade the girl to return and enter another marriage. The young husband is constantly dunned for gifts and he is "fined" for any slight accidents that may befall any of his children at any time. This "bleeding" continues indefinitely. It is naturally impossible for the young man to pay all of this himself. He is therefore under constant obligation to his uncle or his older brother who have helped with the dowry and he, in turn, must help other members of the family with theirs. In many cases the bride price is a "revolving fund," in the hands of far-sighted families. They receive the price for their daughter, only to hand it to their son to obtain a wife for him. It would solve many evils of the prevailing system if the government could fix upon the maximum sum to be asked as dowry in each district, according to the economic status of the people therein; also if it should insist that there be no continued payment of extra "rent" for the legally wedded wife, but that the stated amount should be *final*. At the present stage of their development, the dowry system seems necessary, for it is primitive nature to value only that for which a price has been paid. The "Bride Price," at its best is an earnest on the part of the husband of his good faith towards his wife. The wife is proud of the fact that her

husband has given a good dowry for her, and he will treasure more highly that which has cost him something.

THE AFRICAN WOMAN AS A MOTHER-IN-LAW

The African woman as a mother-in-law comes into her own. As her eight or ten-year-old daughter-in-law comes into the home she wreaks vengeance upon the little girl for all the years of hard labor which she herself has suffered. She now has someone to wait upon her and she takes full advantage of it. There is a strange custom that the mother-in-law must never look into her son-in-law's face. It is very hard to break even Christians of this childish habit. It seems grounded on their belief that a mother and daughter are one, and it gives them "shame" for the mother to behold the husband of her daughter, who is the same as herself. When the wife's mother pays a visit to her daughter, the daughter's husband pays a visit to his relatives for the same length of time. Not long ago a missionary⁵ lost his way in a village and requested a young man to put him on the right path. As they rounded the house, the young man gave a leap and ran at full speed into the tall grass. As the missionary approached, the young man's shoulders were shaking either with fear or laughter. When inquiry was made into his strange antics he replied, with a sheepish grin: "That was my mother-in-law we met and I looked her squarely in the face." This is only one of the many harmless, but senseless customs, that bind the people to a life of slavery to habit which it is the privilege of Christian missions to combat.

The Copper Cross a Symbol of Birth

THE AFRICAN WOMAN AS A MOTHER

More than anywhere else, African superstitions center around the mother and child. To the Congo woman almost everything bears directly upon the little life which she truly loves. She must not only bear the pain of physical birth and the responsibility of rearing her children, but she has to bear, together with her own sorrow, the blame for the illness and death of her offspring. Ngoya was such a case. Her four children grew up about her, and she found joy in life because of them. Two of them became sick and under the ministrations of the witch doctor, they died. He hinted that Ngoya was not all that she claimed to be, or rather that she was more than she should be. When her remaining two children died, no account was taken of the epidemic of dysentery that swept the village. In spite of protestations of innocence she was judged guilty of witchcraft and made to drink the poison cup. She was one to survive, where hundreds have died under similar trials. She now sits before the door of her dilapidated hut, a few twigs burning before her, her wrinkled old face devoid of expression. She is living again the dreams of the past. "One, two, three, four," a Christian friend heard her mumble, "they are all there." He followed the direction of her finger and saw *four little mounds of earth*. It is always in times of sorrow (and there is always sorrow) when the heart is tender, that the missionary has his opportunity. She was patiently

taught of the resurrection hope, but there are thousands of other Ngoyas whose little twig fires furnish their only light.⁶

THE PROSPECTIVE MOTHER

During the months when a mother should be most honored, tenderly cared for, and freed from worry and strain, the African woman is hedged in on every side with an endless array of customs and taboos that are enough to give her nervous prostration or to cause her child to be born with mental disorders. Only a few of these tribal laws are selected, out of the hundreds available, for every locality has built up its own impregnable wall of defense against the workings of the spirits at such a sacred time. Those who read will have ample cause for thanksgiving that one of the by-products of our Christian faith is freedom from such a strain.

A mother must not eat antelope, lest her child have fits and jump like an antelope; she must not eat pork, lest the child have a mouth like a pig; she must not eat fish, for many fish are blind and the child might not see well; sheep meat will cause rickets; and the flesh of any animal caught in a trap will cause tumors on the child's body. In fact, meat of almost any kind seems taboo to the prospective mother needing especial strength and nourishment. In a land where meat is often scarce, one can not help but suspect that the "men folks" are glad for the witch doctors to make these prohibitions, that they may have sufficient for themselves. As soon as a woman knows of her coming

joy, fetishes must be made and the ghosts consulted to ascertain what particular taboos must be followed in her special case. If she should lose her child prematurely, then she will be blamed for being untrue to her husband.

THE HOUR OF TRIAL

Such customs for the waiting mother are unnecessary and harassing, but at least they do not often cause death. Much more heinous and fatal are the terrible customs accruing to childbirth. In this sacred hour, instead of being helped and encouraged, she is hindered and maligned in every conceivable way. She does hard work in the fields until the day of deliverance, and quite often her child is born while she is at work. Many cases are known where she has picked up the child and walked several miles home with it in her arms. Medicine made out of fish bones, the stomach of a chicken, a little blood, and white and red clay is given to the mother to drink. The rubbing of her body with leaves is used to facilitate the mother in her need. She is not given water to drink lest the unborn baby drown. Babies often bleed to death or die from infection because of unhygienic methods used at birth. If the baby does not cry at once a chorus of women sing and hit any noisy instrument that they can find. Friends have been awakened at night by the loud clanging of pots and kettles to frighten the little one enough to bring forth a wee wail. Then the newly-born one is washed with cold dashes of water from either a mud hole or from a bucket in which a salt grass has been soaked. The same polluted

water is used day after day for the same purposes, and is given the baby to drink. The same pottery bowl is used for the bath, for drinking water, for cooking and every emergency.

TWINS⁷

Since customs prevailing at the birth of twins are as numerous as those relating to the mother, a résumé of those pertaining to only one tribe might be more comprehensive than a few selected at random from varied sections. When twins are born among the Bekalebwe people, outsiders may not enter the fence unless bearing a present of equal value, one to each twin, lest the spirit of one be jealous of the other. Many relatives arrive to offer "congratulations," cutting down the fruit trees and corn of the parents to express their joy. Each of these relatives receives gifts from the parents of the twins. Other twins from surrounding villages are sent for and they, too, must be rewarded with gifts. The chief of the village comes in for his share as well. If one twin dies, the other will depart this life in rage, and after death, the two angry spirits will unite and return to wreak vengeance on all, for the spirit was born divided, as two persons instead of one. Therefore they must be kept happy at any cost. They must be fed with the daintiest bits of fowl and porridge. Parents must employ the most expensive "doctors" to keep the babies in health.

Among this particular tribe, twins are cared for and protected, the motive of fear being predominant, but

among many African tribes twins are intentionally murdered or one of them is purposely neglected until it dies. Heathen natives became seriously angry with a young Christian nurse because she diagnosed twins before birth. They insisted that she had "hoodooed" the mother, placing twins within her body. Christian families are the only ones who nourish and cherish twins as a gift from God.

WEANING THE BABY

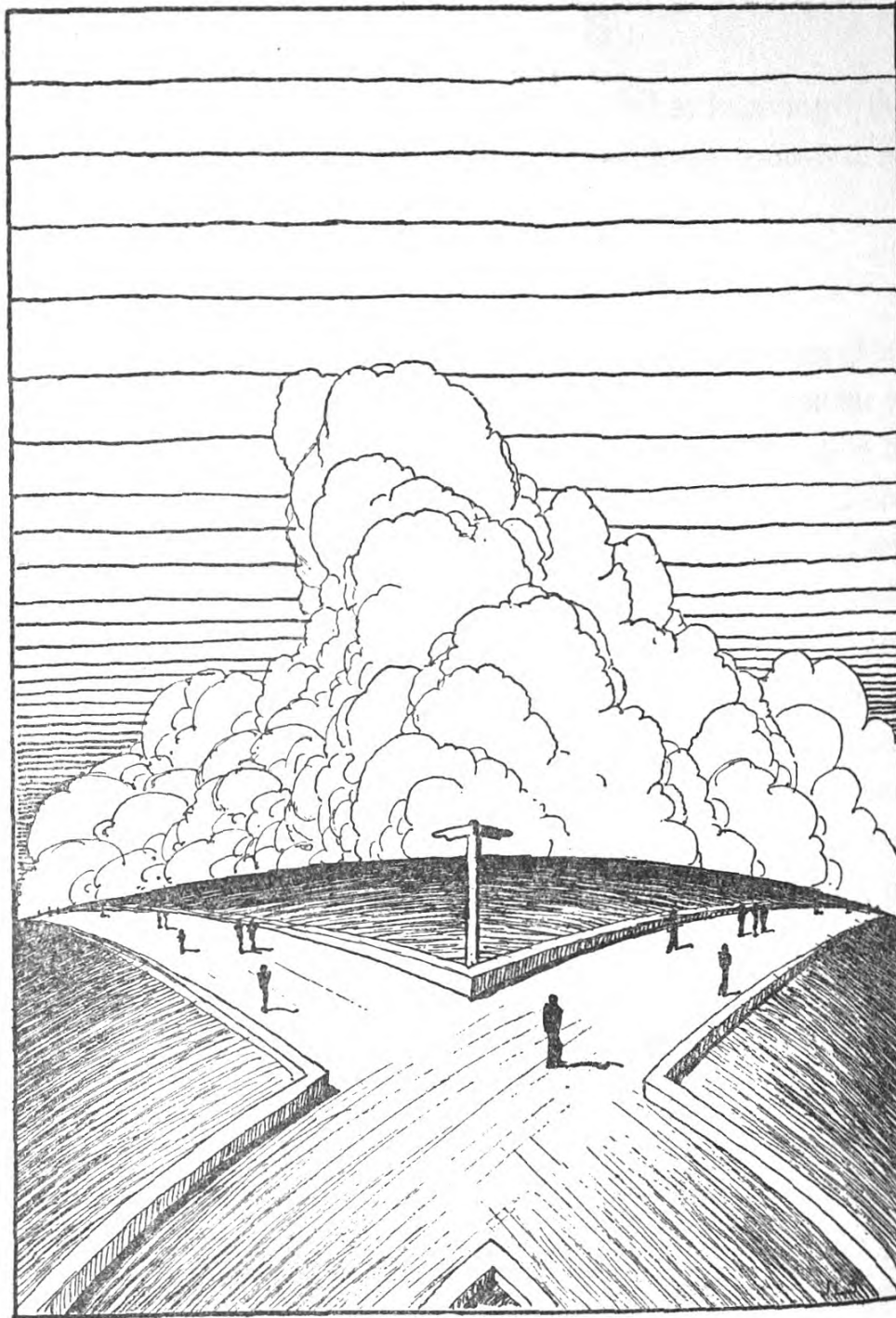
If the child lives long enough to be weaned, there is great rejoicing and special diabolical ceremonies are involved. I beheld one of these ceremonies most unexpectedly. It had been my privilege to hold Sunday afternoon services in a near by village. I rejoiced over the increasing number of women that attended, but on this particular day there were very few. I was both surprised and disappointed. There seemed to be a strange restlessness among the few who did come and in addition to the low rumble of an approaching storm, I heard the weird sound of native drums and gourds beaten together. The sky was rapidly darkening, so I dismissed the group and started homeward. Two small boys whispered: "The women are dancing. We can show you where they are." This was an opportunity not many of my fellow missionaries had had, for the wrinkled old witches of the village do their work in secret and few white people ever catch them at it. As we crept stealthily through the corn fields to the rear of the village, an unearthly sound as of a chorus of night owls all hooting together, steadily in-

creased. I pushed back the ears of grain in time to see twelve or fifteen women, old and bent, their rusty, wrinkled skin painted with whitewash, like old circus clowns. They were leaping in frenzy, in spite of their age, as if demon-possessed. Their leader was dressed like the devil with horns. She must have been inspired by the character she personified, for she, too, was jumping wildly and blowing with puffed cheeks into a native wind-pipe—hence the “hoots” we had been previously hearing, now enhanced by nearer rumbles of thunder. Beneath the blackening sky, they danced and screamed. In their midst stood a young woman with a baby to be weaned in her arms. Her body was caked in red clay and her hair stringy with red palm oil. A loin cloth of coarse string was her only clothing. At her feet were two black pots filled with cassava pudding and chickens cooked entire, claws, bills, head and feathers. This the women were grabbing in huge portions, mixing with polluted dirt and forcing this deadly food down the throat of the poor, innocent child. The women gulped down this repulsive mixture whole, and from time to time placed the rest at the foot of several small spirit trees planted for that purpose. I could remain silent no longer when I saw the little one being fed on death. I came out into the open and pleaded with the mother to save her baby. She only smiled, shook her head and fed him more germs. No wonder our hospital clinics are daily filled with frantic mothers screaming in panic over dying babies in their arms while they themselves are ignorant murderesses of their offspring. Poor African

mothers! This was their expression of thanksgiving to the great spirit for a child who had lived long enough to be weaned!

OUR CALL

Do these customs offend the delicate sensibilities of my readers? I have selected, with care, the least gruesome of the lot. Since my arrival in America, I sought to show to a Christian friend a picture of a poor leprous woman. She covered her face with her hands and drew away exclaiming, "Take it away. I do not even wish to see the picture!" Yet, we, her representatives on the mission field, live among them every day. Does God expect some of His children to carry the crosses of the least of all the earth, upon their hearts each day, and the rest of His own to be freed from the responsibility of even the knowledge of their sorrows? I do not believe that "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Ignorance of American laws does not absolve us from the blame of breaking them. Neither does lack of knowledge of conditions prevailing in mission fields make us any less responsible for the remedying of them. "A call is a need, plus a need that you know, plus a need that you can meet." There is a need; you have learned this need; you can meet it by prayer and faith and sacrifice.



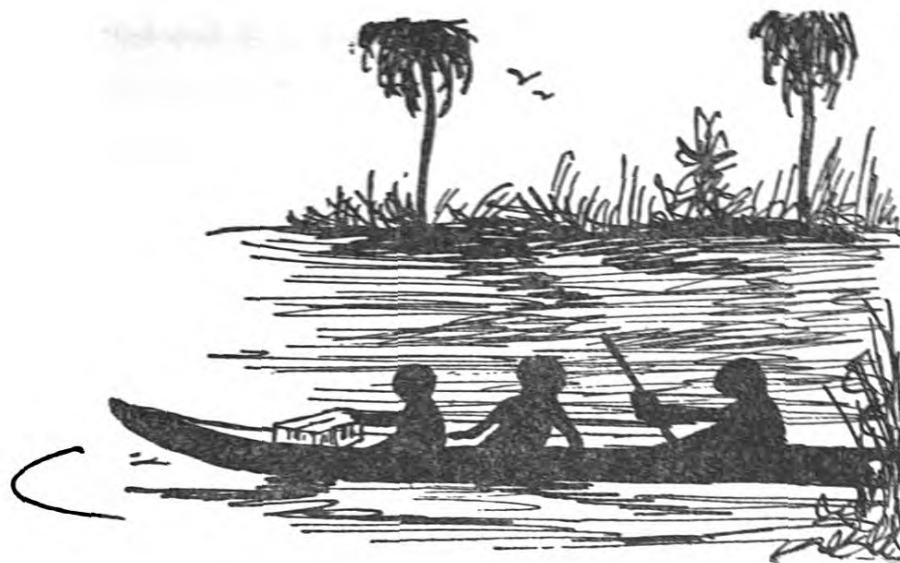
Lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:24.

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

John 14:6.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE CROSS ALONG THE ROAD

Cross Roads

THE Congo woman has traveled a long, long trail. She is different from what she was yesterday, but she is standing at the cross roads of the future and her choice of direction will determine what she will be tomorrow, economically, industrially, educationally, politically, and religiously. In 1934 Dr. John R. Mott held three regional conferences in the Belgian Congo reviewing, with representative leaders all over the Colony, the past and the future of that great country. He impressed upon them the fact that we are now at the fork of the road that calls for decision. We are in motion and we cannot

stop. We are governed by the past and the future. We look upon the road already traveled, that we may profit by experience, but we look forward up the mountain road to the heights, away from the confusion of the valleys and the cross currents, where we may gain a perspective of the future. That is what we will seek to do in this chapter. The cross roads of an African trail, by which the spirits may come in either direction, is a very serious affair. So it is with us! The spirits of the future, both good and evil, are calling the African woman, as she stands hesitant where two ways meet. A sign post is there and it is in the form of a Cross. The Guide Himself has placed it and printed upon it, in flaming letters, directions concerning the Way. Can she read it? Can she understand and has she strength to follow? It is the privilege of Christian missions to take her by the hand and to lead her gently along the new trail which has so many absorbing bypaths, the "upward, winding, daring trail" to God.

Economic Cross Roads

ECONOMIC WEALTH OF THE COLONY

A former secretary of the Congo Protestant Council, in an editorial celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Congo Mission News, the official mouthpiece of Protestant missions in the Belgian Congo, writes: "Nowhere in the world's history has civilization made so rapid an impact upon so backward a people in so vast an area as the Belgian Congo. Upon a country of people centuries re-

tarded, religiously, socially and economically, among the most primitive in the world, has been thrust in two decades the fullest weight of all occidental invention, organization, manufacture, commerce, transportation and acquisitiveness. Men, women, and infants who never before had been more than a day's walk from their village, have been transported thousands of miles on conveyances never before seen, to work never before imagined, in the midst of conditions and laws never before experienced. Enormous gashes are cut in the earth by bewildered labor battalions under the shadow of huge machinery to get two-thirds of the world's cobalt, the world's largest output of copper and nearly all of the earth's radium. Rivers are strained and the earth's surface is sifted to get the second largest output of diamonds. Mountains are tunneled like ant-hills to bring forth seven tons of gold each twelve-month. On the vast extent of waterways are fleets of giant steamers carrying, with their tows, a thousand times the charge of one canoe. Motor roads allow ten-ton trucks to replace the porter with his fifty pounds. Railways lead in every direction. Telephone, telegraph and wireless annihilate distance, and broadcasting to the remotest bush post is soon to come. Overhead plies the oldest air service in Africa, now linking the Congo in five days with Europe.

"To the Congo native, the total effect of all of this is stupefying. He cannot take it in. Neither could any other folk if it had all been dropped down upon them in the darkened bush in a short generation. Fifty years ago the Congo was unknown, untouched. For thirty years after,

penetration was slow and slight, but during the past twenty years, and especially since the World War, it has been spectacular, overwhelming, unbelievable. To those participating in the enormous dividends of this period it has been intoxicating, this vast, new quick wealth. For the native it is devastating in many ways. Anchor chains are parting and nothing seems to hold. Increasing hundreds of thousands are definitely adrift. They are groping and staggering. Many *have already turned the corner* into active badness. Multitudes of others are looking for—they know not what—, and *may yet be directed into the Way that leads to all good.*"¹

BLACK DIAMONDS

Perhaps a personal glimpse into one great diamond mine of the Congo may make African industry as well as the industrial worker more real. Have you ever kept a trunk filled with diamonds overnight in your home? This was our exciting experience, only, sad to relate, the trunk was locked and belonged to two prospectors. We sat upon it to make sure it was real and decided immediately to visit the mines from which they came.

We beheld with astonishment the intricate machinery, brought with great care and expense from Europe, and with awe looked upon mountains of gravel literally torn away from the river bank and carted in cars along a small track to the main line, where every grain of sand is washed through many processes, and the results are personally inspected lest one jewel escape. Many tons of earth often

yield only a handful of jewels, but these few diamonds are more than worth the time, expense, and labor involved. Each separate jewel is known, recorded, and guarded! Occasionally one is stolen and infinite trouble and expense are taken in order to locate it again. There are as many white men and their wives at this post as there are in several of our largest mission stations combined. They are perfectly willing to spend their whole life in a distant land digging for bits of carbon to sparkle on a lady's finger, or to cut commercial glass, and the world thinks nothing of it; yet many nominal Christians are opposed to the idea of spending one's life in the same land hunting black diamonds of eternal value. Limitless capital is readily invested in such industries by those seeking big financial dividends, while all about us lies exhaustless human wealth—yielding one hundred fold spiritual dividends—thousands of *black diamonds* in the rough, with so little equipment, and so few to dig the mines. Black diamonds are rare and valuable. So are the souls of black men.

The presence of real jewels is always detected by the appearance of black satellites. I brought away from this interesting place a handful of these glittering black stones which reveal the nearness of the clear gem. Truly little black satellites, small Africans who throng our footsteps, reveal the presence of our real wealth and opportunity.

MINERAL WEALTH AND COMMERCIAL COMPANIES

I have had the privilege of visiting the richest copper and mineral field in the world, where proved ores are esti-

mated to yield in the future forty million tons of copper. Several of these mines have a natural combination of elements, copper, iron, and lime. This region ranks high in cobalt and diamonds. In tin, it is second, and even in gold it is tenth. Its uranium deposits could meet the demand of the world for radium. It is centrally located, geographically; it has a high elevation and a salubrious climate; heavy rainfall and fertile soil, suitable for extensive agriculture. Fibrous plants, cotton, kapok and sisal, now extensively cultivated, are causing the rapid growth of the textile industry.

To these mineral exports add wood, especially ebony and mahogany, from the equatorial forests, skins of many kinds of wild animals, ivory and rubber, and you have economic assets of no mean value. The chief of the cabinet of the Belgian Colonial Government pointed out in a public lecture some time ago the following facts: "In 1885 there were but three companies established in Congo; in 1931 there were 275, with a combined capital of nearly 6,000,000,000 francs. In 1885 the Congo Free State budget amounted to francs, 1,000,000; in 1930 the Congo budget reached nearly 704,000,000 francs. In 1890 there were 430 Europeans in Congo; in 1931 about 27,000." These latter "boom" years preceded a crisis. These fat years have been followed by the lean ones. The latest available statistics of 1934 show a decrease in white population of almost 10,000 or about $33\frac{1}{3}\%$. This reveals also a decrease in the employment of native labor of about the same percentage, resulting in an exodus of white men back to Europe

and of black people back to their villages. Over five hundred white residences stand empty in one white Congo city alone; mines have been closed and expensive manufacturing plants left to the creatures of the jungle.



Among the sentence prayers prayed by a circle of missionary children in deadly earnest about the economic crisis of which they had heard their parents speak so constantly, the following was heard: "Lord, may all of the finances of the world be finished." They were! However, on January 1, 1934 as many as 317,805 native men were employed in industry, besides 14,482 soldiers and a large number of common workmen in the State service. Labor conditions among them are to be commended highly, as far as physical circumstances are concerned. Good houses, much better than they are accustomed to in their tribal village, adequate sanitary provision, including running

water at convenient distances, and wholesome weekly rations are all provided. Morals are almost everywhere unmentionable. "Black Beauties" roam the streets unbridled. There are many unmarried men in these camps and a woman can be bought by the night or by the week or month to live with them and to cook their meals. They are examined, at regular intervals, that they may not spread disease, but except for the stipulation of physical health, they have free access to the camps at all times. Let us review, with one who has made a thorough study of the subject, from the viewpoint of missionary opportunity and responsibility, the urban women who throng these commercial centers.

WOMEN IN COMMERCIAL CENTERS

"Who is this urban woman? Is she a strange creature with whom the bush stations are unfamiliar? No, she is our own child, but she has cast off her old moorings; she has weighed her anchor; she is sailing away into unknown deep waters. The spirit of adventure, the tang of the salt sea is in her nostrils, and it thrills her, as for the first time she leaves her well-known, protected harbor, and fares forth into unfamiliar seas.

"What are some of the temptations of this urban native woman? I would name laziness as the most important item on the list. There is no garden to work, generally speaking, no meal to pound, no water to carry long distances, no house to daub with mud, no firewood for her to gather. Cooking the meat and mush furnished by the

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company for her husband is her only occupation. During the intervening hours between meals, what fills her time and mind? (Note: Christian schools where practical arts are taught, are seeking to meet this need in urban centers.) The second temptation is immorality, for the men greatly outnumber the women. Hundreds of men come to town seeking work and hoping to send for families later. Many never do send for them. The third temptation is for married women to go home to visit frequently for long intervals. Often irreparable damage is done during these long separations of husband and wife. The fourth temptation is the urban woman's love of luxury, perhaps not peculiar to the black woman! The man who can afford to buy her a bicycle, fine dresses, and shoes and stockings often tempts her to leave her own husband and flee to the 'flesh pots of Egypt' and we bow our heads in shame as we remember that white men have had a hand in this despicable situation. Christian missions must so fill the urban woman's mind with love and joy and activity that there will be no room for sin."²

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

So important a part does agricultural missions play in the evangelization of a country that there has been formed an "International Association of Agricultural Missions" representing twenty American boards. Many believe that because agriculture is the occupation of three-fourths of the people of mission lands, the success of all missionary endeavor will be immeasurably furthered by a strong pro-

gram adapted to the rural life of the majority. The following is a short résumé of the work of one such missionary: "Our object is to encourage the natives to grow more foodstuff, thus raising their standard of living and supplying their diet with necessary food elements for healthy bodies and active minds. Seeds of many varieties are distributed among the natives, a record being kept of those who received the seed and a requirement made to return the equivalent of what they received from their new crop. They are thus taught seed selection. An exhibit of the products raised is held, and red, white, and blue buttons are given for first, second, and third best exhibits. The mission believes that one of the greatest benefits received by the Colony must eventually come from the cultivation of its soil, and she desires to be foremost in the development of this resource for the State and her subjects."³

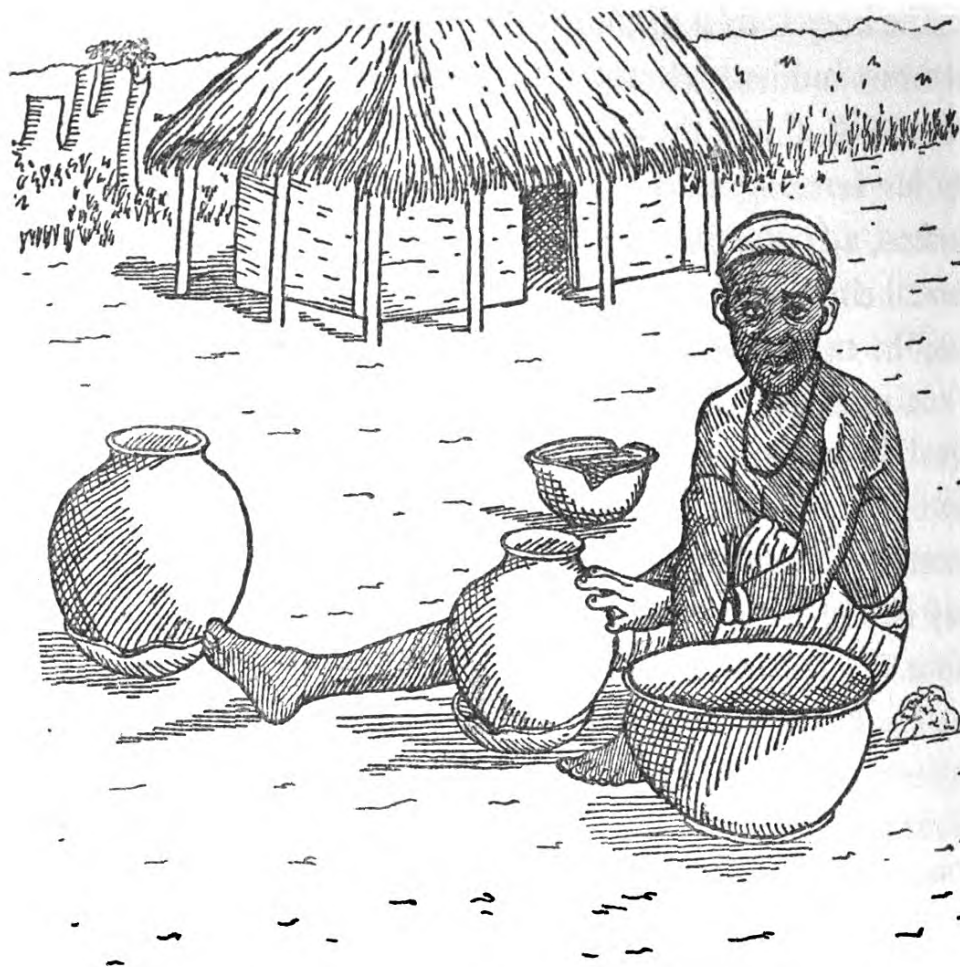
Women as well as men are being trained in scientific agriculture. With the exception of clearing the fields, they cultivate the gardens. If taught to produce better and more varied gardens, to plant fruit trees, and to eat the new products thus produced, it would mean healthier children and a more prosperous community. The missionaries have very much improved the food supply of the natives. They have introduced oranges, grape fruit, mangoes and other fruits; tomatoes, onions, beans and vegetables which were unknown till the missionary came, are now in daily use among the natives. Superior bananas, corn and pineapples brought in by the missionary have taken the place of those that were in use.

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The story is told of an old farmer who, while plowing at sunset suddenly thought that he saw three blazing letters, "G. P. C." in the glowing sky. He immediately gave up his farming and began to preach. After his first sermon, a friend asked the reason for such a sudden and radical change of occupation. "I saw a sign in the heavens," he explained, "that told me to 'Go Preach Christ.' " "You misinterpreted the sign," his friend was emphatic. "It did not say 'Go Preach Christ.' It said, 'Go Plow Corn!' " The whole purpose of agricultural missions is summed up in this practical story. It is teaching the natives how to "Go Preach Christ" by "Going to Plow Corn." "It is the Bible and the plow that must regenerate Africa," says Dr. Donald Fraser.

CHRISTIAN ARTISANS

For years the African woman has been her own miller, potter and cook. Now she is becoming a weaver of cloth from the leaf of the palm, the bark of trees, or the papyrus. She can make baskets so skillfully that water may be carried in them without leaking. Her pottery of various sizes and shapes can stand the fire as well as our cast-iron saucepans. She can knit, crochet, embroider and sew nicely when given an opportunity. She can grow cotton, spin it and weave it on a hand loom. She can make her own cord and rope and weave from it attractive school bags and sewing kits. She can wash, iron and mend her own clothes, and make her own starch, oil and soap. She



is being trained as a hospital assistant, Christian nurse, or midwife, and as a Christian teacher or matron in a mission school.

Yes, the Congo woman is at the crossroads, industrially and economically. She is learning handcrafts and various useful trades. She can weave her own cloth and make her own clothes. She is growing European agricultural products in her own garden. An ever-increasing number of good roads and white centers make the markets accessible

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for her and she is selling her produce at a good price, and exchanging it immediately at the white trader's store for bright Japanese pots and pans and silks, European cloth, cheap jewelry, tobacco or beer. Is the sign at the crossroad teaching her how to produce wisely, sell wisely, and buy wisely? Is there a danger of European products being sold so cheaply that the African woman need not make her own home utensils or utilize her own materials, and which is just as important,—her own time? The way that she takes at the crossroads will determine the wise or unwise use of leisure hours, the adoption of European "styles" in cheap silk and flimsy dresses, or the wearing of sensible, plain, but bright cotton materials in flowing robes and turbans, so becoming to her type. Christ came that they might have life and that they might have it *abundantly*. He is just as much concerned with their dress, their food, their home, their labor, their leisure—their present life, as He is about their future life, for all of this is a part of the *abundance* of life which He came to give. Only by His power, through His knowledge and in His strength can we, as their guides at the crossroads, lead them aright.

Educational Crossroads

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education is the answer to many of the questions raised in this chapter. Though there be a sign at the crossroads, how can the Congo women read it, if she has never been taught her letters? If she is industrious and

raises marketable products, how can she sell them wisely if she has not been taught arithmetic? How can she grow in Christian graces unless she is taught how to study her Bible intelligently? The following applicable quotation is attributed to King Leopold II. "Congo is the future of Belgium. The school is the future of Congo." An article on "Education" published in the *Congo Mission News*⁴ mentions the fact that Christian missions in Africa have passed three distinct mileposts during the past ten years. The first of these was the Phelps-Stokes Commission which, after much observation and study made its far-reaching report. Next came the International Conference held at Le Zoute, Belgium. Following this was the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council. In the first of these, Africa only was taken into account. In the other two Africa received a great deal of thought, prayer, and planning. The findings of these three in the field of education are available and should be carefully reviewed.⁵ They can all be summed up in one sentence pregnant with meaning: "Character development based on religion should be the coloring of every educational activity." The Protestant Jubilee Conference meeting at Leopoldville in 1928, and three regional conferences throughout the Congo under the direction of Dr. John R. Mott, held in 1934, are the latest conferences dealing with exclusively Congolese problems, including a thorough discussion of the educational situation. The findings of these, added to those mentioned above, will

give an adequate summary of the Educational Crossroads in Congo today. The regional conference meeting at Leopoldville asked that a Women's Conference convene to interpret the Colony's educational program for girls and women. This was done and the report made available. It was resolved that there be a six-year course for girls in general, following the State official program of education but including domestic and vocational training.

Relative to the educational work among the village women and girls, the Women's Conference suggested that each station appoint a woman missionary to interest herself particularly in the village work and that she form a council of the leading Christian women systematically to organize this work. These leading women should assume responsibility for the spiritual, moral and social development of the women and girls in the outstations; hold regular meetings for worship and instruction in Christian conduct; supervise recreational period for girls; and hold periodical gatherings for information and inspiration.

Such a woman is Malendola. As a little child she fled, terror-stricken, from the sight and sound of her barbarous chief burning a house filled with little children whom he had taken captive in battle. She was kidnapped by a heathen man, sold as a slave, and later redeemed by a Christian. As soon as she learned to spell and write one word she immediately taught that word to one less learned. She was chosen to help in the translation of

Scripture in her native tongue and with her husband walked several hundred miles into an entirely new tribe and territory, where she had to learn a new dialect, in order to assist another American Missionary Society to begin a new work. Quick, sensitive, intelligent and abounding in tender compassion for the unfortunate, Malendola has been a leader in the girls' and women's work, in village visitation of the sick and needy in the district, and in teaching, by precept and example, her own children and the children of others. Knowing by bitter experience the beauty of purity, she has watched and guarded her own two daughters with a diligence that would put to shame many a modern parent.

The system of Jeanes' teachers is spreading rapidly through Central Africa. Realizing that the bulk of the negro population in America is dependent upon the little one-teacher schools scattered throughout the South, Miss Anna T. Jeanes gave the money for Hampton and Tuskegee to secure visiting teachers of this type. They are usually colored women who have had experience not only in teaching primary school subjects, but who have also had practical training in community needs. This movement has met with such success in the South that the Jeanes' Teachers in America are sending to Liberia and elsewhere one of their number to organize the work there. Especially qualified native women are being appointed to visit the villages, encourage and teach the women, and report back to the station.

THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS' AND EVANGELISTS' WIVES

Almost every mission station has special courses for the training of the wives of the evangelists and teachers. They, too, are required to attend regular school, special kindergarten work being given to their babies while so doing. Refresher courses are arranged for village teachers at the home base after they have gone out into the rural districts. A plan by which voluntary teachers and evangelists may go out and work in needy districts for a year and then return, after such practical experience, for further religious and educational training, is proving a success. All of these schools and conferences are Biblio-centric. The Bible is kept in the center of the curriculum, permeating the teaching of every subject, instead of being one subject taught separately from the others, on the same basis as arithmetic or reading.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The Le Zoute Conference established the fact that in only seventeen African languages are there twenty-five or more books, and that more than half of the African languages have less than five books each as their entire library. It expressed itself as sure "that the time has come for the missions to set themselves to secure an immediate and rapid increase in the production of the literature urgently needed in African languages." The most far-reaching work of Christian missions has been the translation of the Bible into so many African vernaculars. Close in importance is the work of the International Committee

on Christian Literature for Africa. Under the able leadership of Miss Margaret Wrong who has made several trips into the most remote parts of Africa, this committee has forged ahead in the development of a literature suited both to the expanding and the more primitive minds of these people. The little magazine "Listen," sponsored by the Committee on Christian Literature for Women and

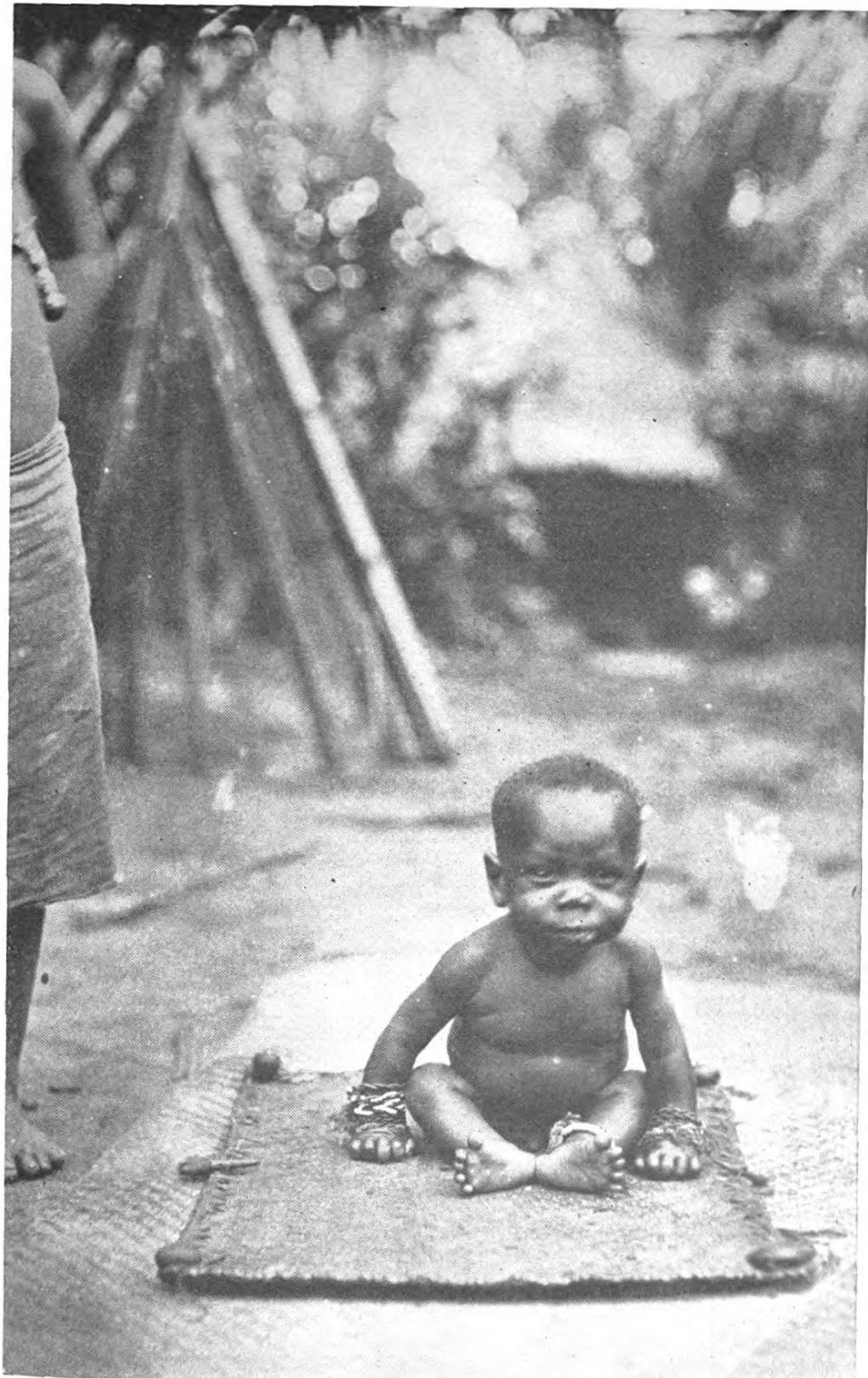


Children in Mission Lands and edited and published by Miss Wrong and Miss Jean Mackenzie has made a great contribution in this field. Published in English its articles are translated into many vernaculars and circulated throughout Africa. A Swahili edition is available for that area and other editions will undoubtedly follow. The International Committee also publishes a mother's manual, books on the care and feeding of children and other books relating to every-day life. "Forty Lessons in Hygiene" and the "Geography of the Bas-Congo" evidence the splendid work done by George W. Carpenter and the Boys' School

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Courtesy of the Rev. William Burton, Congo Belge

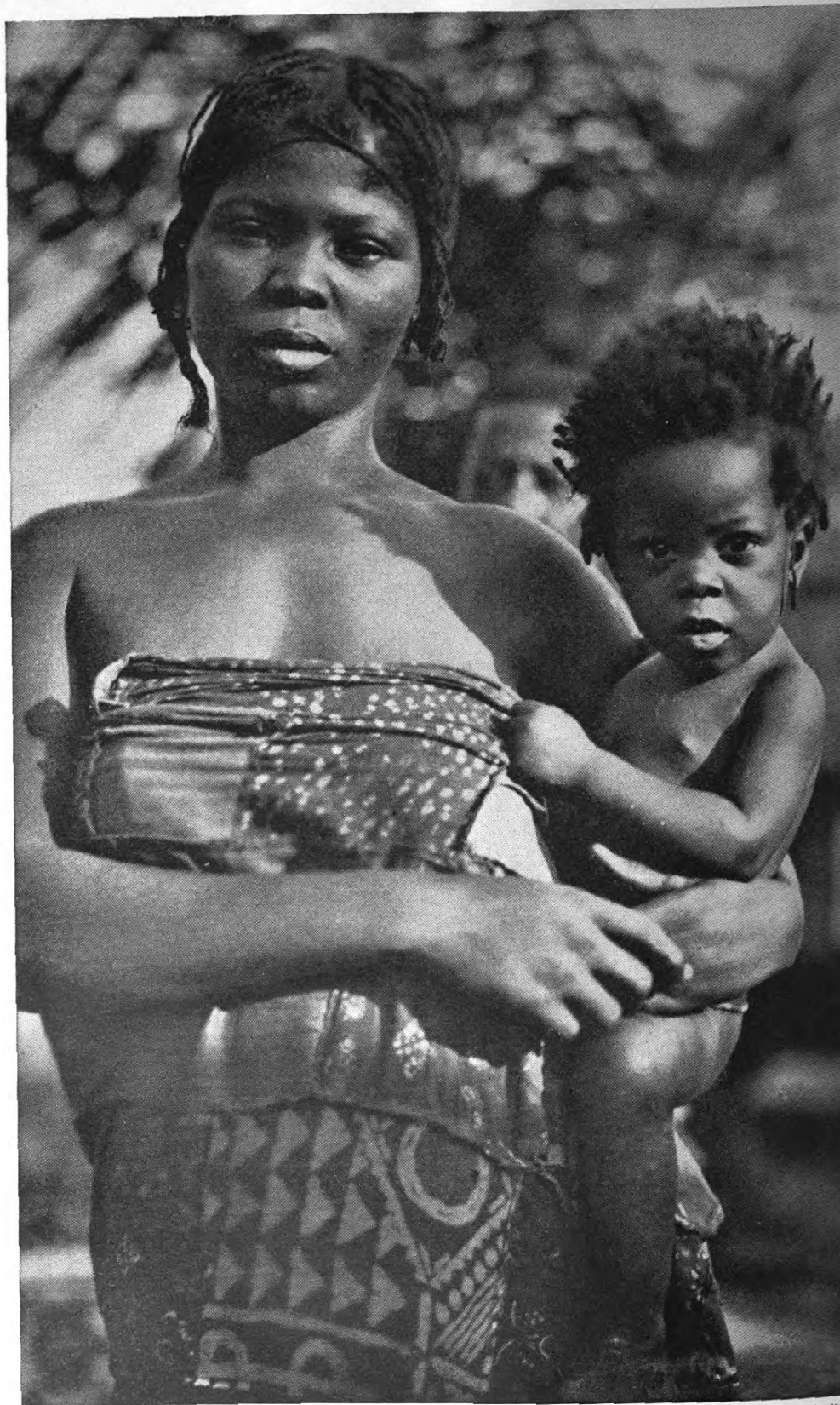
ENCHANTED MAT

"Medicine" on each corner to protect life of child

(see page 115)

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Courtesy of C. Zagourski, Leopoldville
A CONGO MOTHER AND CHILD

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press in Kikongo at Kimpese, Congo Belge. The International Committee is planning an extended program and the translation of many other books in the vernacular will make available a new world of wholesome literature. There is exceptional coordination of all efforts in the field of literature for Africa so that any literature achieving success in one area is speedily made available throughout the country.

Consolidated normal training schools are also being projected for the training of Christian teachers to be sent out over the whole of Congo to dispel ages of ignorance and to proclaim the age-old Gospel of the Great Teacher.

Political Crossroads

COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVE

"It is exceedingly heartening to have evidence that leaders among Belgian colonials are so well informed on matters affecting native interest, so outspoken in their criticism of what they feel to be deleterious, and so sincerely seeking improvement where needed that a 'Commission for the Protection of the Native' has been organized by the King. The chief function of this committee is to bring to the attention of the King, problems dealing directly with the welfare and preservation of the best in Congo civilization and life. The members concern themselves with questions about the premature marriage of girls, the marriage dowry, prostitution, sorcery, public work, portorage, drunkenness, public instruction, desti-

tute children, food supply and public health. They have recommended to the King that a law be passed against girls being betrothed and married in childhood. They believe that the question of polygamy is not to be solved except by giving official encouragement to monogamous families. They point out that a great reduction in human portorage has been made by the compulsory use of automobiles where there are now motor roads and that *female portorage has been forbidden*. They commend the excellent sanitary conditions under which the natives travel on the river boats, and the accommodations and rations provided by employers for their work people, and suggest that a literate native be appointed in each village to keep vital statistics. Asylums for the insane are proposed as well as prison reforms. The Commission, by a divided vote, resolved that the government should fix the maximum dowry in different sections of the Colony, keeping in mind, especially, workmen compelled to pay the dowry out of an earned salary. One member invited the Commission to consider whether the time was not at hand for the native girl to exercise more generally her liberty of choice in the matter of her husband. Others queried whether this liberty might not be abused, whether marriages thus contracted, sometimes without family consent, would be as lasting as the present ones. The unanimous recommendation was that the administration exercise strict control to see that the girl's consent was had in each case, that the tribal authorities record such consent, and that no woman's name be inscribed in any man's tax book until the above

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formalities are observed, and that forced marriages be stopped or dissolved. The following significant pronouncements were also made: 1. That any woman of age is perfectly free to contract monogamous marriage with the man of her choice. 2. That a wife be allowed to leave her husband if the latter takes a second wife, in which case the husband can only recover the maximum dowry fixed in that region. 3. That a wife of a polygamist may leave him to contract a monogamous marriage provided the entire dowry is refunded in a reasonable time."

Compulsory industrial schooling was proposed for girls and women living in the bad moral and social atmospheres of the big European centers. As a general economic policy the Commission proposed that the Government take account of the need of European enterprises already in Congo and of the necessity of limiting their numbers.

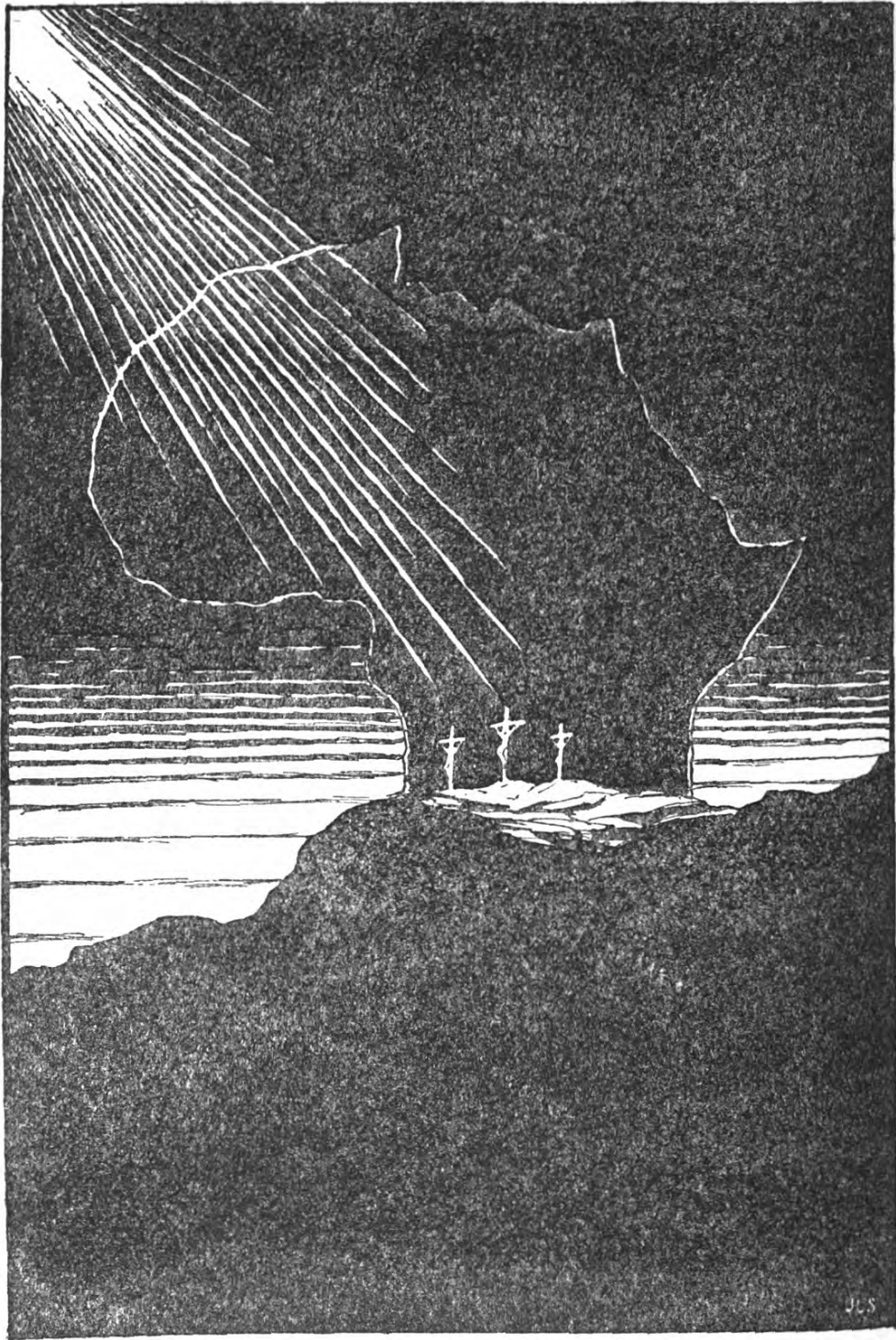
Those who framed the law against the sale of alcohol to natives evidently did not foresee the establishment of great European breweries in the Colony with the attendant large production and low price of beer and the multiplication of beer halls for natives. To remedy this deplorable situation and check increasing drunkenness among natives, the Commission suggested: 1 that the amount sold by each vendor be limited 2 that no drink containing more than 5% of alcohol be sold to natives, and 3 that no European be licensed to sell alcohol drinks to natives.

These and many other suggestions dealing with native

welfare were brought to the attention of the Belgian King by this Commission appointed by the King himself and composed of high Colonial officials and both Protestant and Catholic mission representatives. They are merely "recommendations" and may have to wait some time before being shaped into law by the Colonial authorities. Experience is abundant, however, to show that hundreds of officials have tried to apply many of these principles already, prior to any legal enactment. "As we look at these political crossroads and the vast complexity of many of these problems and contemplate the profound changes that are so rapidly taking place in Africa, are we not impressed with the human impossibility of grappling with and rightly solving them all?" asks Mr. A. G. Mill, who has made a careful study of the findings of this Commission.⁶

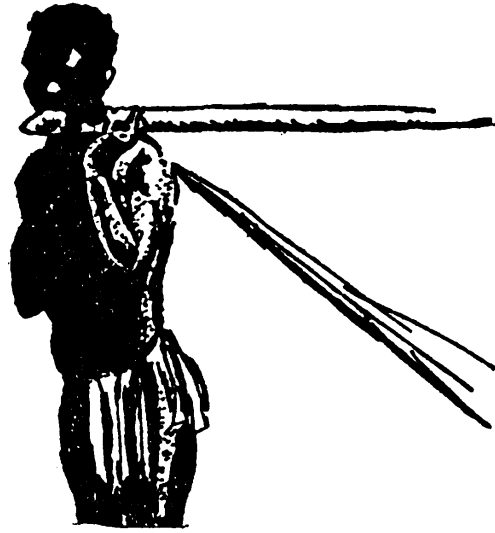
THE SIGN AT THE CROSSROADS

The sign at the crossroads points to the one only way. We will let a former Minister of Colonies of the Belgian Government, Monsieur M. L. Franck answer for us in the words which he uttered in a debate on Congo Administration before the Belgian Senate in 1923: "It is impossible to imagine a more efficient and powerful factor for the moral uplifting of the native than the religious influence. *Therefore, let us protect evangelization in Africa without any distinction between the Christian confessions. The Hon. Mr. Bast was right when he said that to protect and help effectively all the missions is to serve the highest interests of civilization in Africa.*"⁷



I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me.
John 12:32.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE CROSS OF CALVARY

Christianity vs. Paganism

DRAWING A CROSS

DURING the World War a regiment of young American soldiers were champing with impatience to enter the fray. There was not room on the transport ship for all. In order to be entirely just, the captain of each company asked each private to draw a slip. A selected few were marked with tiny red crosses. Those who drew them were to sail for France the next day. One young sixteen-year-old wrote home to his mother: "Mother, I am praying that I may draw a *cross*."

His prayer was answered. He paid the price and his body rests in Flander's field. Nineteen hundred years ago a black man drew another Cross. How strangely significant it was that he, among the howling mob, was chosen to lift the burden from the back of One Who was carrying the sins of the whole world upon His body. The tables turn and today Christians, remembering this, have an opportunity to lift the black man's cross of sin and superstition. It is a costly thing to draw a cross! Most of us would prefer the crowns but we must carry the first before we can be coronated with the second. The Crucified Christ and the Crowned Christ is the only solution for "*Congo Crosses.*" In "*Daybreak in the Dark Continent*" the experiment of a Christian bishop who believed that civilization should precede Christianity is described. Selecting twelve superior Zulu boys he gave them thorough personal training over a period of years without a word of Christ. They made rapid progress in education and culture, but when told that this was all worthless without acceptance of Christianity, each one of them ran away, donning again his loin cloth to go back to his pagan home and customs. Many African missionaries can cite personal instances of similar experiences, where highly trained natives, educated in European or Colonial institutions without God, return to their native land to fall as low in the social and moral scale as their cannibal ancestry. Such training is as hopeless as giving a dead man a crutch to help him to walk. This same truth was very adequately expressed recently by an educated Congo Christian woman.

Jessie had been trained in a mission school in a large industrial center where many counter activities were projected to raise the scale of civilization to a higher social level. When urged to leave her Church and join another group, she instantly replied: "*When you are blind you can hold on to a stick and let someone lead you, but after you receive your sight, you don't need the stick any longer.*" Rejoice that there are many in Congo who once were blind but now can see; who once were holding to crutches, but now can walk alone by faith; who once were seeking self, but now are drawing Crosses.

DEFENCE OF THE CROSS

Two experienced Congo missionaries were recently returning to America for a few months of rest after years of faithful service in Central Africa. On their home-coming boat was a group of prosperous business men. In the midst of a heated discussion on "religions," one of their number turned to the missionaries with the dogmatic statement: "You have no right to go to Africa and poke down the throats of those people 'your religion' when they have a religion of their own best suited to their needs." Evidently, this authority on such an important subject was living up to the remark of a famous American journalist who said, "I am utterly ignorant of the subject, therefore I can speak with abandon." A study of the religion of the jungle will make us appreciate our own religion, and an appreciation of our own will make us determined to give them a chance to make our religion theirs instead of the

animism, fetishism and idolatry which now constitute their theology. A brief comparison between these three religious systems will help to define the belief of the majority of the primitive races of Africa.

In Animism, every natural object is animated by a spirit. The presence of these spirits is not dependent upon the incantation of the medicine man, for the word "animism" is derived from *anima*, meaning *breath*. Hence every object and every living thing has an indwelling "breath" or "spirit." There is no such thing, in the native mind, as an "accident." He attributes every calamity to the intentional ill will of the spirit dwelling in the thing causing the disaster. He is thus fatalistic in his belief, abandoning himself to the inevitable and submitting stoically to the destiny intended for him by the antagonistic spirits always working for his destruction. Belief in animism sometimes leads to cannibalism, for human flesh is eaten to acquire the spirit of the dead man. A great chief, a brave warrior, a rich polygamist, are in danger of being eaten after death, that the spirit which brought them power and wealth may enter the eater to accomplish the same for him. Animism leads to divination and witchcraft. Dreams are always fraught with dire significance to primitive peoples, but to the animist, his soul separates from his body in sleep and actually experiences in the spirit world everything which his dream reveals. It may meet with a wizard and be unable to return. Therefore the body dies and goes to live with the spirits in the other world. Death may therefore

be caused by many unseen forces and it is up to the diviner to find out the reason.

Mediums accuse innocent people, usually old men and women who have become a burden to the populace, of causing the death of the victim. They are then made to drink the poison cup or are put to death in some other way. There is a distinct belief in the life of the spirit after death. One living Congo king confers a great honor upon some of his nobility by designating them to form his body-guard after death. The chosen ones are given a set time to live. During this limited period they have access to the king's wives, are feasted from the king's table and any reasonable demands they make are granted. On the date set, they are forced to commit suicide to precede the king in order to be ready for him when he dies. The story has been circulated that each day this same powerful king sends a message to the spirit world by telling a slave what to say and then killing him. He forgot, one day, part of his message, so he killed another slave and sent him as a *post script*. Perhaps those who think that the African's religion is good enough for him, might like to be sent, also, as a *post script* to the spirit world to deliver their message on the equality of religions!

Fetishism is another form of African religion. It differs from animism in that a spirit is induced to dwell in a chosen object for a certain length of time, by the making of proper concoctions and the saying of proper incantations to entice him. The object itself is not worshipped, as so many people believe, but the spirit temporarily dwell-

ing within the object. Each "medical fraternity" has its "heterogeneous conglomeration of miscellaneous incongruities" to attract the spirits: bird claws, snake skins, human hair and nail parings, bits of bark or herbs, butterfly wings, or parrot feathers. These are mixed to the tune of weird incantations and slipped into any chosen object, such as antelope horns, images, or egg shells. The object may not be worth a penny before the concoction is prepared, but after the spirit has taken up his abode within this favored fetish, prices for it range from a fowl to a woman slave, for the spirit is temporarily in possession of the owner, to work his will. Nimbleness in the feet of a dancer or in the fingers of a musician, skill in trades and arts and in the chase are attributed to the ownership of strong fetishes. Hundreds of sick arrive daily at mission hospitals with strong "medicine" hung around their necks, in whose remedial powers they have implicit faith, and because of which they arrive too late. Perhaps our friend who commended so warmly this most superstitious type of all religions might like to choose between an African fetisher or a Christian physician when he is desperately ill.

In Idolatry, one god can animate a large number of objects and these objects are called idols. Families, clans, and tribes each have their particular gods represented by their particular idols. Rev. John Weeks makes the distinction between these three types of pagan religion clear when he says, "When we find a people venerating natural objects because they believe them to be inherently pos-

essed of a spirit, that faith is called animism. When a people believe that spirits can be persuaded to take up their abode temporarily or permanently in a given article and act in favor of the owner of that article, that faith is named fetishism. When a people worship anything as representing a god, we speak of it as idolatry. It is possible to have any two of these beliefs held conjointly by a people."¹

POINTS OF CONTACT FOR THE GOSPEL OF THE CROSS

At least, religion to the African is not a thing set apart with which to be adorned on Sunday, but it is woven into the warp and woof of his daily experience. His fear of the anger of ancestral spirits causes him to be constantly prayerful in his attitude of worship toward them; the fact that a rich man's life is in danger from the jealousy of the witch doctor makes him share all that he has with others; and his natural emotional and religious tendencies together with the preservation of many Christian traits handed down through the ages from his Ethiopian ancestry make of him a ready and worthy recipient of the Christian Gospel. Rev. William Burton of the Congo Evangelistic Mission has made special study of the previous preaching of the Gospel among the Congo tribes. A recognition of a universal God is revealed in native names which, when translated, mean "The Heaper Together of the Hills and the Channeller of the Rivers," "The Father of Creation," "The Peaceful One," and "The Bearer of Burdens." The recognition that God had a Son is proven by an old proverb: "The Son of God is

not sick." In reply to questioning they answer, "God must have a Son or we would not say the proverb which our forefathers taught us." When the days of mourning for a parent are over, the children are bathed and rubbed with oil. An elder then gives them a piece of cooked banana saying: "*Take, eat. This is your father's flesh and now his spirit is always with you.*" In riverside villages, mourners are completely immersed in the water and they are told that *they have left the dead one in the water*. Surely these ancient customs can be used as stepping stones to the teaching of the Sacraments of The Lord's Supper and Christian Baptism. After a young boy enters manhood or joins certain secret societies, he is considered a new creature. A hare-lipped man or woman, when successfully operated upon, has the privilege of choosing a new name. All of this proves the idea of a new birth. The washing of hands before meals, the lavish entertainment of visitors, the rite of circumcision, the sprinkling of blood to keep away the evil spirits, the eating of meat without the breaking of bones, and the taboo against the eating of pigs or of any animals save those that have cloven hoofs, are all existing customs of Semitic origin in the Congo. The expectation that God will return to the earth again and the knowledge of the impending end of the world is proven by two characteristic proverbs: "Truly God has trodden here. He has merely stepped out of the path for a short time but farther on we shall see Him again." "The horizon reaches the clouds but when the horizon will be dragged down, we shall be as those poured out like water."

When a black woman asked Mrs. Donald Fraser if Jesus had been a white man, she replied: "He was not as dark as you nor as white as I. He was born in a land cooler than yours and hotter than mine. He belonged to a little land closer to your country than to mine. In the Bible we read of Africa being mentioned long ago when my country was scarcely known at all. Jesus learned to walk in Africa and an African carried His Cross." Immediately members of her African woman's class began to pity their white teacher born so far away from Bethlehem and one of them remarked with pride, 'ere the class was over: "Our country gave Him hospitality."² Yes, truly, "God has trodden here. He has merely stepped out of the path for a short time but farther on we shall see Him again."

The Growth and Grace of Evangelical Christianity in the Congo

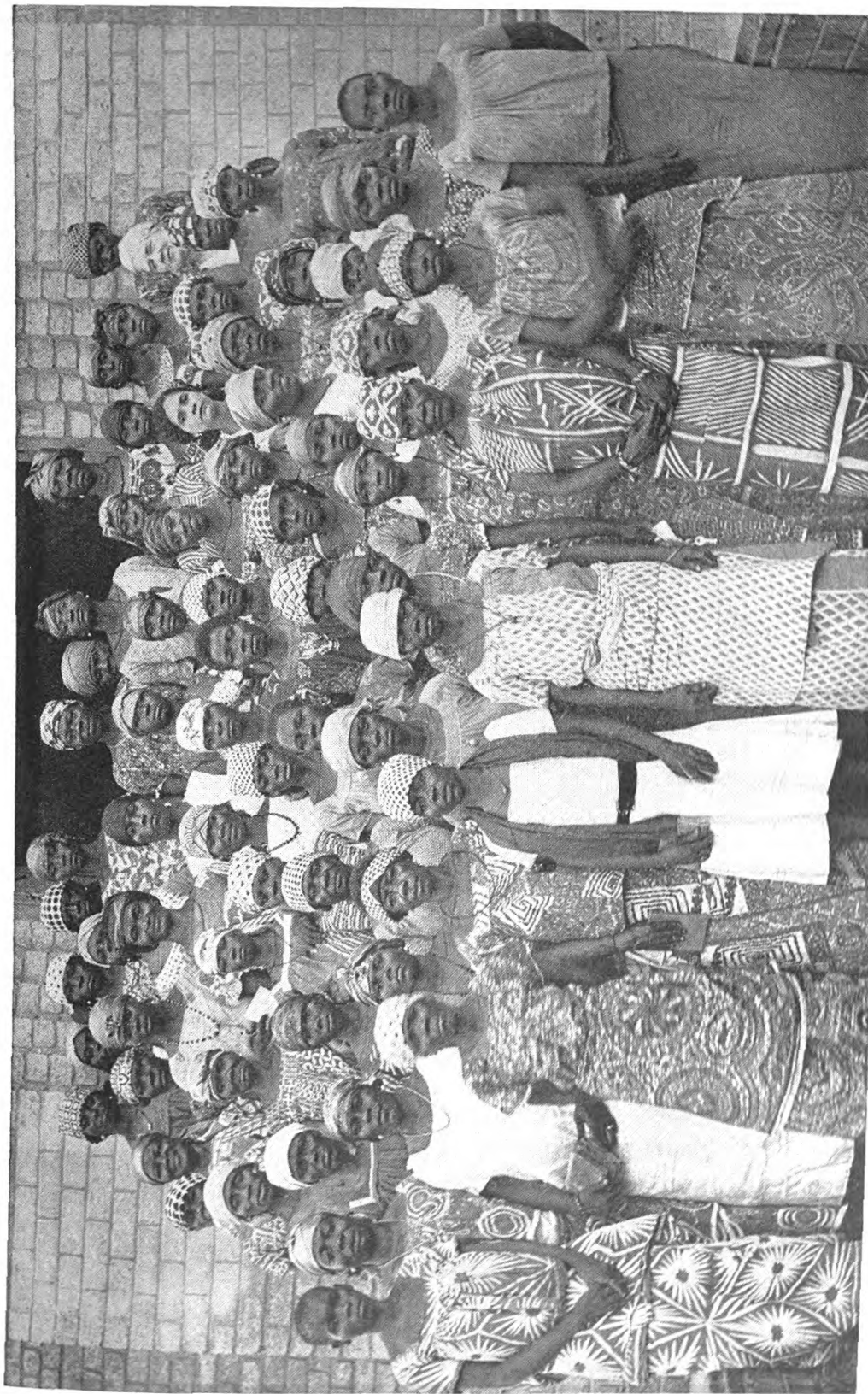
GROWING CHRISTIANS

There are now at work in the Belgian Congo forty-four Protestant Societies, with eight hundred and ninety-three missionaries, including twelve nationalities. There are two hundred Christian mission stations and a total of 527,800 natives in active touch with Christian missions, not counting the children in 10,116 Christian schools. There are 238,807 baptized Christians. In America an individual may join the Church on a verbal profession of faith. In the Christian Church in Congo a long period of probation and training is required before

baptism is administered. Each one is required to learn the tenets of the Church Universal. Denominationalism is never stressed. The whole territory, almost half the size of the United States, is divided among these Protestant forces and each convert is a member, not of a particular denomination, but of "The Church of Christ in the Congo." They are usually required to bring another into the knowledge of Christ before they themselves are admitted into church membership. Except in special cases, they must be literate, able to read and understand their own Bible, and must lead an exemplary life before their fellowmen. If they fall into temptation after admission, they are disciplined anew. A group of mature Christian native women recently meeting in a religious conference in the Congo sent in the following findings. These represent their own ideas of what Christianity should mean in the life of African women:

1. A believer ought not to marry an unbeliever, and the Church must not sanction such marriages.
2. It is the duty of women to rear their children in Christian homes, and to allow their daughters equal opportunities with the boys in schooling.
3. The wives of teachers should be taught, too, so they can help their husbands, and they should always go with them to live in the village where they teach.
4. Christians must not drink fermented drinks of any kind.
5. Christians should not indulge in heathen customs of mourning for the dead.

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Courtesy of American Presbyterian Congo Mission

CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF THE CONGO

(see page 184)



press Lucbo, Congo Belge

Courtesy of J. Leighton Wilson
“BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE”

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If these tests were required of American Christians before they were admitted to church membership. I am wondering how the church rolls would diminish. Realizing that almost 150,000 Congo Christians have met these requirements makes us thank God for the quality and the quantity of mission work in Central Africa.

GIVING CHRISTIANS

I have heard of American boys who put buttons in the church collection but never until I went to Africa had I heard of offering plates that had to be as big as bushel baskets to receive the thank offerings. I had heard of tithing money, but I had to go to Africa to learn about tithing children, and time, and garden truck. A native Christian had four children. He gave one of them to the mission to train for God's service as His gift of gratitude for being healed at the Christian hospital for African sleeping sickness. Had you ever thought of tithing your family?

Ngoyi is a Congo widow. Her husband did not leave her an insurance policy nor did he invest in stocks and bonds. There were none such in his country. Her only means of support is a tiny field five miles distant which she must hoe herself. Day after day she rises at dawn, going forth with bare feet in the cold, foggy morning and returning at blazing tropical noon. Recently a little bundle of bills was found in the collection plate marked "Thank Offering." No one would have known who gave such a handsome gift, had she not had to ask a friend

to write the words for her. Truly she cast in all of her living, for she had made the one hundred francs which she gave, doing wonderfully well with her crops. "From the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants shall bring my offering."

Daily there are offerings of eggs and chickens and goats. Among the various articles found in the collection plate are beads, bracelets, rings, dried locusts. These gifts are given in all sincerity and are sold at the village market and turned into cash to help with the local church expenses.

PRAYING CHRISTIANS

African Christians know how to pray! In the great South African diamond mines, it was noticed that the natives discovered more jewels than the white men. When asked the reason for this, a Kaffir unhesitatingly replied: "We black men get down on our knees. You white men don't like the dirt." This is spiritually true, for many Congo Christians, finding it impossible to keep tryst with God in their crowded huts, slip out into the forests or fields and there pour out their heart to Him in simple child-like communion with their very real Heavenly Father. From the Methodist Episcopal Congo Mission comes this report of Mamu Malu, a converted witch doctor: "Almost every morning her pleading voice awakened us as she prayed for herself and all of her people. I do not know how early she started but one morning I was awakened at one o'clock and heard her

at prayer. I awoke again about three-thirty and still heard her pleading tones. Her voice in prayer was like a trumpet call to us saying, 'Get up and pray. Get up and pray.' " Two prayers made by Christian native women literally translated, might help the reader to understand their sincerity and simplicity: "Lord, be merciful to our teacher so that she shall not get tired of telling us more about Jesus. We know that we are slow and we forget so easily but we want to hear more of Him. Help us who have received Jesus to be faithful to the end. Help us to do as He commanded us, to go out into all the world to teach others. Amen."

"Lord, before the missionaries came, we were as animals. We could see and hear, but we lived like animals. There are still many in our midst who follow the heathen customs. Help us to teach them and show them the way of life. *Bless the women in America and help them to pray for us and send us teachers. Amen.*"

SINGING CHRISTIANS

Congo Christians are happy Christians. If we would all "enthuse over our religion like the Methodists, work for it like the Baptists, pay for it like the Presbyterians (ancient history), take pride in it like the Episcopalians, and *enjoy it like the Africans*" we would win many to Christ. Christianity has sung its way into their hearts and through music, as perhaps through no other single channel, thousands have been attracted. Since there are about eight hundred languages in Africa and since, ac-

According to Longfellow, "Music is the universal language of mankind," then music is a binding link between the multifarious tongues of Africa and a fitting preparation for the language of the world to come. As many as forty boys and girls on one station alone learned to play the hymns of the Church on small, portable organs in one year's time, under the leadership of a native musician. Choirs, singing in beautiful harmony of four parts, go into surrounding districts to take part in evangelistic services. On a station of another mission far removed, one marked the particularly good music and learned that a native boy had found an opportunity for service with his musical ability and training and had passed it on to scores in an entirely different tribe and language. One of the most outstanding Christian leaders in the Congo today, Tshishunga Daniel, called by an experienced board secretary the "Kagawa of Congo," has constructed a musical instrument of his own design, out of the cast-off interior of an old organ and an accordion. He has made a xylophone out of native gourds. Boys whom he has trained play mouth harps, flutes, and various musical instruments. With this home-made orchestra, he holds his own evangelistic meetings, attracting hundreds to the clean front yard of his little house, overlooking a beautiful, winding river and a great State Post beyond. This one man, with his evangelistic zeal, utter consecration, and musical gifts has won to Christ or won back for Christ over ten thousand converts in the past six years.

It was Christmas Eve. We had driven almost four hun-

dred miles over good African roads, paved with powdered ant hills, that day, hoping to reach Bibanga station in time to participate in the singing of lovely carols with the native Christians at dawn on Christmas morning. At dusk, just before crossing the last river, a sudden tropical storm beat down upon us, deluging the machine and obscuring the road. We sat huddled together in the car with no food or shelter. Crossing an African river on an African ferry is, at best, a dangerous procedure, but to drive over narrow, slippery boards onto a slippery raft in the rain is suicidal. As lightning vividly illuminated the swaying, dripping palm trees overhead, and the watery path which lay in front, we decided to turn back to the nearest white settlement. Our Ford wouldn't start! The engine was glugged! We had visions of remaining all night in that small enclosure, piled high with luggage, cold and hungry, our bodies aching with fatigue. We never start a journey without prayer for God's guidance and journeying mercies. This had been done in the early morning and all day we had thanked Him for good roads and a good car. It was time for a second prayer service, so we held it in the car with the storm deadening our words. Then we held our breath while one more attempt was made to start the engine. Never be disgruntled again over the noise that an old Ford makes when it starts. The noise that ours made on this occasion was as music to our ears. With thankful hearts we turned about and retraced the watery way. Arriving unexpectedly at a nearly deserted hotel at so late an hour on such a night, no preparation, of

course, had been made for our hospitality but we were graciously given a cup of tea and *a straw bed*. Lying, weary and hungry in this wayside inn in a far country, our minds reviewed another inn and another such bed at such a time. A warmth came into our souls and the real meaning of Christmas dawned upon us as never before. Suddenly we heard exquisite music as of angels' voices singing, "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth Peace, Good-will to men." Was it a beautiful illusion or merely a dream as we slipped into sleep? We strained our ears to listen. It was just three o'clock and still dark and cold. Nearer and nearer, deeper and richer were the voices singing: "Silent Night, Holy Night" in the beautiful native tongue. It was a group of joyous African Christians, awakening the dawn with their Christmas music. No white missionary was there to lead them. It was a spontaneous expression of their gratitude to God for the birth of His Son. In their little church shed made of mud and sticks with a thatched roof, there was no Christmas tree with lighted tapers, there were no gifts in tinsel paper, no Christmas goodies, but the Spirit of Christmas was in their hearts and the Spirit of Christ was shining upon their faces. God had used the African to teach us the real meaning of the Birth of His Son.

PLAYING CHRISTIANS—PAGEANTRY AND RELIGIOUS DRAMA

Children love pageantry and color. Young African Christians in this respect resemble them, for their hearts are easily touched and their minds taught, by Biblical

drama and religious plays, often planned and produced on their own initiative. How indelibly have the lessons of Christ's parables been impressed upon the mind and memory when actually enacted before the eyes! Rugged Old Testament characters, whose deeds of heroism are easily dramatized; the beautiful Nativity and Resurrection scenes of whose matchless meaning one never tires; and such simple religious truths as "Pilgrim's Progress" so vividly portrays, are all worthy agencies of instruction in character building. The "Kagawa of Congo," previously mentioned, has dramatized the whole progress of Pilgrim as he journeys from the City of Destruction to the Holy City. At the last religious service I was privileged to attend in Central Africa, before departure, Christiana with her children set out on their long hard journey along the King's Highway. To those who know the depths of ignorance and superstition in which the African woman has lain for years, the sight of a Christian native woman with her children taking the initiative in such a scene before a vast mixed audience constitutes in itself a miracle. The glow of sunset on this Sabbath afternoon lit up the distant hills and the roofs of a white settlement across the river bank, above which rose the spires of a Christian church. It set aglow the faces of the many black people who, in reverent thought, were making the journey with Christiana and her children. We felt that Congo womanhood was on her way. It is a long, hard way, indeed, but with such a courageous beginning and with such a "cloud of witnesses," she would surely arrive, in time, at her high and holy destination.

WORKING CHRISTIANS

African Christians work. We wish that our American friends could visit a church in the lower Congo built by villagers who carried, one by one, more than forty thousand stones for the building of it. Each stone represented a journey of eight miles for the carrier. A similar church in the upper Congo was built of gray rock. A road had first to be built twelve miles over steep hills and deep valleys, with native labor, to the spot where the rock was blasted and carried by hand by native workmen. Ten men working twelve hours at a time, pushing on carts two thousand four hundred pounds of rock over these miles of hills and vales, received for this strenuous work about fourteen cents each per day. Women gladly went after school hours, having had nothing to eat all day, returning at dark with an average of eighty pounds of rock on their heads, having walked twenty-five miles, with supper to cook upon their return. They received only a few cents each. When we think of the vast amount of human labor involved in this work of love, the very stones seem to be imbued with life and to throb with power. One thousand seven hundred and nine Congo Christians arrived at one mission center for a Thanksgiving meeting. Christian women voluntarily brought the firewood from the forests for these visitors, and boys and girls of the local church carried water up a steep hill, in order to amply supply their guests with necessities for their simple housekeeping. It took a half hour to obtain each bucket of water.

SOUL-WINNING CHRISTIANS

Congo Christians are soul-winning Christians. Could you attend a typical Easter service, at dawn, on a mission lawn and watch most of them scatter, afterwards, in small groups to walk miles into all of the surrounding territory to deliver the Resurrection message; could you meet with the same group at dusk and hear their joyous report of how 2,500 others had heard the same story on that glad day, your own heart would be thrilled anew with the power of a new Life. Could you see for yourselves, small groups of Christian women, babies on their hips, Bibles in their hands, walking miles to hold a religious service and returning weary, hungry, and happy to fix the evening meal, your heart, too, would be aroused to new evangelistic zeal. One Sunday afternoon I was holding a meeting, alone, in a nearby village. My knowledge of the language was still inadequate for the message I longed to bring. Suddenly two earnest Christian leaders appeared in the doorway. Seeing my need, they stopped and helped me with this service. I found out later that they had already held meetings in four different villages and had gone all day without food, but they did not hesitate to give this additional joyous service.

The following letter was written to me, in broken English, by a first generation African Christian: "Dear Mama, If I meet with someone in way, I salute him. I say, 'Do you know Son?' 'What Son?' he ask me. When I see that he does not know Son, I let him know Son right now. Today I went in machine road. I say to one, 'Do you be-

lieve in Son?' He say, 'No, because I do not know Son.' After when he understand Son, he believe in Him. I meet with an old man this evening. I ask him if he was a Christian. He say, '*Yes I was but now we get no missionary in our town. We get no one who can come and remember us about Son.*' I am glad that I am a workman of God for good work." What a rebuke and challenge this letter is! May we, too, be "workmen of God for good work" and as we meet someone in the way, may we point them to **THE WAY**.

INDEPENDENT CHRISTIANS

The indigenous Church is becoming an independent Church. At an Australian pavilion in a London exhibition, was a beautiful tree, brought twelve thousand miles across the seas, laden with red-cheeked apples. Visitors were amazed at the miracle of a tree laden with fruit, successfully transplanted in a new environment, until they discovered that each apple was tied to the tree with fine green silk. Christian leaders are realizing that foreign money and foreign leadership can not always be tied with invisible strings to the African Church, but that the fruit must grow naturally on the tree, if it is to be prolific in the future. Hence, more and more stress is being placed on the training of indigenous leadership and responsibility. The findings of the regional conference held in the capital of Congo, in 1934, under the leadership of Dr. John R. Mott, under the heading "The Indigenous Church" show the trend of the future in this direction:

"With gratitude to God we report the following findings:

"1. That there is a growing disposition on the part of missionaries to transfer responsibility to the indigenous church, and an increasing ability and readiness on the part of native leaders to accept and expect such transfer.

"2. That marked progress has been made in the application of the principle of self support.

"3. That the indigenous church through its leaders and members is increasingly propagating itself.

"4. That in the still indispensable function of comrade, counsellor, inspirer and guide, the missionary is able to serve the indigenous church as mediator and conserver of its rich heritage in doctrine, experience, and policy.

PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

The African Church is a persecuted Church and the women bear the brunt of the suffering. The same thing that makes the African woman a worse heathen also makes her the best Christian namely, her deeply religious nature, around which her whole life revolves. If she has willingly bowed under the yoke of pagan doctrines, how much more gladly will she suffer for the Christ who said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me." Congo Christians pay a costly price for their faith in Christ.

Katshunga was a slave in the Bakuba kingdom. He soon found that he could win favor with the king by treating the people so cruelly that they would do the king's bidding immediately. He became a terror in all of the territory. Crossing a forest stream, he met a young woman with a baby in her arms. He asked her why she had run

when she heard that he was coming. She replied that she had not been in the village and knew nothing of his coming. Upon this, he became angry, snatched the baby from her arms and threw it into the crocodile-infested stream. The mother leaped into the stream after her baby and both of them were drowned. Upon his return home, he found that one of his four wives had been visiting the mission services and wished to become a Christian. So enraged was he over this insult to his authority, that he flogged her with an elephant skin whip until she lay unconscious at his feet. Then, in a senseless rage, he took burning embers from the camp fire and seared four large places upon her body. This Christian wife had learned to read. When a note of sympathy arrived for her, her husband accused her of attending school that she might write and receive notes from other men in the village. She replied that she would teach him to read the note for himself. Letter by letter, line by line, she spelled out the alphabet and words for him, using portions of the Bible as her textbook. While they were reading about the crucifixion of Christ, he asked his wife to tell him of Jesus. This she did. He became an earnest Christian through her Christian example and teaching, placed his other three wives in honorable marriage, and with his chosen wife, Mbokashanga, who still carries the marks of her faith upon her body, he is teaching the message of Peace among the same people to whom he was once a terror in war.

Many other Christian women, too, bear upon their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. When Livingstone

had nearly completed his great journey right across Africa, he arrived at a Portuguese fort in the Congo. There, on a great rock, the print of a woman's foot had been carved. It was the footprint of a great African queen who had lived about three hundred years ago.³ Memory of her had been thus preserved in hewed stone, but the footprints of thousands of heavenly heirs, with the blue blood of Heaven in their veins, who have walked the straight and narrow path among the thorns and briars, have been carved on the Rock of Ages, that those with spiritual vision may mark the tracks and follow in their train.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND HOME LIFE

Yonder is a gaily decorated booth; Belgian flags flying, bright flowers in festoons among the palm branches, with happy children's faces peeping among the fronds. The wedding feast of goat meat, cassava bread, and tropical fruits is waiting. Down the village path, swept clean by an advance guard of chosen friends, marches the wedding procession. The bride is dressed in long, flowing robes of blue, a bright turban on her head and bright flowers in her hair, gifts of the groom, while her maids are clothed in rainbow colors, similarly designed. The groom and groomsmen are wearing borrowed European clothes, perhaps a dinner jacket with striped trousers, and patent leather shoes with no socks; the same outfit serving for many such occasions. With orange blossoms scenting the air and the strains of the wedding march fading away

from the church, the happy couple draw nearer, hand in hand. Another procession is forming. A group of girls, friends of the young Christian couple, each with a basket of produce on her head, is approaching. It is a bridal shower and the clean, new home with an extra window, and a few pieces of simple furniture made by the groom, will soon be stocked with fruit and nuts and grain enough to begin the first housekeeping together. We cannot fail to note the difference between such a scene and the ones pictured in a previous chapter, of little girls, sold in marriage, running screaming to their mothers for protection, as their heathen husbands snatch them out of those protecting arms.

Joseph was a product of the mission. He was the kind of youth that reflected credit on his Christian teachers and was sought after by the newly formed airline company. After remaining away for some time from his young Christian sweetheart, Mbombo, whose name meant, in substance, "The chiefest among ten thousand," he asked permission from his employer to marry her. The manager replied: "Why it would take you two months to go there and come back by road. We can not let you go for such a long time. Can't you get your wife to come here?"

"No," said Joseph, "she is a mission girl, and we want to be married by the mission."

"Well," replied he, "There is a plane leaving in a few days for your mission. You will have to go on that. Both of you report at the air port for your return journey.⁴

The marriage was solemnly celebrated in the lovely church and the next day the happy Christian couple left on their honeymoon, one thousand miles by airplane over the equatorial forests.

Such a marriage is symbolical of the many new homes that are being built on a higher plane, of husband and wife sailing life's heavenly places together. No longer the husband, with spears and arrows, stoically walking in front while his wife, with babies and burdens, plods behind; no longer a separate meal with the women eating the left-overs; no longer bush children growing up in ignorance; but a well-ordered home, simply but adequately furnished for their needs, the family altar fires daily burning, clean children in school, and husband and wife sharing and bearing life's laughter and loads.

CHRISTIAN WIDOWHOOD

The widow in a godless home has no other alternative but to enter again into a godless marriage. When she becomes a Christian, her whole attitude is changed. Avenues of useful service are now open for her. How many missions could bear testimony to the faithful ministrations of such, as matrons in Christian girls' schools, as adopted mothers in orphans' homes, as nurses in Christian hospitals, or as Bible women in surrounding territory. I have been talking to Sudila and Mwaluki, two of these. With Bibles and small bundles under their arms and the love of God in their hearts, they set out, barefoot, on their own initiative, alone and unafraid, to tell the glad story

to many who had never heard it before. For several months they walked from village to village, cooking their own food and dependent upon no one but Him. Often they were ridiculed and misunderstood. Once they arrived at a village, drunk with revelry and rioting. They raised a Cross upon the spot where blood had been shed, and went on their way. Still more often they were welcomed with gratitude. They returned, foot-sore and weary, having walked three hundred miles and spread the Gospel wherever they went. They received no pay for their services, but as I looked into their faces I was conscious of the fact that rarely had I ever talked with Christians so rich in eternal possessions.

A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

It was not Washington's birthday nor the Fourth of July. There were no drums beating and no flags flying. It was not the Jubilee of the King nor a great national reception of some hero. I have seen such parades but this one was the greatest of all. For weeks the lepers had been camping in the corn and cassava fields back of the hospital. Even the other sick patients, covered with sores, drew their dirty rags around their bony bodies, unwilling to associate with these social outcasts. Day by day their numbers increased as the great day approached. Many of them hobbled on stumps of feet as many as one hundred miles. Each morning we would find others waiting at the door of the hospital, soaked by the chilling rains of the wet season, with their small possessions tied up in

grass baskets, and a few chickens or ducks eagerly seeking a way to escape from their small prison. Half-starved children would be asleep on the bare ground, exhausted in their attempt to follow their leprous parents over the long, long trail. They were the lowliest of the lowly, mistreated so long that they expected cuffs and rebuffs. They fell prostrate at the feet of the doctor, expecting that he, too, would send them on their way—they knew not whither!

Their patience and perseverance were rewarded and their day came at last. Sunrise shone on an African road that wound like a white ribbon up and over the hills. A cloud of white dust made by sore feet in the soft sand and the creaking of a few home-made carts showed that the procession had started. I have seen gaily decorated floats pass by crowded streets to the rhythm of thrilling music, but never have I seen a sight so enthralling as these carts, filled with the sickest of the sick, the lamest of the lame, passing down the white road without the beating of drums or the thrumming of a single tom-tom. The procession moved slowly. There was a reason. The tropical sun was beating mercilessly upon the hot sands, blistering their sores, and the road was long and weary for their maimed feet. There was a smile, however, on every face and gratitude in every heart. *This was their emancipation day.* They were going *home*, the first home most of them had ever known. *The new leper camp was finished and at the end of the trail was a Christian village prepared for them by God's people.*

The children of Israel marched from their land of slavery, after many great and terrible wilderness experiences, into their Promised Land. These children of Ham, after a life of bondage in the flesh, were marching to their Canaan, made possible for them by their unknown friends in America through "The American Mission to Lepers." Through the generous gifts of this Christ-like organization, neat homes had been built, a school, a church, and a dispensary. Here five hundred lepers and their families receive "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Here their wounds are bound up and their sores are healed. Here their minds are taught and their souls are saved. Here they are learning of the Great Physician who cures the leprosy of sin and who is preparing for them a home in Heaven. There is no longer need for a weary procession, but they are daily singing "processionals" in their hearts, thanking God for even the dread disease that made it possible for them to become Christian citizens of such a Christian village.

CHRISTIAN OLD AGE

We have been studying of unwanted old age and of old age wanting to die. The helpless are often cast off and neglected that they may have their wish. Only followers of Christ seek and save those who are old in Congo. Their aged minds are frequently so dulled that they cannot grasp the new teaching, but when they do there is joy among the angels in heaven. Such was Mujinga. They

hesitated to bring her for baptism because she could not grasp the course of study assigned to candidates. "Too old," they explained. In regard to theological questions, her mind was a blank, but when asked Who was her Savior she answered clearly, "Lord Jesus." Upon those two words Christ built His Church, and so she was received into the fellowship of the saints. Her old body trembled as drops of the sacred symbol of water descended upon her bent head. She was given the baptismal name of "Anna" and was read the story of the saintly old widow who blessed the Christ child in the Temple. She was manifestly happy that she was honored with this name. So closely did Mujinga Anna live to her "Lord Jesus" and so simple and child-like was her trust in Him, that when asked the name of the evil one who used to tempt her so often, she replied, "*I used to know him, but now I've forgotten his name.*"

CHRISTIAN DEATH

It was midday. Brazen skies poured down blazing heat upon scorched earth. The missionary, weary and worn from a busy morning in the school room, had just sat down to her noon meal. Suddenly, the sound of sobbing! Rising, she hurried to her window. There a sad procession was passing. A Christian mother, wracked with grief, was carrying in her arms the heavy burden of her lifeless child. Other women followed, each mourning softly, tears spattering unheeded in the white dust. Forgetting all sense of hunger or fatigue, the white teacher

Then she stretched arms to the stricken mother. Taking the little dead baby in her own weary arms, she walked side by side with her black sister, uttering words of love and comfort. Into the darkened hut she entered, and with tender hands clothed the little body in a wee white garment. Others watched, in silence, her ministrations. Not until the night shadows began to fall and the little body had been placed to rest, did she once think of herself and of her own physical needs. That act of love, in a time of need, broke down all racial barriers and made one the mother hearts of black and white. It is at a time like this that the missionary has her greatest opportunity. When the heart is tender from sorrow, the Resurrection lesson can best be taught. The greatest test of Christianity comes simultaneously with sorrow and death. How great is the contrast between the Christian and the pagan attitude towards such!

She was the sweetest and most faithful of all the evangelists' wives. Always smiling, clean and neat, Kabedi would come to the weekly meetings. She was the first to enter and was waiting on the front seat for the missionary leader when she arrived on that last hot Thursday afternoon. On Sunday her young husband, with a spring in his step and a song on his lips, had set out at dawn to tell the good tidings to those along his way. The rising sun was suddenly obscured by ominous clouds; a crash, a flash, screams, and the crisp crackling of fire! They dragged Kabedi, lifeless, out of her blazing hut, and her two little children, who were fearfully burned by the

scorching lightning. She had always been an industrious woman and her crop of grain was safely harvested and stored upon the rafter. In a moment, the dry grass roof was gone and the mud walls fell, scattering fresh sparks which, in turn, kindled new fires, greedily destroying all the household possessions that remained. A stricken people stood silent and awed around the smoking embers of the ruined hut. The story of Job had been realistically dramatized before their very eyes. I stood with the mourners and looked into the ruins. A Bible lay charred upon the ash heap. Leaves from God's Word were scattered over the debris. I picked up a scorched page and read there a message of comfort for the broken hearted, an age-old message which fire could never destroy. God built, at that hour, out of the ashes of a Congo hut, a great Cathedral whose windows opened skyward. It was a Sabbath morning, and in Heaven, Easter Day had dawned for Kabedi.

Our Response and Responsibility

A Congo missionary, while on furlough, was speaking of "The African Woman as She Was, as She Is, and as She Will Be." His little son, born in Africa, after listening to several addresses on this subject demanded, "Daddy, who is this African woman? Do I know her?"

Through the pages of this book may we come to know the African woman, not in general but in particular, not in a group but as an individual. Knowing her, we will come to love her, and loving her, we will serve her. We who are women have a great responsibility for this since:

The mystery and majesty of Christ's birth were first revealed to a woman's heart.

His first look was into a woman's face.

His seamless robe was woven by a woman's hand.

He was ministered unto by woman's substance.

His place of rest and refuge was in a woman's home.

He was anointed for burial by a woman's gift.

He was concerned on the Cross about a woman's care.

His first word spoken after Resurrection was a woman's name.

Then does His tender heart not ache as He looks down upon the very least of all these, in the most obscure places of all the earth?

As our tourist boat, homeward bound, slipped around the West African coast before putting out into the deep sea, I was awakened at the midnight hour by a lone light gleaming through the porthole of our tiny cabin. It faithfully flashed from a sturdy lighthouse on the last point, gleaming like a great star in the blue-darkness of the night, like Stanley's star on a field of blue, like the flag of the great Free State. May this gleam symbolize a "Free State" indeed, freed from the shackles of sin and superstition. May our last glimpse of Africa through the pages of this book be a glimpse of the *Star of Hope*, stars of the *Southern Cross* gleaming through great darkness, the Bright and Morning Star who gave His life on Calvary's Cross that the world might be *free indeed*.

“O Lord of Hosts, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the Kingdoms of the earth. Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear. Open Thine eyes, O Lord, and see. Of a truth, Lord, kings have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire. They were no gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. Therefore, they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord, save us that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord, even Thou only.”

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AFRICAN PROVERBS

He who will not take advice, gets knowledge when trouble overtakes him.

The ant says to itself, "The world is so large that I cannot possibly hear all the news of it"—so it goes about its business.

Wherever there's a man there's also a road.

If anyone pricks you with a palm thorn, return the compliment with a prick from a porcupine quill.

Friendship of oil and water is evil.

If a leopard has killed people in the village and you come forth and are killed, it is your own fault.

The wild pig does not dig cassava for his friend.

True friends are few.

A man may be born with a fortune, but wisdom comes only with length of days.

Not to aid one in distress is to kill him in your heart.

It is the cowardly hyena who lives long.

Corn near the path never ripens.

Ropes get entangled when goats are tied to the same post.

A lame man said that the load on his head was not properly balanced, and was told its unevenness began from the ground.

When a child falls into the water, take it out before you spank it.

He who forgives, ends the quarrel.

He that forgives gains the victory.

A person does not smack his lips until he sees food.

Do not select your wife until you have the dowry.

Truly to hear, you must get near.

You had better accept a good thing while it is available.

Everybody is going. You had better go, too. If you stay back you will be left for good.

If you loaf while others are farming, you will soon be begging for something to roast in your fire.

If you don't farm, what's going to stop your hunger?

You must have wisdom to cope with your neighbor.

People who like each other walk together.

If you wait to plant until the season is over, you do your work for nothing.

The first rat that went into his hole did not get his tail burned by the prairie fire.

The way for a short man to get there first is to start early.

The stick of wood that blazes up too quickly doesn't last.

Don't preach to Mr. Hear-with-his-eyes. Preach to Mr. Hear-with-his-ears.

An intelligent child needs but one lesson.

Assent in the mouth but refusal in the heart.

The goodness of the string is from the fine threads of the fibre.

Gazing at food does not appease hunger.

When the work is a failure, the worker feels shame.

A blacksmith is sought after because the tools he makes are a success.

When they tell you, listen.

A stream does not splash unless a stick falls in.

The dawn does not come twice to wake a man.

Wisdom is not in the eye but in the head.

If a matter be dark, dive to the bottom.

Do not repair another man's fence until you have seen
to your own.

A sharp spear needs no polish.

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