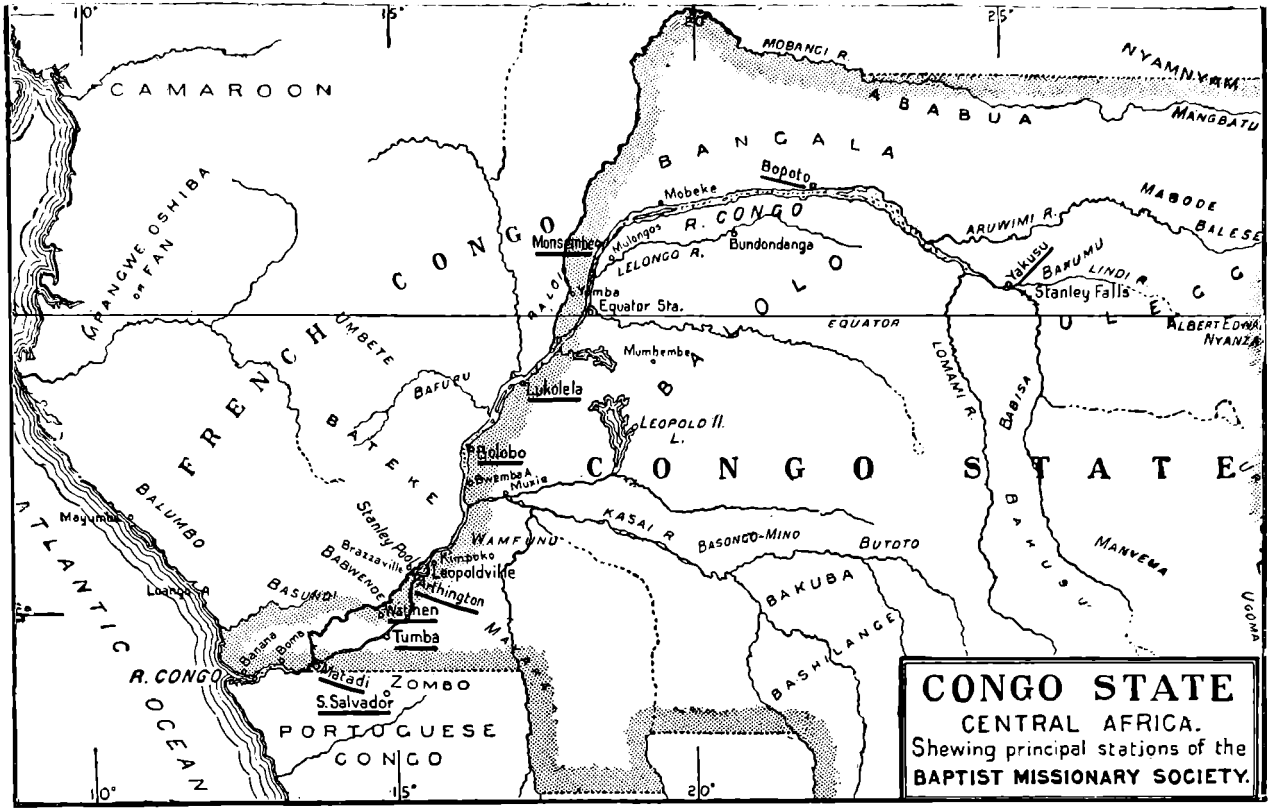
HARRY WHITE.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R. CONGO
BAKUBA
BASHILANGE
ZOMBO
S. Salvador
PORTUGUESE CONGO
UGOMA
CONGO STATE
CENTRAL AFRICA.
Shewing principal stations of the
BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

HARRY WHITE,

Missionary to the Congo.

BY

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UNION CHAPEL, MANCHESTER.

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PREFACE.

THIS brief record of Harry White's life has been written in response to the growing desire of many of his friends, for some permanent memorial of one who was deeply loved and intensely admired by those who knew him best. It was entrusted to me as an old friend and fellow-student, and I can only regret the delay before its appearance, and its inadequacy now that it does appear. A pathetic interest attaches to it because Mrs. White has passed to the higher service during its compilation. She hesitated before allowing it to be written, feeling that he would have not wished it to be done. But when urgent pleas from many friends convinced her that the story of her husband's life might do something to induce

others to offer for mission work on the Congo, she consented, and threw herself very heartily into the task of securing letters and supplying all information. I have been favoured with a large number of letters, and have drawn from them very extensively. But the story which I have endeavoured to tell has been the story of mission work on the Congo as illustrated in White's life, rather than the story of his life only. This is all he would have wished the book to be, and I trust I have not been entirely unsuccessful in this endeavour.

J. E. R.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY TRAINING.

THE story which appealed to the Christian missionary instinct of Harry White is very familiar now, in its broad outlines. But in 1885 the Congo Mission was still in its infancy, and the romance of the story was tempered very much by its record of suffering. It was only seven years since the first heroic band, including Mr. and Mrs. Tom Comber, Messrs. Bentley, Crudgington, and Hartland had landed on the banks of the mighty river which Stanley's intrepid exploration had revealed. The future missionary read the thrilling record of the attempts made to push on from San Salvador and to reach the upper river, attempts fraught with danger and ending in failure for months,

but successfully crowned on February 10th, 1881, when Mr. Crudgington called to his companion Mr. Bentley, "Look! there's Stanley Pool." He read also the pathetic account of the death of brave Mrs. Comber within a few months of landing in Africa; of the still more sudden call which came to W. H. Doke, the earliest reinforcement; of the death, through dysentery and fever, of brave Hartland, one of the band of pioneers; and then five months later of H. W. Butcher, another of the reinforcements; and of the further blow which fell upon the Mission when J. W. Hartley, with two travelling companions, succumbed to the deadly peril of travelling through Darkest Africa.

But he heard a call for men. The losses seemed God's challenge to the faith of His servants, and both the men at the front and the Committee at home had the watchword "Forward." Their confidence and courage had been rewarded. Those seven years had seen marvellous advances. The earliest efforts were made to reach Stanley Pool, and thence to penetrate into the heart of Africa. The diffi-

culties to be overcome had been great. The Congo is navigable for 100 miles from its mouth, to the port of Matadi. Then there is a stretch of 200 miles broken into frequent cataracts, and flowing through hilly country. At the head of the cataracts is Stanley Pool, a lake twenty miles long, From Stanley Pool the main river is navigable for 1,000 miles. Then Stanley Falls are reached; but these are only 500 miles from Uganda, or from Lake Tanganyika. The real objective of the Mission has been the peoples on the banks of the river between Stanley Pool and Stanley Falls. The first station had been established at San Salvador, a chief town on the caravan route from Angola to Stanley Pool, but sixty miles to the south of the river and the caravan route from Boma to the Pool. As the missionaries reached the river, and pushed on towards the Pool, new stations were founded. These included a base station at Matadi called Underhill; a station at Wathen, due north of San Salvador and near to the river; and a station called Arthington, above the cataracts and close to Stanley Pool.

Thus far had the work progressed when the call from the Dark Continent was heard by Harry White. He was born at Dalston, in London, on November 12th, 1865. The family removed to Tottenham in 1874, and though young Harry had been accustomed to attend the Established Church, he was invited to West Green Baptist Chapel, and, gladdened by the welcome extended to him, he settled there. He was converted under the ministry of Rev. G. Turner. He left school at fourteen, but he utilised fully the advantages given to him by his connection with Cassell's Publishing House. He read omnivorously. He could be seen walking home from business or riding in the train eagerly devouring some standard work; for he did not fritter his time away with scrappy literature. His moral strength was tested during these years by men in the office who offered to lend him books of a questionable nature. His refusal angered them, and they tried to entrap him into reading them. But they were utterly unsuccessful. A friend describes him at this time as "a smooth-faced, firmly-knit, manly young fellow, having pale but finely-

moulded features with truth and determination boldly written there." He seems to have been a model scholar, from the schoolmaster's standpoint. As a biography must not shrink from chronicling "the whole truth," it has to be sorrowfully allowed that his schoolmaster does not remember ever having corrected him. Such exemplary character sounds almost superfine; but for the encouragement of all, let it be stated emphatically that Harry was a brave, sturdy fellow, who only escaped punishment by the goodness of his character and the thoroughness with which he attempted everything, including his lessons. About this time he learned to swim, and he used to plunge at once into the river Lea without any "shivering on the brink." He remarked one day to his friend "I am going to swim across this morning," and he did, although he had only just learned. But the spirit of adventure and the bump of determination were both largely developed in him. In later years these were consecrated in absolute surrender to the will of his Divine Master.

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the young men, as secretary of their Bible-class and of the Literary Society. His love of children was very noticeable. He would tell them tales, make toys for them—at which he was very ingenious—and romp with them. He studied children as he did everything, with a view to more efficient service in Africa, whose people seemed to him as children. But the love of children was supreme over any such instinct. When his little girl was born he wrote to a friend that next to the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, this baby was the most precious he had received. His wife wrote after his death, saying, "I shall never forget these last weeks with baby. He was never happier than when the little one was nestling to his breast, and he would sit lost in reverie."

The determination to offer himself for Congo was made after reading an urgent appeal for men to go out to that field. It was a critical moment in the history of the young Mission. The missionaries were prospecting up the river from their base station at Stanley Pool. This had been rendered possible through the con-

tinued generosity of a noble friend of African missions, Mr. Robert Arthington, who had not only provided the means for the earliest journeys to the Congo, but in 1882 bore the entire cost of the *Peace*, a steamer specially designed for the work of navigating the Upper Congo as a mission boat. The pioneers were profoundly impressed with the vastness of the task awaiting them; still more were they weighted with the conviction that God was calling them to go forward. They found the districts on either bank of the mighty river inhabited by millions of fierce people, mostly cannibals, speaking various dialects, but with splendid possibilities about them. Behind these river-side populations dwelt countless hordes of inland folk, with whom they were usually at war, and who detested all white settlers. What a mammoth and yet inviting task for the missionaries of the Cross, to take the Gospel to these dusky savages and claim them for Christ! It is no wonder that the call came to England, "Send us more men, that we may go forward." And Harry White was one of those to hear it, and to say

to the Lord of the harvest, "Here am I; send me."

What were his qualifications for such a task? They were not of the sort which might strike the eye most quickly, or appeal at once to the casual judge of a missionary's equipment. He had not enjoyed any special educational advantages, though his parents had secured him a thoroughly useful middle-class school training. But he left school at fourteen, and had spent the subsequent years in business. He had had very little experience in preaching or public speaking, nor was there any promise that he would ever become a fluent speaker. His gifts were solid rather than showy. It was equally unlikely that he could ever settle to the quiet life of a student. His whole nature was eager. The alert mind tabernacled in a vigorous body, whose pulses throbbed to the music of movement. Equally pronounced was his hatred of all cant and shame. This hatred was voiced with no uncertain sound. It drove him to look with suspicion upon the customary phraseology of Church life. Whilst not judging others, he

was very sparing himself in the use of religious shibboleths. And, in combination with his broad human sympathies, this opposition to fashion made him an ultra-Radical. There was no hope that Harry White could ever live in grooves. He loved to carve new channels for his energy; or, if he walked in familiar paths, he must be convinced that they were the paths of righteousness in which he walked "for Thy Name's sake." He had a strongly marked individuality. This was seen even in his dress. He was the despair of tailors. His boots had to be made according to Nature's last, and not according to fashion's latest. How we joked him over those broad-toed, massively-soled shoes which could not be exchanged for another man's in college! But when he walked fifty miles in them while we were content with twenty-five miles in ours, we used to ask whether Nature was not a better guide than a Bond Street dandy! Dandyism of all sorts roused his indignation. Toadyism and flunkeyism he scorned. So he advocated very advanced political views, and was just the man to shock

the respectable devotee of proprieties. It may be unfortunate that he could not advocate his views without having to shock other good people. He was very conscious of his weaknesses; indeed, he exaggerated them, and inflicted needless scourgings upon his sensitive nature. But he had to be true to the best he knew, even though in pursuing it he seemed to trample upon ideals dear to others.

Another instance of his independence of judgment was his unwavering devotion to the principles of vegetarianism. He considered that these principles accorded best with Nature's teaching about food; and with good-humoured obstinacy he stuck to his vegetarian diet. And he did this when there was no chance of dining at a well-appointed vegetarian restaurant where the bill of fare is a pathetic and admiring imitation of that at the resort of ordinary feeders, but when his only food for months together consisted of bread and fruit and one or two vegetables cooked to complement other people's joint. But though this independence of judgment was so marked in all his life, and though

sometimes it brought him into conflict with others (to his great sorrow), it was joined to a singularly meek spirit, and was ennobled by "the beauty of holiness." He lived a life of much simplicity, on which the keenest eye could not see any stain of impurity or greed or selfishness.

Running through all these qualities like a strong shaft transforming separate wheels into one piece of machinery was a dominant purpose. He was determined to find out what God's will was for him, and then to concentrate his whole being on doing that. Before he was twenty he was convinced that God meant him to be a missionary to Africa. Once that was settled, everything in his life fell into its place. He had little encouragement from many of his friends. His broad views had brought him into close contact with men whose religious views were entirely different from his own. They laughed at the idea of going to preach the Gospel to African savages. It was quixotic (which, with some people, means too dear at the price); he would be throwing his life away; let him stay at home and help to heal the wounds of his own

land. The latter temptation was keen; but directly he felt it was his duty to go to Africa all these appeals or jeers fell from him as paper pellets might from an ironclad. He had a very humble estimate of his gifts as a preacher. He recognised that his views were easily misunderstood, and might not be the best recommendation to some whose influence was valuable; but he knew men were wanted on the Congo, and, as he said, he could not find sufficient reasons for not going. His health was vigorous; he was capable of enduring much fatigue and even privation. He hoped that his practical knowledge and mechanical skill might be useful in pioneering work in "Darkest Africa." Above all, he had a passionate love for the Saviour and a deep sympathy with all his fellow men. These gifts would not have sufficed alone; but he felt that God had called him, though he asked wonderingly why this honour had been laid upon him. He did not know that the strong meshes of a Christian pastor's prayers had been closing him up to this work. Mr. Turner had recognised the sterling qualities of this young fellow

who undertook so readily any work for which he felt at all fitted, and who did all he promised with such thoroughness. So the earnest pastor —a deeply interested friend of missionary work— prayed that Harry White might give his life to the service of Christ in foreign lands. His prayers were answered; and when the urgent appeal for more men for the Congo rang through the Baptist churches, the lad he had prayed for resolved in his own quiet way that, if the Lord would use him, he would go. And when Harry White made up his mind to do a thing because it was God's will, nothing conquerable by human consecration could keep him back. He made his plans quietly, prepared himself as fully as he possibly could, and then applied to Regent's Park College for admission. He was received with a very large number of new students, and in September, 1885, began his course of special preparation there.

CHAPTER II.

COLLEGE LIFE.

FOUR very useful and happy years were spent at college. White entered heartily into all the departments of college life. He was a prominent member of the debating society, and a gallant upholder of the college reputation upon the football field; but everything he did was done with a view to making himself more efficient as a Congo missionary. During one of his vacations he learned carpentering, because he knew that must be useful for pioneer missionary work. During another holiday he walked to Rome and back. He was always a great walker. On one occasion he covered a distance of seventy miles in seventeen and a half hours. The tramp to Rome made him famous in college. It was undertaken with a desire to know how he could get on in a strange country where he did not know the language. He was thinking of possible itinerations and pioneer journeys in Darkest Africa, where his heart was already, and he

wanted to accustom himself to roughing it. He had plenty of experience of the latter process during this famous walk. He took very little money with him purposely. Being a vegetarian, he was not compelled to go into the towns for food. He lived chiefly on bread, apples, and milk, and these could be secured at any farm-house. Being compelled to take train for a short distance on the return journey, in order to get to London in time for the opening of college, he arrived in Calais without a cent. How was he to cross? His honest face was his fortune. He recognised an English clergyman of repute, accosted him, and told his story; and the worthy canon trusted the penniless Baptist student with the money for the fare to London; and perhaps he was surprised to find that the story was true and the money returned!

During this "Continental tour" White was not usually afflicted with the ills of hotel life. Often he slept out in the open, or in a barn. A favourite resting-place was "a village inn, where we got beds for 2d. and the privilege of washing at the public fountain." It was dusk and

raining when he reached Tell's Chapel, on the shores of the Lake of Lucerne. His diary relates:—"I went and lay down in my mackintosh in the open 'drink-hall' on two forms, with the night breezes fanning my face—my satchel for a pillow. Such an arrangement ensures early rising, if it has no other advantages, and the morning light awoke me, and a delightful walk I had in the vigorous morning air to Altdorf." An amusing incident which happened a few days later in Italy is related thus:—"Seeing some fine eggs in a cobbler's shop, I went in, hoping to buy. There was no one in the shop, so I waited. Presently in rushes a heavy, savage-looking fellow and begins trying to push me out. Getting more angry and excited, he pulls out a pistol and threatens to shoot me if I don't leave his shop. That not taking effect, he comes on with a heavy stick. But I have one also. By persuasive words I manage to cool his passion, and it is my turn to threaten now. I shall fetch the gendarme if he doesn't apologise for assaulting me and breaking that egg on my shoulder. He sulkily

says he is sorry he mistook me. 'But only last week,' says he, 'I had a man come in my shop and steal from me two pairs of boots. And when a boy came and told me there was a strange man in my shop, I rushed over, thinking you had come on the same errand. I didn't know who you were. I am sorry that I didn't see you were a gentleman. . . .'" Another night was passed in the stone hut of some cheesemakers on the Apennines, with sloppy mud all about, and floor of similar material. There was no hint of blankets or bedding. The men, eight including White, lay in their clothes on layers of branches, with sacks for bedding.

He spent many days amongst the dwellers on the slopes of the Apennines—"some of the finest peasantry in the world. The men are slim-built, athletic, vivacious, and intelligent; the women strong, fine-featured, hard-working, and dignified, often noble-looking in old age. All the folks seem temperate, neighbourly, and hospitable. Their life is charmingly simple. They have their patches of corn and their greensward beneath the chestnut shade. They

have their goats on the rocky heights, who give them cheese. From his own sheep the peasant cuts the wool, which his wife and daughters spin by hand and then weave into the cloth they wear. Cows and bullocks draw the plough and drag the loads of corn and hay up and down these rough stony paths on sleigh-like arrangements. One of the prettiest things it is to see the tardy ox with a great load of new cut corn, jolting and lumbering up the jagged way between the wild hedges, amongst the bewitchery of the glistening chestnut foliage, with a dark-eyed girl leading the eccentric animal." This passage from the account he wrote of his tramp serves to illustrate his quick apprehension. A walk was a delight to him, because each sense was an avenue of approach for all that was worthy of notice. In a letter to the lady who was afterwards to become his wife, written during his college course, this is how he writes about his walk from the village where he had preached on the Sunday—a small matter of twenty-eight miles:—

"What I kept wishing, as I walked, or rather rambled home through the delightful woods and

along the lanes and quiet foot-paths of Buckinghamshire, was that ladies could get into the habit of walking well. I felt really selfish being there alone, intensely enjoying nature in some of her loveliest aspects, and you, perhaps, busy in the dull house. The fact that I can get such infinite enjoyment from a walk in the country, when to most the enjoyment is all taken away by the pain it costs, is a reminder of how much mankind loses by neglecting to cultivate the powers which God has given. How deep and pure might be the pleasure we could get from health-giving things on every hand if our faculties were only cultivated to use these things aright. Look what some lose by being unable to read a good book. How many thousands of times have we lost the chance of sweet pleasure by being unable, by reason of the grossness of the sense of seeing, to find anything beautiful in the little flower by the wayside! I think we should hardly need wealth to make us happy, or any of the grosser pleasures of life, if our beings were so attuned to nature that we could have every sense a minister of joy, bringing love and beauty to our heart's

perception from the common things strewn by the Creator around every step of our life. What a degenerate brute man must be to prefer the stifling theatre to the landscape alive with beauty, to see more to call forth his admiration in the glaring stage scenery than in the changing hues of the simple country side! How can people called cultivated (!) prefer the luxurious couch and the novel, sickly as can be, to the voice of nature speaking through a thousand song-birds and myriads of lesser things?"

In later years these powers of observation and description found ample scope as he travelled the unknown rivers and forests of Africa. But these letters are full of suggestiveness for all who are failing to "consider the lilies."

Although White took his place in the College Preaching Station Society, his modesty made him shy of visits to the larger churches. He loved best to spend the Sunday either in a village or working in the slums of London. He was a constant visitor to the Dock Mission, to which the College sent helpers each week, and his happiest work was done when addressing a

band of rough seamen or of outcasts in a lodging-house. If he preached at one of the village stations he would frequently walk a large part or all of the way home. An incident which occurred during one of these visits illustrates his unconventionality and goodness of heart. Before leaving on Monday morning, he went to the cottage of a bedridden old lady to bid her good-bye. He found her without any fire, so he lit it and put the kettle on, and rushed to the station without time even to wash his hands, richly rewarded by the old woman's cry, "God bless you! my boy."

He retained to the end his affectionate interest in his College. Writing from the Congo to a fellow student, he said: "I want to congratulate you on passing that old Senatus so splendidly. Regent's certainly showed up well in that list, did it not? And it is thanks to you and old——! As you would conclude, such as I had another vocation whilst in Coll. It was chiefly to keep Regent's from getting too proud through high attainments in scholarship." This sentence is characteristically modest in its estimate of his own scholarship.

Meanwhile his desire to go to Africa had been growing steadily stronger. He had heard Stanley lecture when that intrepid traveller told the story of his 7,000 miles journey to crowds of interested listeners. But was there one in the crowd more interested than the young Baptist student, who looked forward with patient but eager anticipation to the time when he would visit that dark land as a herald of the Cross? That he was not deceived by fancies is clear from such a message as the following, written to his future wife:—"The strain of African life you cannot imagine. I am afraid the romance of books of travel deceives. Pray think seriously about the relation of this life amidst enervating home comforts, and the life amidst wildness without society to keep the drooping spirits alive, and with a constant strain on all the powers; and remember the sin of throwing oneself unarmed into danger." In the same letter occur such sentences as these:—"I could not bear to have to give up work in the land long looked forward to." "I feel that I cannot live my full life anywhere but in

Congo." On the day before he was to see the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society he wrote: "I doubt whether even you yet understand how I long to be out *there* working with the brave fellows. . . . If not stronger yet more constant is the longing desire to see the shores of Congo land. When will they come in sight?" He had not long to wait now. He was accepted by the Committee at the same time as his college friend, W. L. Forfeitt, and they joined a party which included Messrs. Scrivener, Cameron, and Percy Comber, returning to the Congo in April, 1889.

What a send off the missionaries used to get! The smoky old rafters of the railway station rang to the unaccustomed echoes of "Diadem" as the assembled friends sang "All hail the power of Jesus' name." Then the group of the fellow students of White and Forfeitt joined in a lusty cheer and shouted the college "war cry," "Forward Regents." So the brave band went forward to join their comrades on the distant shores of the dark continent.

CHAPTER III.

"CAPTAIN WHITE."

UNDERHILL, at that time the base station of the society, was reached by the missionary party on an early day in June, 1889. On the first Sunday they met for service in Mr. and Mrs. Weeks's "pretty two-roomed house," and in the latter part of the day were rowed to an English factory near, where White told the Gospel story, with the aid of an interpreter, to about fifty native workmen. In the evening a little company of seventeen gathered to show forth the Lord's death. Then came the separation. Forfeitt journeyed on to Wathen with Scrivener and Cameron. White and Percy Comber turned to the south-east to reach San Salvador; Mr. Lewis had to take his wife to the coast, *en route* for England, so Comber and White went to occupy the station during his absence.

This gave White his first insight into missionary life in Central Africa; but it by no means intro-

duced him to all its perils or delays. The work at San Salvador had been begun in 1878 by the missionaries who landed first by the Congo. The district was far more in touch with civilisation than the inland districts could be; and the thirteen years which had elapsed since the station was founded had witnessed a remarkable development of Christian service. White wrote enthusiastically of the admirable results achieved, particularly in the school work and the training of young men. Evidently he was surprised to find a number of boys in the school with whom he could begin work at once. He notices the interesting fact that though these boys are quick at adding up, "because the bartering instinct is in their blood," they cannot see the use of figures, and do not take at all kindly to sums. The young missionary warned his friends not to "expect any romantic-ringing letters from San Salvador, for I am in the midst of a people whose king has an invalid chair, and whose chiefs begin to reckon their wealth and demonstrate their dignity by being able to wear two old European hats—say, one

straw and one wide-a-wake felt—and one, two, or three European coats at the same time, whilst their followers carry a number of vari-coloured umbrellas corresponding to the dignity of the said dirty-faced potentates."

As he lived amongst the people, and as he journeyed to the neighbouring villages, other causes for astonishment were not wanting. He notes with surprise the cold, misty mornings and evenings, more suggestive of England than of Central Africa. Again, he is surprised "that one should be able to feel a real exhilaration when walking in Africa. I thought when I read Livingstone's statement to the same effect, that he must indeed have been a wonderful man, of most mighty constitution, to know such an experience. But I find everyone speaks of the enjoyment of a *moderate amount* of walking at the *proper time of day*." He mentions here the temptation to walk farther than was customary at home, and must have found his own large experience as a pedestrian stand him in good stead. It was distinctly encouraging to White to find that at San Salvador his vegetarianism

put him into no difficulty. "It is astonishing that I have been making to-day, of native foods, a dinner almost exactly the same as I should have coveted were I at home. Eggs, delicious new beans almost equal to green peas, only richer, a kind of pumpkin eating much like vegetable marrow, with this white baking-powder bread made in small crusty loaves. . . . Apples and porridge for breakfast, with eggs forced down your throat first, and a good ripe banana before you start! Oughtn't a fellow to live and flourish? Well, so I shall as long as this continues. . . . For a time I am living as a vegetarian should live—getting just an ideal food." It must be mentioned that the state of affairs up river was very different, and that White had to sacrifice his vegetarian principles later on.

But he was not to be allowed to enjoy the genial companionship of Messrs. Lewis and Comber for long. Marching orders came early in September. Mr. Harrison was down with sickness; and Mr. Grenfell wanted White to come and take charge of the *Peace*. So the baggage was packed, carriers were selected, and,

after a brief stay at Wathen *en route*, Arthington was reached, where the River Congo opens out into the broad expanse of the Pool, and where the steamer will be met.

The next twelve months were spent by White on the *Peace*. He was a "cockney"—"a nickel-plated cockney" he called himself, "with baser composition underlying the Regent's metal." He was quite a novice at managing a steamer: but he was ready to do any work which the mission required; his unfailing ingenuity enabled him to overcome the difficulties which presented themselves; whilst his tireless good nature triumphed over the inevitable mishaps. Many voyages were made between Arthington and Bolobo and Lokolele: stores had to be carried to the stations; missionaries conveyed up and down river; the precious mail-bags safely delivered to the lonely workers; and many helpful services rendered to other missionary societies or to the State officials. The voyages were full of lively incidents. At times the river is high. "Hardly a rock is to be seen," says the novice in a letter, "and we can go almost anywhere, whereas in the

THE MISSION STEAMER "PEACE."

dry season we have to pick our way with the utmost caution between reefs and banks and snags."

A letter, dated December 23rd, 1890, contains the following paragraph :—"The progress of this epistle was rudely stopped this morning by a tornado coming down stream, which soon enveloped us in a fury of driving rain lashing up the waters of the Congo till it was rougher than ever I saw the Bay of Biscay! I quote this phrase from my work, entitled 'Aberrations in Central Africa,' of which the first volume has been issued by Messrs. Poorbrains, Peace & Co. The fact is, I only saw the Bay for three or four calm, delightful days! Our old companion, the *Plymouth* swift boat, which we take in tow alongside almost invariably when we go out—like some ladies their husbands—is a bother when these tornadoes come upon us. Once crossing the river in a choppy sea (or, rather, *river*), I had its gunwale only an inch above water. You should see these poor 'unclothed' shiver and shake when they have to bale out the old *Plym* for an hour or two! Anyone

would think Africa was the coldest land on earth, and I'm sure if the explorers in Arctic regions only shook with cold nine-tenths as violently, the very exercise would be enough to keep them warm."

This is his description of the crew:—"There's bright, quick Francis, the engineer, foremost in all hard work. There is Sése, steersman, a queer little parcel, yet a very useful fellow withal, looking after wood-cutting for our fire, when we put in at evening, and a (would-be) crack shot. Certainly he is an ardent sportsman—can't bear to see a hippo bob up his head without having a shot at him. Francis is from Cameroons. Don't know where the worthy man at the wheel comes from. Then we have Emmanuel of Manoel, from Akkra, a sturdy fellow, assistant engineer; and another boy, 'what keeps the water proper in the boiler,' regulating the self-acting pump as the gauge-glass indicates. Mr. Quartermaster Harelip is a former Congo Capato, a little bit of a swell, who doesn't shrink a job—a strange combination, say you! I suppose Sése is boatswain. What that young man is who looks after the anchor

dropping and lifting, and throws the sounding line, I don't know. Of the Bobangis, there is Joe, who carries the anchor to and from the shore, and Joli, the great big swell. You would say it was a comical crew if you saw them squatting in the old *Plymouth* towed alongside, roasting their dried fish and kwanga over a wood fire in a tin pan, with their cicatriced faces and bodies, or if you saw them round their camp fire when wood-cutting is finished and the tongues of all are loosened to an almost dangerous extent."

One advantage of steamer work greatly prized by White was that it brought him very much into the company of Mr. Grenfell, our intrepid pioneer missionary and explorer. In letters written during this time, White makes many references of this sort: "Then came in Mr. Grenfell's knowledge of the river, his wonderful memory and careful mapping to decide which channel we should take, which side of a mass of islands we should journey, and when we should cross into another channel." "Mr. Grenfell is poorly these two or three days, but he slogs on all the same. No tiredness can make him miss

an opportunity of taking a latitude or longitude, tedious job as it is, if a clear night and firm ground offer the opportunity."

Two very noteworthy trips were made during White's year on the steamer.

The following extracts from a letter dated "Kintamo, Stanley Pool, October 18th, 1890," will explain one trip:—

"I should like to write you a good long letter this time, but no chance I'm afraid, and I'm not at all inclined to collect my thoughts just now, on the eve, as I am, of a journey that promises to be as new an experience as unknown in its results. I am going for a journey of some two months or more up the Kasai to a station on some of its highest tributaries. I am going on the *Peace*, but not in charge of my charge. And it is prophesied I shall have but little peace of mind on the way! The mind or soul of the *Peace*, poor Mr. Grenfell sighed, would be driven out of her by this voyage, when he heard she was doomed to make it. Yet peace or no peace, for the quiet of my conscience and heart, I felt obliged to undertake the trip, because if I

didn't, how should I know what might come to those eight of our workpeople and mission-boys who are compelled to make the voyage willy-nilly. For the State requisitioned her. . . So to-morrow I start with a State captain."

It was an anxious time for all our steamer staff. The demand of the State had to be complied with, and yet there were misgivings as to the wisdom and safety of allowing a missionary to make the journey. However, White determined to stick by the steamer at any cost. Afterwards he wrote: "I'm glad I went with the *Peace*, however some may criticise my doing so. I had a duty to our workpeople and boys (the skilled part of our crew was requisitioned with the steamer) which was a greater consideration than some unsympathetic criticism from the strait-laced at home." The River Kasai flows into the Congo from the east, halfway between Bolobo and Stanley Pool. The compulsory voyage up this big tributary was utilised by the skipper of the *Peace* for improving his powers of mapping out a new district and for studying the people on the

banks. The book in which he entered the results of his study contains a carefully-drawn plan of the river and surrounding country, together with many interesting notes on the people and on the flora and fauna of the district. Altogether it gives an instructive glimpse at his industry and quickness of observation.

This journey under the strong hand of the State was a great grief to White. He wrote about it thus: "But the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and this past two months has been anything but sweetness for me. If I were in search of happiness, and you offered me two months in Pentonville or my last two months over again, I'm sure I would prefer six months in the prison (with innocence). And, in fact, what a relief it would be to get 'hard labour for life,' with its freedom from anxiety, to this life of toil of mind, regret for unwise deeds, uncertainty as to how to do the next thing demanding doing" But it was recognised by everybody acquainted with the case that White had rendered the Baptist Missionary Society a very signal service by the courage, courtesy, and

wisdom he showed all through this unhappy incident. Mr. Grenfell, who had returned to England to superintend the building of a new boat for the Mission, wrote when he heard of the *Peace's* safe return: "I am devoutly grateful you got on so well as you did, and thank God there was no greater difficulty in managing the boys and keeping them in order than you experienced. You know I was not a little anxious about the outcome of it all, and it is a great relief to me to have so good an account as you are able to give. I sympathise with you very sincerely in the difficulties you have had to face, but it is a very devout doxology that wells forth as I consider how well you got through them all. God be thanked! And may He continue to protect and help you in all your goings and make your way very plain."

The second trip was of a very different sort. It was a voyage up the Mobangi River, a mighty tributary of the Congo, flowing into it on the north bank near the Equator, and discovered by Mr. Grenfell some years previously. On that occasion 400 miles of the Mobangi had been

explored by missionaries who were far-sighted enough to realise that mission work in Central Africa involves a statesmanlike effort to understand all the conditions under which it could be carried on most favourably. Only because the exploring work had been well done before could such a journey as White describes in the following extracts be possible:—

"We didn't go up the Mobangi to explore it this time, but to see if there were any spots within easy reach that would do for new stations. We had a very heavy cargo, mostly goods for Upoto, and a dozen workmen made a big addition to our crew and to the load we had to carry. The Mobangi was 'dry' we found; as the boys say 'the water was very dry'—that is, there was a good deal of sand where water would be another season. So we had to do a good deal of dodging in and out, now one side now the other side of a broad channel, to avoid the huge banks that seemed, till you were right up close, as if they would block all further progress. . . . One great advantage of travelling 'when the water is dry' is the getting good wholesome

sand-banks to camp by. 'Tis delightful, when the throbbing and clattering of machinery is still, and the axes are ringing by the blazing fire, to take a stroll over the great breadth of yellow sand that squeaks under your tread like the deep snow of home. Just when the sun is going down purply over the deeply darkening island belt of trees, and the after-glow reflection deepens over another great island mass of dense foliage, and the stars begin to come out in their splendour, then is the time that makes the memory of life here very much sweeter than it would be if without such times of peace and scenes of beauty. . . .

"The second day the towns came thick. . . . There was a grand scene to rejoice a man's heart looking for a site where he might work amongst friendly people. A long line of villages, with their plantain and oil palms screened by a fine line of tall trees and shrubbery, and a beautiful strip of golden sand from which the water had retired, made as pretty an African settlement as you could wish to see. But no sooner were we seen heading for a beach by a spit of piled sand,

than the whole community turned out, sauntering along the lengthy "Riverside" in throngs. We stayed an hour to view the place and buy what food we could. . . .

"The whistle was a terrible scare until, upon our return journey some days later, after all the women and children had started scampering as if for dear life at its shrill sound, and the men seemed agitated, I had one of the men on board and made him pull the whistle-string himself. He stood with the thing shrieking in his ears till we screwed down, and then darted ashore and was received with laughing congratulations by his neighbours. A few minutes and we were passing another line of villages, situated on a flat breaking into a steep bank some twenty feet high, quite a line of cliff. But the water would rise a good eight feet before reaching full flood, and then these sheer high banks, which were giving us so much trouble over getting wood, would not be so formidable looking. Of all the places we saw on the Mobangi, I think this line of villages—one day's steaming from the mouth—occupied by people very little

different from those at Bolobo and Lokolele, would be the best place for a mission station. It's to these villages that most of the trade from the Congo comes. I mean native trade; other trade there is none, as the people who have the ivory will only exchange it for slaves. . . . .

"On the Sunday afternoon we visited a neighbouring village. There the wonder was the piles of elephant skulls. At the other villages hippopotamus skulls, turned upside down, made a general seat under the shady palaver tree or outside the dwelling. These are common trophies. And at the village visited the night before, we had seen a few elephant skulls and some fine deer and buffalo skulls. But going up to a tree where such trophies were piled now, we counted to our surprise no less than twenty-five elephant skulls, mostly big ones. . . . A hundred yards away was another similar pile, indicating, I suppose, the Rialto of another village, although there was no marked boundary. As you will agree, we remarked that the people who could show such a trophy must be hardy and daring hunters. This was the next most

promising spot for mission work I thought. . . . A calm Sunday by the sand bank in the midst of the great Mobangi flood. We had a little service in the morning, and in the evening our usual prayer meeting; read, wrote and strolled, and paid aforesaid visit to town in our boat, the men paddling to a lively recitative and chorus in their usual fine time and tune of the Upper Congo folk—grand contrast to the inharmonious voices of the Lower River.

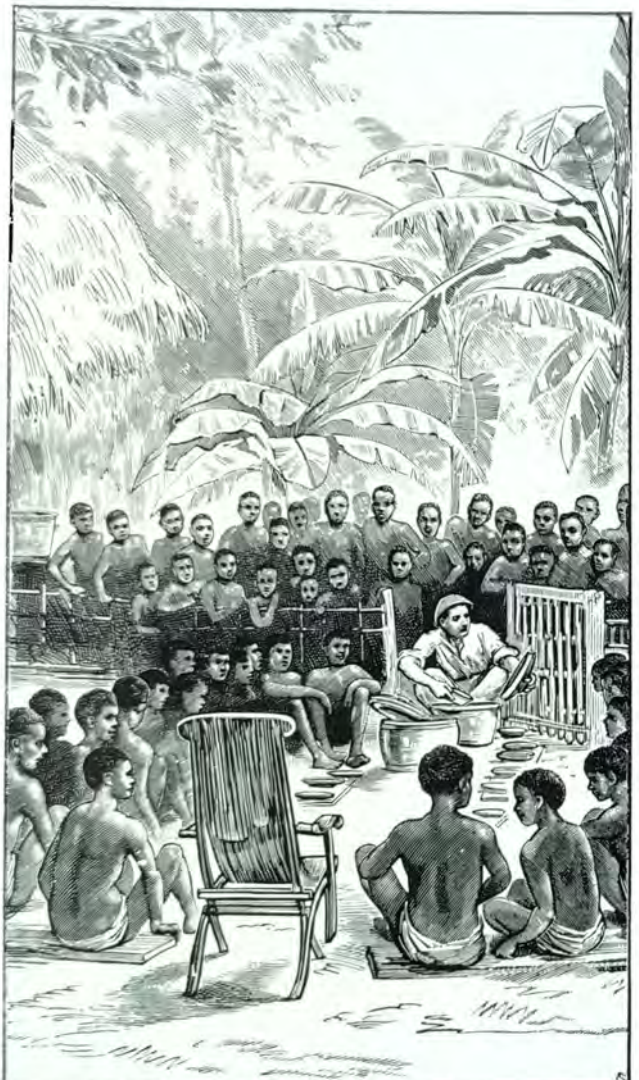
"From this time we weren't very well pleased with the reception we got. On the Monday three hours brought us to a long line of villages by a pretty shore. We visited one, but the people were very shy. Not a soul was to be seen at first. . . . No impression could we make. Just half a dozen people would come and trade, and the rest skidaddle. So far the people were like enough to our Bobangi neighbours. But that evening we came upon a very distinctly different nation, not understanding any Kibangi. There, as we approached the beach between the two low cliffs, the gap was seen filled with armed men—quite a crowd. . . .

"We stayed nearly two hours at two places here, trying to get the people to come. But the nearest they would approach was to the edge of a cliff, from which two or three men cried out that they did not want us, and we had better go on. . . . There was no use in proceeding. The bounds of possible mission work had been reached, so we turned round and made our way down stream."

This letter will help to make clear how much White's heart was set on a forward movement. He could not bear the thought that the Society must be satisfied with the stations already founded, and it was his darling wish that he might have a hand in the new enterprise when the time came for it.

It will be understood, therefore, that it was with deep thankfulness "Captain White" navigated his little craft when she carried men and goods far up the river, and he could write: "*Upoto is founded!* The bargain was struck last night, and to-day we have commenced clearing the land, buying native huts for temporary dwellings, and hiring workmen. So Oram and

Forfeitt are having a busy time of it." A little later in the year the *Peace* carried Messrs. Weeks and Stapleton to found another station at Monsembi, though White was lying ill with fever at Bolobo and could not accompany the party. But how he and his comrades rejoiced that thus at length the forward move had been taken and new vantage points had been occupied for Christ amidst the villages which are scattered along the banks of the mighty Congo!



BOYS' TREAT AT BOPOTO.

CHAPTER IV.

BOPOTO.

ALTHOUGH White could not accompany the party which founded Upoto, or Bopoto (to use its better-known name), he was soon commissioned to join his college friends, Oram and Forfeitt, there. The next spell of missionary life was spent as part of the staff at this station. Bopoto is 700 miles from Stanley Pool, and is on the north bank of the Congo, just at the apex of the horse-shoe curve which marks the river's course. It was a great joy to White that he was commissioned to join the staff here. He always felt himself better fitted for pioneering than for the routine work of a settled station. His temperament and his training seemed to mark

him out as a likely man for this new rough toil. Many deeply interesting letters written from Bopoto have been preserved; and it will be best to let the missionary tell the story of life and work there, as far as possible, in his own words:

"It was past six when I got back, as I came the two or three miles or so from the State Poste overland, and so visited my sixtieth Ngombe (or 'country' or 'provincial') hamlet. But you must not think I've been over-walking myself. I find we have over fifty of these 'Ngombe' villages within a half circle of a three-mile circumference! Of course, most of the hamlets are very small. The tortuous puzzling paths amongst these sixty odd hamlets are all amongst the densest bush, often pleasantly shaded (where the bush is not, as it mostly is, the mere luxuriant growth that always out here covers deserted plantations and clearings in an indescribably Congo (? African) character). Indeed, this is a glorious spot of earth. Some day I will sit down and attempt a description of the magnificent panorama of water and wood—glistening,

dazzling, long shadowed, intensely deep-hued, and silvery gleaming—mazy channels, amongst islands of a massive greenery, a sort of substantial bulk of verdure that hardly has room to luxuriate (it's got beyond mere growing long ago). And, in fact, the sheer low banks of the upper ends of the islands only half support the outermost giants, bald, white-trunked cotton trees, or oil palms, playing the Leaning Tower of Pisa in a way that will gain the meed of its impudence in a crash and a grand old splash and splutter one of these days—next high tide perhaps, when the 2½-mile an hour current gets tickling the underside of their overhanging roots and the top of the brittle bank over which they have leaned so long! I do not think any river or views in the world could equal these scenes from the long, low Bopoto ridges, and wooded and sweet-scented shrub-grown slopes.

"On Saturdays I am making it a practice to take a whole day jaunt, as my school does not give me time to get to the more distant districts of our neighbourhood on other days, unless I

walked in the heat of the day; although I have not yet penetrated so far but that I could go over my lengthiest jaunt in the cool time between four and six in the evening. But it is useless to do that sort of walking here—waste time (half the distance and twenty times the knowledge gained). I never take a walk without my note-book and compass, and my old *Rome*-ing satchel roams away with me inseparably, only with this difference, it rides on somebody else's back. So the Saturday's walk is by no means an old style performance or feat of barges, but is welcomed enthusiastically as an opportunity for seeing more into the home life of the worthy folks around us—so much despised by the waterside 'gentry'—not the landed, but emphatically the landless, by the way. . . . Certainly the Ngombe of this district—'Moiya' as they call themselves, and as I shall speak of them in case I have to speak of other tribes of 'Ngombe'—certainly, I say, they are not an idle people. What would an old Bobangi chief say to this example. Last Saturday I passed through a chief's village who had gone to a place described

as two or three hours' walk. I met him on my walk back about four in the afternoon (having just succeeded in circumnavigating his circle, or parish, of some fifteen hamlets), eating a morsel of cassava-roll and splitting a certain reed-stalk into fibres for string. This man receives through his own hands all the trade that comes from the large and indefinite districts north, his village being the furthest we have yet visited on the Great North Road from Bopoto the Lower, along which comes all the little ivory that finds its way to this place, and which leads surely across the Mongalla and on to the Wellé. . . . Let me tell you of my last Saturday's trip to a neighbourhood or parish, the remotest point reached of which may be the extraordinary distance of three miles from this blotting pad. I passed through the string of villages forming part of Likomo parish, the nearest of the twenty odd hamlets of which is ten minutes from us, and the furthest not more than fifteen (!), and along the few hundred paces to the first hamlet of Kalàgba. With me were two school boys and a worthy youth. On the way we met some of

those strange red pods growing close to the ground, the flower which produced them springing from an underground running stalk. . . . Three little horseshoe arrangements of rabbit hutches passed, we enter a fine open sort of round-square place with weeds and small grass, and in part shaded by a beautiful, wide-spreading 'fig,' whose dark foliage and wide-spreading and parallel-growing lower branches, give an air of sombre pleasantness, like that of a broad home cedar in a garden, to the peaceful, silent village. Under the shade of the village tree will be sitting, perhaps a little company of strangers from the far Bandanga, or of neighbours paying one of the everlasting neighbour calls. Perhaps the blacksmith's boy is blowing up the fire for his brother. A man with skilful strokes of a native axe shapes a paddle in a few minutes from a very roughly prepared stick, lessening the vigour of his strokes as it draws nearer to completion, and then sitting down to finish it off by carving all over the blade. Several groups of women are sitting about kneading the cassava meal and wrapping it in leaves in the

form of long cat's-tail-like 'twists' for boiling, after which it will be ready for sale at the daily market held on our '*estate*'; or for home consumption, if it has been made with superior care!

"In an unwalled shed, in line with the other houses, which are now and then semi-detached but in completed villages uniform with the whole unbroken side or half of a hamlet or village—in one of these open sheds, which are the 'parlours' of the family mansions, and are always provided with benches of planks on low posts stuck in the ground, are lolling several youths; or perhaps it is noon and a company has arrived, and a minstrel neighbour has strolled in carrying all before him with the *pink-a-pinkinabulation* of his 'biti,' as the Congos call the instrument which with them consists of a set of curiously tuned iron-splints or 'keys' on a hollow box; but here the same slips of iron (tuned nearer our scale) are fixed to a piece of thin wood fitted to the open side of the back part of a tortoise shell. If this musical tyrant has come along, you will hear a

curious chorus of guttural humming and 'clicking' from the thronged shed, peeping under the roof of which you will see the body of every person present, slightly swaying in time with the music, whilst each beats time with a little stick on anything that may be handiest. Like enough the perspiration will be running down everybody, but still, so long as the 'biti' sounds, the bodies sway and the little sticks beat time, and the humming and clicking continue. I was once overtaken by such a storm. I had to make fast my note-book and drive before it. The minstrel was lord of the hour and the minds of the company!"

"It is the Ngombe towns chiefly that have diminished, for what good reason we could not clearly make out. The stupid man in charge of the *poste* could only tell us that the man to whom the best Ngombe village belonged had died, and so the people had gone back inland. We followed a big path on the Sunday afternoon some mile or more inland; paths old and new, made as by fugitives, branched in every direction. A stream, pretty enough in itself (feeder of

Itimbiri, I think), stopped the ardour of the explorers. We thought of naming it after Scrivener, of whom, if it could not be said that he was the first distinguished traveller to see it, yet it could be said truly that it was the first time that distinguished traveller had seen it! But then we thought that his name was already connected with a great engineering work at Lokolele—viz., the Scrivener Viaduct—and that was sufficient honour for the present; and as we could not hit upon the name of any liberal subscriber to the Society we left the stream unchristened. . . . By the way, the Ngombe towns are building a bit behind our station here, and by the way in which the waterside village has recovered I should almost feel justified in settling at any recently burnt-out town if I had the opportunity, and the people were evidently in the neighbourhood. Scrivener, Stapleton, and myself, last week, passed through seven or eight Ngombe villages all within thirty minutes of the station, all building at a rapid rate. Some had moved sites, others seemed quite new advents. Of course they were the

usual Ngombe rabbit-hutches, on their hard sand-raised floor, but they looked prim. But how comical to see these great fourteen-stone six-footers leaning their elbows on the grass stalk rafters of their unfinished dwellings! I might say to a wondering audience that a thick-chested Ngombe man at Upoto was once sleeping in his low abode on the high floor, and, heaving a heavy sigh, the roof was lifted off by his expanded chest! But still these biggest of the Congo men go on building the smallest dwellings. . . ."

But the missionaries' journeys were not all on foot. These heralds of the Cross were able to reach many more people by using the great river highway.

"I must give you some account of our voyage these last few days after leaving here. We have been as far as the mouth of the Aruwhimi. The voyage has been interesting, more so, perhaps, than pleasant. The one thing it has impressed, and that very painfully, upon us is the unsettled condition of the country. At every place we visited the people would not stay to receive us, but scampered off into the bush,

or paddled away in their canoes, often as soon as the steamer came in sight. You may imagine we felt very disappointed at not finding the people more friendly and truthful. But evidently their relationships with steamers have not been the pleasantest. We landed at some very finely-situated villages a little this side of the Aruwhimi, on the south bank. They were so sheltered by the foliage growing on the slopes of the waterside hillocks, that we had almost passed them by but for noticing a few big-chested individuals and canoes on the fine sandy beach. . . . We went up to Basoko (the State station at the Aruwhimi mouth) by the north bank, but on our return journey we at once crossed to the south bank of the Congo and saw a piece of river scenery and well made settlements with evidences of industry about them, that pleasantly surprised us. This is the long Borumbu district, and a very fine district it is. The villages are rather scattered. Four hours' steaming down stream means some thirty miles, and that was the time it took us passing the villages of Borumbu. The pleasantest were at the upper

end opposite the Aruwhimi almost. It was these we visited, the folks very politely leaving their homes whilst we inspected them at our leisure. I got a talk with a few men on the beach, however, before we left. They did not seem to have any reason for running away, and told us a big lie—that the people had not run away from us, but happened just then to be all out fishing or getting chop from their pleasant town across the quarter-mile channel on the thickly-wooded island yonder. Pleasant it looked pushing back the energetic growth of lanky forest trees with their mass of jungle beneath, that the emerald plantain leaves might lounge and swagger about amongst the all-brown, leaf-roofed dwellings that squatted along the bank for a mile or more. . . .

"The houses in these villages were somewhat better than any we had seen since leaving Bopoto, though not so good as the best style of the villages Mbumba, Ngengere and Yambinga between here and the Itimbiri. They were very low and long, and with the posts supporting the broad eaves of the leaf-thatched roof. Some very

good specimens of pottery unfired were about the village, better, if anything, than even Mbumba used to turn out. These villages, however, could not represent anything like the population dwelling in Mbumba, Yambinga, Ebumda, and Ngengere, between Bopoto and the Itimbiri. Lower down on the same bank we saw several long lines of hamlets, some evidently holding till recently a very large and dense population. These are known as the Yelulema towns. They seemed decayed; some fine sites were almost entirely bare of houses and without sign of inhabitants. But, nevertheless, in spite of the unsettled look of the districts, there is still undoubtedly a very large number of people living between the Itimbiri and the Aruwhimi."

Sometimes, however, their reception was more encouraging. A later letter says:—

"I think my last reception and experiences at Ndoba and Yambinga, and invitations from Ngengere people, will read as a very welcome contrast to those former disheartening attempts to get at those places. There was a good crowd by the bank as we drew near Ndoba. Not a

person ran away as we put in to the State premises. In half an hour we had bought a good pile of wood, and I half a dozen fish nets and ditto of mats very cheap. The folks knew me very well, asked when our steamer was coming, whether it would come to their town, and if I would come and build there? On the return journey, when I was navigating that remarkable tub alone, we put in and bought, in a few minutes, another pile of wood, and found the folks likewise fearless and friendly and in even larger numbers. I had no time to go through the town, but the number of folks coming to see us and trade was the best argument that Ndoba was flourishing, and that its former nervousness was but a temporary disease probably related to the Hausa epidemic."

Meanwhile the little band had to face all the difficulties incidental to pioneering missionary work in Central Africa. Merely to provide shelter and sustenance is not easy. The following extracts help us to realise a little of what this means:—

"I am off to-morrow with a canoe company of

workmen to search for some big durable timber for our house. We are going to do a little camping out. I may be back in a day or two, or may stay some time—depends upon circumstances (events always do in Congo!) This house, the Family Mansion, Bopoto—for it is to be for the first man who comes here married—is rather a castle in the air at present. We have a goodly collection of logs for piles on which to raise it from the ground. We have a fair number of planks on the way. But we have not much wood for the big timbers of the frame-work yet, and the wood for planks is getting very scarce in the neighbourhood. . . . I gathered and swallowed my second picking of 'Canadian Wonder' French beans from my garden to-day. The former picking was gathered six weeks less one day after sowing! Forfeitt's came on in exactly the same period to a day! We have had quite twenty gatherings since I have been here off Forfeitt's. We are very glad to find French beans do so well. It seems we shall be able to have them all the year round. I've a very fair bed of carrots also just maturing.

These do very well here also. But our turnips suffer a good deal. I've some dozens of cabbages and coleworts out and flourishing. Forfeitt's garden has been supplying us liberally. How much more luxurious is life with a cabbage than without it! Having a bit of garden, too, one is never without a job—another very advisable thing! Just now I've got a carpenter's bench in hand. I'm teaching a worthy 'Ngombe' youth to plane. He does very well. A Bopoto young man saws with the hand-saw very well, and we have got a pair on to a pit-saw lately, besides our two Kroo-boys at the same work; so the logs are falling into planks and rafters a bit more encouragingly. With help in planing and sawing I can get out some of the new house—a spell in the morning, another late in the afternoon, and between times for language; and my morning school, evening for language—not of the research kind which we have in the day, finding words and phrases from some village hopeful—and writing, and the last bit before sleep for a read. This is my daily amusement; gardening instead of carpentering it has been

mostly. Now my three plots of garden are in a kind of order—fences all made, paths marked, —very dimly seen however, with the rains—maize and sorghum, pea-nuts, beans (native, and the precious two or three rows of European), sweet potatoes, recently-acquired yams, a few very choice, equal to your flouriest, mealiest English or Irish murphy, cabbages, &c., &c., tomatoes by the score, yielding daily *ad lib.* . . I am longing for a walk back into the district from which these tall, lean, lank, dismal-browed but gentle and pleasant visitors come with an occasional tusk—parties of three or four or a dozen of them. I will try it soon if I keep well.

"I daily look wistfully on my new ventures in the carrot and turnip and cabbage and lettuce-growing line. It seems that we can have tomatoes all the year round, and that without hardly any care beyond throwing down a ripe one now and then. Perhaps it is difficult for you to realize what this fact means in a land where the food supply has so little variety, and so little of that fruit and vegetable element

which we have always regarded as essential to health. Tomatoes are the one vegetable we know from home use which seem as much at home here in all parts of Congo as in Italy—grow with less ado in fact. They are a priceless boon, I believe, especially at new stations, in the years before the oranges and tropical fruits can be introduced, and a bushel a day can be assured to you with but the attention it will take to raise half-a-dozen cabbages. And yet, till I came here, I have only got them very occasionally."

Some of the difficulties will be very patent to all who read the following extracts :—

"The other Saturday, on one of my walks, I had an unfortunate experience which has made things difficult in one direction; and though it was nothing like so serious a palaver as some, it may be more permanent in its ill effects if we do not come to an understanding. I had passed through nearly the whole of the district of a certain warlike township called Boso Godo, the furthest place I had reached in my walks, when the townsfolk who were following

me—a noisy, arrogant chief and a gang of young sparks armed—tried to induce me to give up the path I wanted to walk, seeing they had not been able in some miles of lying to throw me off, or, rather, to keep me from finding the right paths to where I wanted to go. I was trying to find the inland road to our neighbour towns some five miles down river by a canoe, which hitherto has been quite unknown to the white man. I succeeded, but only after what I must call a catastrophe. They at last cut down branches and held them down across the path, so I just stopped and sat down in a shady place, expressing myself quite content to rest there till they liked to let me go on; go back I would not. They tried some time to induce me to return. Force at last! Some of them got hold of Mvemba and began dragging him along. I laid hold of him with one arm, and after being dragged a few paces got the other arm strongly round a sapling, and they could not budge us. They thereupon started rifling me, some picking my pockets of prismatic compass, taking my hat, &c., whilst other lugged at poor Mvemba and

got my satchel away from him, leaving the strap in his hand. The chief saw they had gone rather far, and as I threatened him with the seriousness of the palaver, he stopped them as they were at my watch and pocket compass. After a bit, a sort of fear seemed to get hold of them, and they disappeared in the wood, all except the chief and a boy or two. I sat down again in the same place, declaring I would not move till my stolen things were returned, and then only in the way I was going. They tried to get me to go back by promises to restore all my things if I came to the village. No; I go that way. They told tales about the warlike character of the people of the next village, but could not persuade me to move back. Presently most of my things came back—satchel, compass uninjured, satchel minus most of the beads and a few barter odds, worth a shilling or so, and I went on my way, and found the path through to the town where are the Trading Houses. . . ."

One of the sad incidents which mark work in the Dark Continent is thus described:—

"We had a sorrowful experience the other day. The villages on either side and at the back of our station all burnt to the ground, except three or four shanties. I suppose these villages were almost the only ones along the river that have not been burnt out within the four years of the life of this station. The people had been fidgety for some days, since one of a crew that brought down a State soldier to summon a chief to Bangala, got cut on the arm in a drunken brawl. But we assured them that the State would not punish them for this. And the chief who had been sent for had duly gone up and got his case settled. . . . A marauding party had given the folk one chance. They had called in the night at a village opposite, on the south bank, to pick up more fellows. That was what saved scores of folk being made prisoners. For a man who had friends and interests here, paddled quickly away from that village in the darkness, and gave these folk warning. We heard in the early morning hours the tramp of hastening feet. And when we got out in the daylight, the

village on either hand was utterly deserted, it seemed. But our boys stayed on the station feeling certain it would be a surer safety than flight.

"I was measuring and marking for the carpenter and boys just after breakfast, when a shot was heard, and another, and much shouting. . . . A stalwart warrior or two gallantly chased a poor little goat with their spears, and there was plenty of shouting. Several canoes were moored to our station beach, being thus laden. And said 'warriors' were rushing to and fro across it (by the right of way, of course) in all their war paint and exhilaration, and often stark nakedness. . . . Soon the great flames leapt up about our station, presently encircling it, one might say. Boys were sent, as soon as the first smoke arose from the village, on to every roof—dwellings, stores, and outhouses—so that if any sparks blew on, they might pull off the thatch and stamp it out. All our baths had been filled with water, in case of burning thatch dropping through to the rooms. The station store escaped very narrowly, and, but for God's having held

the reins of the wind, all our stations must have presented the same look of desolation as the humble village of our neighbours. It was wonderful to find how many had found a refuge with us—mostly children or old or sick folk. . . . We found the next morning that the two 'men' killed in the bush by the 'warriors' were, in fact, two tiny children—people found their little hands lopped off—but whose children they were we haven't heard, for their bodies have not been found."

But we can well believe that the hardest part of the pioneer missionary's experience arises from the loneliness of his situation and the apparent slowness of his work. And yet how bravely these men and women pursue their allotted task. For some weeks White was absolutely alone at Bopoto; yet letters written during that time are brimful of fun. And what fidelity breathes in the following lines, written to his sister on the second anniversary of his departure from England:—

"I remember April 26th, 1889, with what I believe are called 'mixed emotions.' . .

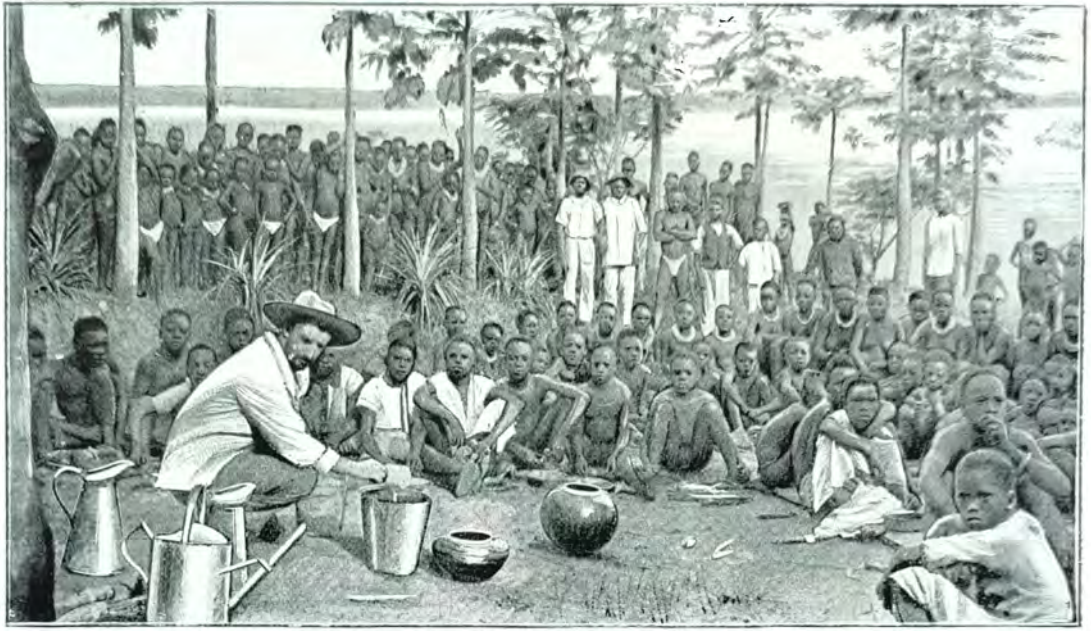
But as to this second anniversary thereof, there is no mixture in the emotions which the consciousness that I have been favoured to witness *it*, calls out. I suppose I'm not of all mortals the *slowest* to grumble. But I think I should not be human if I had anything but gratefulness, and most glad thankfulness in my heart, as I consider that I have been allowed to live, and, on the whole, enjoy life and work fairly in a treacherous land like this for all but one month of these two years! And, moreover, I have been brought along to this second anniversary of that greatest of my 'Good-byes' with steps increasing in elasticity and ever new springing hopes, and with the confidence that the *Norham Castle* was the right ship for me to have set sail in; that, in fact, any other port than Banana would have been a mistake, and to have kept off the ship would have been a pity—a bit of disobedience, in fact. Feeling this in my heart sincerely, I hope anything that seemed like not considering wishes (or fears) of father and mother will be seen in another light, and that all who formerly said 'Don't go,' will now say, 'Go on, don't stop; go

right through wherever your clear path leads!' And even I hope that those who said 'Fool,' will mend their verdict and say, 'Not so foolish; evidently he went to try and do his own proper work.' And as for my good friends and comrades who said at once, and all through college life, 'Go on; you're on the right track; sure you are,' they will, I know right well, be as thankful as I, when they hear that I am on so far and not in the least tired, but only impatient to get on faster. I have been tired, but never tired of my job; not even tired of my job in the limited sense of wishing the particular work I was at, done with. I certainly was not tired of San Salvador. And if I sometimes got very tired, even to collapsing (as it were), on the steamer, yet I did not tire of it. . . . My present good health gives me some ground for hoping that I may be able to do a good bit of work before I start home. Very few would have been surprised if at his second anniversary White was earnestly asking for relief that he might go home, instead of asking for it that he might start on new work over new ground. So you see I am by no means

tired at present either of African life or African prospects and promises. Altogether, as regards body and spirit, certainly I am in fairly healthful condition. For which I say again, yesterday's peaceful, sunny Sabbath anniversary reminds me I ought to be very thankful.

"I've not the cheek to take up my doggerel tale at this late date with last chance of this mail expected to come every hour. I am alone in my glory—though not much alone by the crowd that has been favouring me to-day—having now some dozen small youths busy on the floor with recently-arrived *Pall Mall Budgets* and *Missionary Herald* (upside down mostly).

"It has been a festive day with our neighbours, and a hungry one nevertheless maybe, as holidays of the 'Bank' sort often are. Fact is, four villages have met in a great wrestling match here to-day, and in the 'country' township behind there has also been a match with a company of visitors. It is really the second great fishing season. Last week all the boys and men were out camping in the islands, but a temporary rise of the river (which had been



SCHOOL FESTIVAL AT BOPOTO.

going down) brought them back, as no fish can be taken when the water is rising by the dam-fences, which is the wholesale manner of fishing at the fall of the two great floods of the year.

"We are keeping a second detachment of Christmas festivities to-day. The boys have begun the day with climbing and paddling matches, and sort of parade and (very) miniature sham fight, when one boy's gun went off and the others wouldn't; but the *paddles* which all except the two captains carried, went off splendidly, and without any noise. The guns, though—that is, the one that went off—made a dreadful noise for nearly an hour. That's to say, it was the exciting cause of said noise, if it only made of its own very self a couple of bangs; yet the bangs made a running and a shouting and a chattering and a laughing around our house very emphatic and very African. The air is clear again, however, and the boys have retired to sit awhile in the town and munch a morsel of cassava bread; whilst old young Seabreeze, his worthy Kroo cookship, is dealing with another goat carcase and

vegetable adjuncts; and Mijnheer, the sentimental Dutchman who didn't supply the sentimental side of my unexpectedly lonesome Christmas as I expected he would, is seated in my (or Forfeitt's appropriated) deck chair, pipe in mouth, and book in hand, and legs crossed; why not? And why not the goat carcase? My second generation of haricot beans are coming through the well-watered little bed in all the verdant hues of your new gooseberry leaves. But then the first generation only supplied seed enough to propagate the kind, and that very poor; and though we have other beans in plenty, I have no chemist's word for it that they contain the requisite food properties to justify my eschewing the goat carcase now I've been chewing (not very thoroughly, curses to my 'going' toothies!) goats at intervals, and chickens in the interims, so long a time. Goat White? If not, why not? Goat H. W.? If so, why? . . .

"If the ship we expect doesn't come down to-day, I shall be able to tell you how this semi-festive day closes. Really think I must

try another plum-pudding, as the other wasn't so very bad, and our neighbour is here. Now there is that solemn Aruwhimi boy of Forfeitt's in his dragging white cloth and shirt gone to ring the dinner-bell, and one must eat. So fare thee well, and again a Happy New Year to you all. Evening! Well, the youngsters have feasted, had their presents and prizes, and gone home to dance a choral drum dance in celebration of the event and praise of the winners, and are now quietly subsided about their higgledy-piggledy houses. Our young neighbour, the Dutchman, came along late this morning (as I said above), and is staying to-night, having managed to buy two tusks reaching about to your forehead, somewhere in the neighbourhood. We had throwing the spear and racing before the feed. The great cauldron, which you will notice I am ladling from in Forfeitt's photo of a former feast, was to-day again ladled from in presence of a much larger crowd, brought about us as before by our having a shot round at the old chalk man on a board the boys had been trying to transfix. For the fourth time in my

life I 'let off a gun'—will not say fired, for I missed the haystack. Forfeitt's harmonium is grinding in solemn strains, and my eyes are getting heavy, so I do not feel inclined to start any new subject, or further enlighten you in any way. To-morrow being Sunday, the steamer is sure to come."

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOLED IN PATIENCE.

THE next two years in Harry White's life were crowded with personal joys and sorrows. In the early part of 1892, time for furlough was due, and he sailed for England. He got off ship at Lisbon, and tramped through Spain and Portugal a bit before reaching home in June. The doctor recommended some further time on the Continent; so he went off to Germany, returning in time for the Centenary celebration of the Baptist Missionary Society. He spoke at the Young People's Meeting in Exeter Hall upon the hopeful side of Congo life, and of our life in Congo land. On January 24th, 1893, he was married to Miss Jessie Yarrow, who had looked forward for many years to the joy of accompanying him to Africa. These hopes seemed to be

about to be realised. Arrangements were being completed for the passage in April, when a visit to the doctor revealed that White was unfit to return. He was advised to spend some time amongst the mountains in Switzerland. His young wife could not leave England as her father was lying dangerously ill. However, nothing was ever allowed to interfere with the plans of these two for service in Africa; so White went off alone. Two months later his wife joined him.

It was a queer home to which they came—almost as wild as one in Congo. They obtained the use of three rooms in a châlet, said to be "furnished," 4,000 feet above sea level. But the following notes from a description given by Mrs. White will show how much the reality answered to the advertisement, and how ready she and her husband were to dispense with all comfort in the search for health and experience for Africa. "Our little châlet was the last house in the valley, which was hemmed in by peaks. Close by us ran a mountain stream—here we got our washing water. A mile further we walked to

get our drinking water. Our bedroom, besides the bedstead, contained two chairs, a little table with jug and basin, and six nails for wardrobe—but what a view! Sitting room: wooden table, two chairs, and ladder into roof, which we used as a sideboard. The kitchen was better furnished, but the candlestick was an old bottle, and for some time we were without knives, and had only one cooking pot, which caused me much amusement. Cheese and cream came as a present; fruit we could get from the little shops, and some very tough meat. But we fared sumptuously, the food being so sweet and good. As we had no oven, we had to bake our 'gateaux' and other things at the public bakehouse. On washing days, Harry used to fetch me all the water and assist in keeping the wood fire replenished, for as we had no bellows, it was a tiring exertion to blow up the fire and to wash."

Further disappointment awaited the ardent missionary when he returned to London. The Society's medical adviser would not allow him to return to Africa, and ordered Bournemouth for

the winter. The Christian intercourse and sympathy enjoyed there cheered Mr. and Mrs. White greatly, but there was always the intense desire to return to Congo burning beneath the outward calm of patience. The brave heart was tried still further. The news of the death of his dear friend Balfern — colleague in college and in work—came as a terrible blow, whilst it increased the desire to return to Congo. The doctor saw him again and passed him. Preparations were made for his speedy departure, for it had been arranged that Mrs. White should follow him later. The farewell meeting was held. Then on the very morning when he was to leave London he was summoned to the Mission House. People had been frightened at his paleness and wanted to keep him at home longer. He saw the Committee and reluctantly yielded to their urgent appeal that he should wait another six months.

It is impossible for those who did not know his intense love of the work in Africa to realise how heavy a trial this fresh postponement was. But there was no useless repining. Believing

that God was leading him, Harry White set his hand to do "the next thing." He obtained an appointment to serve the churches in the Orkneys, and the summer was spent amidst the kindly folk of those northern islands. He returned south to help in deputation work before his departure. Then a little girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. White, and six weeks of very beautiful joy followed until he sailed for the Congo on December 15th. He was leaving behind him his beloved wife and child; but it had been arranged that he should go forward to found the new station, and the price was to go alone. Both wife and husband assented with cheerful readiness, for each thought first of Africa, and was content with any sacrifice which aided their life's work. The separation was prolonged to nineteen months because the forward movement was delayed. But there was no murmuring. Mr. and Mrs. White's acceptance of so much separation in the course of their brief married life is a beautiful example of the consecrated courage with which our missionaries sacrifice their tenderest love "for the sake of the

Name." If we may lift the veil for a moment from a sacred affection, let us read with reverent sympathy the following extract from his first letter to his wife after he had sailed from England :—

"ss. *Angola*, December, 1894.

"I have been in a way praying that I may this time regard every letter I write as the opportunity of testifying for our King, and may not regard myself as my own during letter-writing any more than at other times, as I fear I have hitherto. I really had not imagined how much a letter from a far land might be, to some going daily about the daily task without chance of variety. . . . I am absorbed in my prospects and opportunities. Can go on talking about all these things, and there's my darling wifie and the little Heaven's gift at home—left behind so readily! No, darling love, the time hasn't yet come for me to most acutely feel my loss—or deprivation, rather. Therefore, too, I do not feel that I have made any sacrifice. Dare I then take credit for having done anything self-denying in character? No, I should not! Still, though

I haven't felt any bitterness at parting, I have sometimes—never mind how often—found myself recalling the fine sensation of stroking that little one's silky hair, of kissing her dear little cheek, not to say felt the tug of her unconscious little fist doubled in my straggly growth!!! How different will be the meeting with her when we return, if God spares us that joy! A lassie just learnt a language—having in those few last months probably made far better progress with our tricky English than her mother with one of those simple tongues of Africa! Think of it, dear one—and we will pray God fervently to let it be possible—but still say all along 'His will be done!' . . ." There is an infinite pathos in this message when we remember that he never saw his little one again! When we multiply such messages a hundred-fold, and picture many brave mothers and fathers saying good-bye to their darlings, only asking that they may see them again if it be the will of the Great Father in Heaven, we have watched one of the keenest tests to which the Christian heroism of our missionaries is subjected.

Glimpses at his feelings during these trying months give evidence of his fidelity to his work, and his buoyant superiority to disappointment. The following extracts are taken from letters written to Mr. Grenfell:—

Ormond Dessus,

"September 30th, 1893.

"I'm proving a very rotten reed, as regards the weight of our, or rather your, work out there! Alas, poor Yorick! . . . I really am thinking of going home, *viâ* Berlin, just to see old Schweinfurth and ask him if it hurts much to have a spleen cut out of one. I did think by this time to have been able to report that the doctors couldn't feel mine. But yesterday I was examined with (hang it all!) the contrary result. 'Still very large.' '*Encore très très gros!*' said the good man who inspected me on my arrival in this Canton *four months* ago. This after swilling daily two pints of fresh milk, ascending nearly a dozen times summits over 7,000 feet, lying about on the glorious slopes of these valley walls, breathing the delicious pine odour, bathing in streams from the glaciers, fetching

the water for our châlet establishment from a stream, also glacial, five minutes off, and generally getting good tack and enjoying the charms of a glorious Alpine valley in the *best of company* in one's 'own hired house.' It is too bad. For the railway companies won't refund the fares either, nor give us a free ticket home! However, I shall go and see if Dr. Biss will overlook the spleen, or at least give me a probable date when I may hope to start. I hate this repeated writing to Congo, saying I hope to come such and such a month. I have been reckoning without my host it seems. . . . I suppose now you are back, Darby will be gone to make a start up the Mobangi. I hope so, at any rate. You must leave me out of count for the present, after my failing to keep faith—or, rather, after the churlishness of this spleen! 'The spirit is willing' you know, but ——! I do hope I haven't delayed the opening of that new place. . . ."

"November 29th, 1893.

"I'm not to start out to ye just yet. Alas! Must spend this winter at home, and may hope

to start away from this do-nothing existence in April next.

"Well, that's something to look forward to, only I little thought I was going to spin out my leave like this. . . . It makes me feel bad staying home so long whilst you are all so hard pressed. For you must not think I'm in a miserable condition; on the contrary, I'm able to enjoy myself immensely—find it hard to fag myself, in fact. A little wholesome work is all I want. For I'm such a lazy hound if I've got no task work, that I can't sit down to tackle anything; and no carpenter or blacksmith has asked me to spoil wood or iron for him since I've been flitting so."

"May 4th, 1894.

"I fondly thought to have presented myself to you with Brother Brown, instead of getting him to hand you on my behalf a mere scrawl as my representative. Day before yesterday's hopes dashed again! I duly took leave of Committee, and was grandly farewelled at West Green with the help of Scrivener Brown and India and China. Sundry of the unknown, after

these opportunities of gazing on me, begin bringing pressure to bear on Mr. Baynes. Ought not to let me go! Mr. Baynes says he's been inundated with letters about the wisdom of my going. A. H. B. says better stay at home till after next Committee meeting (22nd), and wire to Antwerp that my berth's not wanted. Here am I in durance vile. And I am puzzled exactly what course to take. Never believed in going for martyr's crown, especially of the pasteboard gilt sort. Yet I feel most of me is in the Congo, and the risk not much different from what other men run. You may see me next mail, or come with Graham and Field by Dutch boat. But if not, know ye all 'tis not my fault. Now this is the pluckiest I can write. If I attempt more I shall get to feel bad. Can't bear to think of you all fagging there so short-handed and with so little prospect of being able to advance, and me here at what? Don't know. Well, God bless you who've got the finer bit of work set."

"August 27th, 1894.

"Now, I have by no means been down in the

dumps these six weeks, but I declare no moment has brought a pleasanter surprise than that which discovered your handwriting in a bulky envelope. . . . I really am thankful to have had this additional bit of experience before going out. I needed it. Indeed, the more I see of myself, the more I see how half baked I came out to you! You do not seem to have heard, when you wrote about Balfern's death and Oram's, that I was kept home this other half year. It was the hardest thing I've ever had to bear. I hardly knew till then how all my ambitions and hopes had got wrapped up in Congo. And the only way in which 'old ——' can get me even now to look aside is by appealing to my meaner self; he can't make me look anywhere but due South, by promising anything to satisfy a man who is willing to do the hardest work that comes in his way. So he talks about gardening and bracing climate and kindly neighbours. Some, I suppose, think I'm a fool, and wonder why I don't get and make some alternative arrangements. Well, I simply won't; yet here's the folk of two of these island

churches been trying to persuade me to 'leave them blacks and come to us.' And I could do it, and act the martyr! I wish I could see you and get you to examine me and report to Committee. I think they'd then make us both some amends for keeping me at home so long. . . . However, I will make no plans except this, which I have sworn to myself; either to go forward or to go under on Congo. I have not forgotten your advice, which I hope I took, when you left me at Bolobo that time. You hoped I would be led to recognise the 'next thing' and do it. Which plan of action I have since let several hundreds of English know is that recommended by George Grenfell to his younger brethren."

"December 2nd, 1894.

"My word is rather at a discount on the Upper Congo by now, I fear. Still, I have to tell you that at last I have my ticket, and am arranging to sail from Liverpool on the 15th inst. The Congo mail does not leave till the 27th, but I want to call at Lagos to get a haul of not yet introduced fruit, &c., for Congo, from

the Royal Botanical Gardens there. . . . I am coming to try another taste of Congo life as a bachelor. The wife, of course, has to stay at home with the wee lassie, who looks as bonnie as you could wish. . . . The Committee this month will decide the case of the very man I want for a colleague—Stephens, of Bournemouth, who has given up business to come out if they will have him. If they will not, to go out into other foreign work."

The reference to the "next thing" is a window through which we see something of White's heart. His nature was cast in the mould which gives us our reformers and iconoclasts, or the leaders of social movements. His vision swept a wide horizon. His nature was eager and impetuous. His indignation with wrong was matched by his ardent longing for the best; sometimes these made him impatient with slow progress. The chariot wheels seemed to drag heavily. He was for harnessing a team of powerful steeds to the chariots and dashing forward. His driving was "like the driving of Jehu." Such a nature found it difficult to do "the next

thing." And his effort to submit to the wise counsel of his senior was the triumph of grace. But "the grace of God which appeared in Jesus Christ" was a very real factor in the life-story of Harry White. The secret of his unfailing courage is found in a sentence culled from a letter dated "Bournemouth, December 20th, 1893." He writes to wish some dear friends "a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year," and adds: "You are neither of you altogether dependent for happiness upon outward circumstances or changing events, and I hope recent sorrows will not prevent joy of heart; for the well-spring is deep and not to be dried up by a blast from the desert!"

CHAPTER VI.

PROSPECTING FROM MONSEMBE.

"ss. *Benguela*,
"Malela,
"River Congo,
"Sunday, February 3rd, 1895.

"IN the Congo at last, you see, thanks to God's preserving hand." Harry White must have penned these words with profound gratitude. They marked the end of a long and trying period of enforced absence from the work he loved. Three weeks later he was at Wathen, where he found Mr. Cameron "completing his seventh week on his back" in a continued fever. Happily the fever abated, and White was able to continue his journey up country. He was set apart for founding the new station which all had

A CONGO MARKET.

been earnestly desiring to open. As far back as 1890, in response to an eloquent appeal in Broadmead Chapel, Bristol, by Mr. Darby, two generous supporters of the Mission, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Sargent, had offered a special gift for this purpose. But many difficulties had presented themselves. White had chafed under the delay as much as anybody. He had accompanied Mr. Grenfell in prospecting trips up the Congo and its chief affluents during his previous stay in Africa. Though he regretted deeply that it had been impracticable to commence the undertaking during the years he was at home, he reckoned confidently on being permitted to go forward at once. He wrote to Mr. Grenfell from Underhill on February 6th, 1895: "By the good hand of God, I am here at last! Yes, you are right; we ought by all that's holy, go forward now. The conviction has grown on me that the next move is to be my special job, and that move is to be made I feel certain—no second-sighted Highland seer more certain. At least, I have told folks at home, or said it to myself, at any rate—that I would 'either go forward or under.'"

However, some time would be required yet to perfect plans. Whilst pressing on to the interior, White wrote to Mr. Grenfell from Wathen: "I have duly arrived thus far, you see, in the best possible trim, thank God! Whether I am to get nearer to my long-cherished prospect immediately is hardly certain"; and to his wife he said: "You will want to know about my probable movements. Well, the one thing I know is that I am going up to Bolobo, and that when there I am going to overhaul the stuff that has been ordered out for the new station, compare it with invoices, and see if more needs to be ordered. Then Grenfell and I are going up river, he being prepared to put in some weeks visiting the districts above Bopoto with me on the *Goodwill*." In another letter during the same journey he declares he is "full of hope and elasticity"; and to a friend just accepted by the Committee for work on the Congo—Mr. J. R. M. Stephens—he wrote:—

"Useke, March, 1895.

"Right glad I am to be able to congratulate

you on your acceptance for our work of preaching the Gospel of our Lord to poor Africa. I would rather at once wish you the many years of blunderless, consistent Christian work with us that I pray may be in reserve for myself, yes, and for all of us who are now out here. For God has been so merciful in late years to the Committee in wrenching only one now and then from them, that we really begin to feel it possible that all of us now out here may have a fair spell of earthly work. We would plan it for ourselves, but it might not be the right thing for all of us alike. And as for yourself, I know you are not the sort to start in Congo a-loving of your life to the ignoring of your soul. So it will be all right. A happy start and full heart to you, then, old man. May you step across from homeland to workland with the most elastic step you have ever taken in all your life of enthusiastic service and hard work! And the good Father comfort your most worthy mother as you leave her! I believe she will be gladly giving you up, seeing the greatness of the service, and she will not miss her recom-

pense for her self-denial in foregoing your help and comfort. . . ."

It was to the same friend he wrote, a little later, words which tell the secret of the strength of Christ's true servants :—

"July 3rd, 1895.

"Once again welcome indeed as one of us! We are a mixed lot. If I mistake not, you will find something companionable before you've done with us. God keep you in these treacherous first months, and teach you your weakness in your new surroundings. May He keep the devil from lying to you about the fund of strength you have, and about how fresh you are for work, and how much more you could do and how little tired you are after this or that exertion. The old liar, he has had us all at different times with those lies about our strength. . . . It was a bright journey up country all the way. All the ladies who have had such bad times I found bright and happy, enjoying life at home as I never saw ladies before, having mastered their surroundings right nobly, transformed the Congo mess-table, transformed the

atmosphere of the stations, and not a little altered the gentlemen to whom they are linked in some cases. . . . Once again welcome to Congo, and may you find a similar *satisfaction* in the work to that which I have found. Weaknesses, interruptions, disappointments, rebuffs, don't affect that deep satisfaction, for it springs from a consciousness of doing the Master's Will. The failures are covered by His promises of love and forgiveness, so they don't rob you of the satisfaction. One sets out to do a work that men don't do to earn their bread by — that there are too few to do. . . . God give us grace to think only of His eye being upon our striving, and may we forget that men are looking at us, and then our service will be true indeed."

In April White arrived at Bolobo, but writes: "My plans for the immediate future are altered somewhat. I have decided to ask them if they will have me at Monsembe until Grenfell comes up again after this Wathen Council next month. I shall be able to get the timber I want to finish the house for the new station. It was only when

I found that there were a half-dozen Bopoto-Ngombe men here whose time is nearly finished that I determined to sit down at Monsembe rather than Bopoto. I can revise my Ngombe words—possibly get a slight vocabulary printed or type-written in duplicate, and go on with my joinery. We should thus be able to put up our house in a very few weeks after landing at our new site. As to where that site is likely to be, I cannot give you any idea until after next September, when Grenfell and myself propose to make a thorough prospecting tour above Bopoto."

How he thought and planned for this new station is clear from such extracts as the following:—

"From Wathen up, I have been preaching what sounds to some a revolutionary doctrine. One station only in a language, and conversely *one* or *each* language a station; not to stop wasting our strength putting two sets of men doing the same work at the same time, and also not to stop our forward going till we have claimed every tribe-tongue that can be called a

formed and workable language as a medium for the conveyance of the news of salvation. The old system of planning for a station according to the mass of people along so many miles of river bank was excusable so long as it was believed that there was one riverine language by which we could proclaim the good news from Stanley Pool to the Lomani or Stanley Falls. But now we are beginning to know something of the divisions of the people and the localities over which the various dialects extend, and of the affinities of this and that dialect, we must alter our policy. We must ignore the geographical relationship of our stations—that is, whilst we are on the high River road alone—and consider the language fact. . . . You talk about these language diversities being a hindrance to the progress of truth—putting off the day of the preaching of this Gospel to all the nations to many generations at the present rate of working! Why, suppose there was only set on to the writing down, studying, and mastering of these Bantu languages, a force of specially-trained men, with a similar equipment to those that are

busy noting down the facts and phenomena of the animal kingdom—nay, say, of *beetles only*—why, how long would it be before the Gospel could be printed in every one of the African tongues? Perhaps it would take nearly as long to put the Bible in every language as it will take naturalists to get a specimen and record the habits of every variety of beetle on this continent. If it takes—as it promises to take—a good deal longer, why, surely it is not to the credit of the Christian Church that talks on its platforms now about having at last recognised that it was duty bound to carry out Christ's command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.

"You see now what is behind my policy of one station in a language, and every language a station. Station is getting an ugly word, seeing in the minds of some it is found to involve an expense under certain circumstances so very considerable. But there can be no work in an African tribe of lasting character that can be expected to influence the condition of that tribe, without a station. It is time the wild fancy of a mission

steamer or ox waggon spitting pamphlets and hymn books at river bank or prairie, or tramping missionary talking to the stars (or winds), was dispelled from the mind of the friend of missions. . . . If I go and stay at Bopoto, I shall not be able to go off the station much. Tornadoes on the Congo are not generally courted in an open boat, much less canoe. And inland the forest will be wet—very wet—and the streams and swamps deep. If I stay at Monsembe, there will be rain also, as there always is in plenty, to the delight of the pumpkins and cabbages. I daresay I shall stay at Monsembe, as there will be more room now Weeks is going home, and I could probably get on with my sticks better there than at Bopoto, where the native lads are not so keen on earning wages, or, at least, not so fond of *working* for the desirable. . . . Grenfell thinks he will be up again by September, perhaps August, when the heaviest rains should be over. And I hope that Brown will come with us on our prospecting trip and sit down with me for a bit, till Pople comes, at any rate. . . . Kiss little Love Lassie for me. Tell her I want

to see her and kiss her myself. Oh! for one rub of her little velvet cheek—and one kiss from your lips, dear sweetheart! But we must wait."

The idea of "sitting down" at Monsembe was carried out, and White spent nearly six months at that station, doing very much the kind of work he had sketched for himself. This is a part of his description of it:—

"Stapleton and Stonelake have very generously been troubling to get townsfolk and workmen to bring in sticks and bamboos for me. The sticks are their hardest wood, 'Minsâi,' which the boys declare is harder alike for adze, saw, and chisel than the ironwood, and it is certainly tougher. Fifty logs of this (varying between 8—11×4×8) are at my disposal, having cost 1,000 rods the lot, nothing else to be reckoned except the wear on an axe or two! Now, if there is a chance of reply, will you kindly say whether your capacity extends to the additional load, and to some hundreds of bamboos—not over eight feet long—which are in (thanks to Stapleton's kindness), and which I purpose to use for walling? The long white stuff I brought from Bopoto is nearly

all cut up, and so will not cumber the deck this time; but the logs will be too long to go below, I suppose (9—10 feet). I have taken the iron-wood posts for my wall stanchions to save the white stuff for planks, and the doors I have got made."

It may seem to some that this was a queer way for a missionary to spend his time! Perhaps White recognised this when he wrote to his wife: "I think God will justify our Mission as a society in the eyes of the Christian Church one of these days—unless, indeed, the Church insists on being provided with romantic-sounding tales of an impossible progress of 'The Kingdom,' and so on." The same strong common sense broke out in the following message to a very intimate friend:—

"Friday, April 28th, 1895.

"How do you think the general sentiment at home is with regard to our moving forward out here? Do folk think that we ought to be content to try and evangelise all villages of the tribes we are already in touch with—doing in a hurried and makeshift manner (necessarily) *the*

work that naturally belongs to a Christian Church? Or do they believe in the Missionary's being the overseer and planter of the churches rather than the local evangelist, leaving his words to have what effect they may on the people he impresses, without guidance, and the children without any helping hand? A missionary must set out to be one or the other. If he plants and watches the early growth of churches, he must be content to let the great mass of the country around him wait for a hearing of the Gospel until the preaching in his immediate neighbourhood and the familiar talks with boys, have given the Holy Spirit his waited-for opportunity of claiming for His own those of His choice. . . . I do hope that folk are not running away with the idea that Africa is being evangelised by the miserably inadequate few whom the home churches send out to preach and witness. If folk would only go into the real business of preaching the Gospel to every creature, they would conclude it was a more elaborate task than they had thought for, and the missionary's work most difficult where they had reckoned it most

trifling, and the work of the Holy Spirit of God amongst heathen nations to-day a far more mighty exertion of power than they had ever conceived. . . ."

It is certain that the long days spent on the necessary pioneering work is a heavy strain on loyalty; the men have to be brave enough to be patient. We seem to hear some of the heart throbs of the struggle in such sentences as the following, which are culled with some hesitancy from letters written to his wife from Monsembe: "Another Sabbath coming around so swiftly reminds me of my promise to myself to take some of its quiet freedom to talk with thee, my far-away sweetheart. So much more lately I have felt the want of the communion of those long months that are now rolled up in the past rather like the shred of a dream than a page of real history, a part of actual living. And when are they to be taken up again in kind? When are we to be again to each other help and love and joy and confidence (and rebuke even, if you will)? A sort of cloud has set heavily down on my heart and hopes—an ugly, recurrent sign of

weakness dulling the brightness of one's eye and making the mouth hang glumly—like this present morning's atmosphere, which hangs heavily upon the life of Nature. . . . My ankles are swelling, since a little after coming here, decidedly, and are uncomfortable for walking and standing the latter part of the day; body generally feels kindred symptoms. . . . Only this left to one (and for this, to be devoutly thankful is the least offering one can offer) enough strength for the tasks that come to hand, sufficient power of enjoyment not to be melancholy, and so far a delightful freedom from actual sickness. . . . I believe it was about your next month's and little lassie's fate I meant to continue writing, dearest. . . . I am wondering whether you have got her a home yet! . . . I wish you could arrange it this way. . . . Get Mrs. —— to take little lassie, without promise about the years in Congo. Because I may not be able to stay out long. I may in six months be so done up that it would be folly to send for you, and my only reasonable plan would be to stay on till I could leave the

Society without upsetting arrangements. I have got my whitest colour back, and that old form of indigestion threatening, with its consequent diarrhœa, anæmia, and dropsical symptoms. It may be only temporary, and go with this trying wet season. If so, all right. The job of starting my station will be a good test. . . . Just a good-night word, dearie, and I must to bed. . . . How's little cherub, I wonder? Soundly sleeping now, I suppose, with an occasional heaving of that baby sigh, as to say, I feel the weight of the coming life-burdens on my strong young chest; but it is all right! I wonder where she will spend the days of our absence from her? I wish I knew! But, there, the way will open duly! Kiss her for me, a thousand times if it will not wake her, precious little one! How delightful it will make the home-coming together, darling, to think we shall be seeing her, so grown, so different, and yet our little one! Will the longing to see her make you impatient of life here? I think not, love, if I know you. These people (which set will it be?) will be precious to you, and you will

feel it a good thing to trust God and the chosen friend with your God-sent charge for their sakes, who are so poor and dark-minded. We have had our little communion service with our four selves and the two native Christians. . . . You see hope springs eternal in the human breast! I don't give up hope of being able to invite you out to a new work. I hope impatience of the lengthening delay (but it is not yet so long an absence as we contemplated likely) will not make you say, 'Never mind the new work; are there not souls to be converted here and there?' Yes; but not by folk who start and convert them in order to sooner enjoy each other's society! Mark that, darling, and be patient."

But the time of waiting for an advance was now at an end. He dated a letter from ss. *Goodwill*, below Bopoto, September 21st, 1895, in which he says: "The *Goodwill* came at last, you see, and here I am on board, this calm and beautiful Sabbath morning, going towards—what?" A week later he wrote from Basoko:—

"I have got the Bopoto boat alongside, and twenty Bopoto lads and young men by way of transport means for coming down river when Grenfell leaves me. For my plan is to bid the *Goodwill* adieu when the time comes for her to leave Stanley Falls, and drop down in the boat with the aid of said company. Fifteen or so of the young fellows belong to my school. The best boys are amongst the number, and two or three of the scholastically hopeless ones, too! For the rest, there are three older youths of the Ngombe who have been ready to accompany us from the first, and have been very useful on many occasions. Number 20 is a young man from the settlement of Ebunda. . . . The advice I referred to was for me to make a journey down river, as I am now looking to do, rather than stay at any spot. Grenfell says he can write home that he left me at Stanley Falls (say) to follow down by boat, as I wished to ascertain details about language variations, for which the hasty steamer trip gives me no opportunity."

Bosoko is at the mouth of the Aruwhimi

River, half-way between Bopoto and Stanley Falls. The forward movement had begun at last! True, this was only a preliminary trip; but with characteristic eagerness and courage, White had determined to be left behind by the *Goodwill* when she returned down river, that he might make a thorough examination of the proposed site. The voyage up was utilised for the purpose of making friends with the natives, many of whom saw a missionary for the first time. The following description of one such attempt is very interesting:—

"A couple of hours' steaming brought us to another place after passing some of the prettiest forest, and, I think, best land I have seen, besides several apparently old clearings grown over. . . . The men retreated at a safe distance before the steamer as we approached—such as had not cleared out at first sight of us, I should say. For our coming was, alas! the sign for a score canoes to paddle out to the island and others up river, whilst small groups of men stood on the high bank to watch the developments. This time I got Grenfell to stop some distance

from the shore with the steamer, whilst I dropped off in the boat with five young men. But even we frightened them. And now began a bit of fishing, or enticing. We landed by one of the rude stick ladders they fix to the face of their sheer banks, fastening the boat thereto. We brought a few brass rods to trade for anything they might have to sell, and to entice them. As we walked through their line of shanties, or shelters, the few most daring ones retreated at a safe distance till they had put a creek, chest deep in water, between themselves and us. We now stood shouting across to them. Mafuta, whose home is three hours further up river, could communicate better than my boys. But they said, for the twentieth time, we were not to be trusted. If they came, the steamer would come up and shoot at them, that they feared me, and so on. So, after an hour of fruitless shouting and assuring, we started back. Akuma now offered to go with the Ebunda man in a canoe and speak with them. So he got a paddle and loosed one of the crankiest of all the crank craft that I've ever seen a Congo get into, and the two of them

paddled up to where the men could see them. At length two men were seen returning: Akuma had got one of the villagers to get into the canoe with him on condition that the Ebunda man allowed himself to be held by the rest of the party in hostage for their comrade not being treacherously dealt with by me or my men. I had picked a handful of greens, and left two rods stuck in the path as payment. As soon as the one representative arrived, I offered rods for some of the maize cobs that were just nicely ready for cooking, growing about some of the houses. The old fellow begun plucking them with a will.

"Meanwhile, some few others came along and protested they were not afraid, if it were not for the steamer being apparently ready to bear down upon them if they showed themselves. They were of a markedly different type from all the riverside dwellers below, but, I thought, very like in feature and skull form to the big tribe that extends through a large country behind Bopoto, called Bondunga. Their most striking decoration is the knots of thick cord tied through their

ear-lobes, which are pierced with some half-dozen holes, through which you could put a pencil. The hair is like that of the folk of Bondunga, shaved off the forehead, and the mass remaining first plaited and then plastered with oil and clay into a solid, greasy, skull-cap looking sort of arrangement. Their foreheads were exceptionally full, and the nose finer and the lips thinner than any folk below can show. The same characteristics distinguish the folk here and of the place we passed and called at where Mafuta found an individual of some remote second cousinship, who was moved to an extravagant jig when Mafuta introduced himself. 'Come along, all you fellows, verily I've got a brother come! Bring maize and fowls to sell his people, and give him "welcome."' I satisfied my new-made friends, brought along by such perseverance, by making blood-brotherhood with a young fellow of my own age, who, I suppose, held some position amongst his people. I got back after an absence of just two hours. But all thought it was time well spent. I only got a couple of fowls, some greens, and maize,

but that was a help, and they promised to welcome me as I came down river in my boat."

At length the steamer reached the limit of the mighty highway on which she can carry the messengers of the Gospel, and Messrs. Grenfell and White had to determine where the latter should pitch his tent. This was done after careful examination, and on October 6th, 1895, White wrote to his wife :—

"ss. *Goodwill.*

"To-day has been just sweltering as we have lain under this 30-foot bank, on which I am hoping now to build my darling's long promised shelter, and live with her many a happy working and Sabbath day. We have chosen our site, you see, subject to permission from headquarters. After this, all our other doings seem hardly worth noting. . . . The *Goodwill* leaves me here. My plan is to stay some two or three weeks, if my Bopoto lads will let me, and make a vocabulary and beat about to see which direction our land had better run in. We have an ideal site, high enough above the water to be never swamped, and even to allow of our

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coffee and cocoa trees sending their roots down without fear of getting rotted in undrained soil. A spring of delicious water within five minutes of the beach, welling up in the forest—a thing no other station can boast, a creek of deep water a few hundred yards further up river, in which the steamer could lie in perfect safety through the worst tornado, and whence we can dip water for our plantations if we extend our property later on, when we are fully satisfied that we have selected the most advantageous site. . . There are young trees enough to give some shade on the weed-grown plot we have chosen, trees to grow down the face of the bank, so that we can make a shady path to the beach without having to be continually at work keeping it up. A hundred yards from the water all is at present a tangle of small forest and undergrowth."

The next morning the *Goodwill* slipped her cable and steamed westward. This is a letter she carried from the solitary white man she was leaving. It was to his wife:—

"Steam is up; my stuff is all ashore and my

tent up, a preliminary dash paid for the piece of land we have applied to the State for, and evidently a perfectly good understanding come to with the folk. We have this morning learnt new details of the country of which our proposed station will be, God willing, the gate—a populous fertile land leading on to the great mountains far away by the lakes. Tribes, too, covering more ground than we thought for; that means languages having more unity than we expected. For eighty miles below this, all the Lokele and the forest folk on this side speaking the same language—the best of news! Steam warns me to forego more words with my love. Be assured I am safe, and have had a unique entrance given me to the people we hope to make a new home of light amongst. . . . I may stay a month here; my boys are not so discontented as I feared—quite resigned to stay in fact."

VIEWS OF YAKUSU VILLAGE.

CHAPTER VII.

PIONEERING AT YAKUSU.

THE plans for White's stay at Yakusu and return to Bopoto with the crew of boys were altered in an unexpected manner. Let the missionary tell his own tale.

This is how he wrote to Mr. Sargent concerning the beginnings of his work: "I must indicate what is meant by 'the work started.' Shortly, a B.M.S. man landed at a certain well-affected village (Yakusu, just below the Lindi River, and ten or twelve miles below Stanley Falls) and has said, 'How dee do?' to the folk. On the first landing of the mission party—quite in force, for the *Goodwill* had two couples on board as out-of-health trippers—the ladies of the place started a chiming choral dance with a vigour that made us sweat again to only see and hear—a sort of 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' performance à la Yakusu. I argued this could scarcely be called

an indication that they were determined to make a meal of any white man who might venture to stay 'unprotected' in their midst. (I *quote unprotected* as a foreign word, not properly belonging to the vocabulary of the children of the King.) So I found myself the day following our return from Stanley Falls waving adieu in company with a score of my whilom Bopoto school lads. I had their company for a week. Then home sickness conquered any slight sense of duty and turned upside down their remembrance of promises; gave them, too, the astonishing courage to venture on a journey of three hundred miles with the stream and no other protection than a State flag, a steel whale-boat, the fiction that they were a white man's express party, and, as a last resource, a fowling-piece and a score of shot cartridges. All got without mischief to Bopoto.

"I was not long in discovering that I was much better off alone. Certainly it was with just a single twinge of forsaken and lonely feeling that the morning after their night escape, I took my kettle to an old lady's fire and

asked her to kindly boil it for me, rather than go and hunt for sticks and make a fire myself, you know. So for some time my breakfast kettle was boiled on a neighbour's fire. But soon I had lads of the village ready more or less to do little services with regularity. And after a few weeks, my own protégé came along from Bopoto, and life became quite luxurious, for he could be trusted to watch a pot, and the gentle coaxing or bribing of young gentlemen to go and get a can of water, or a bundle of drift-wood from the forest, was no longer a charge on my patience. In short, I had a servant. Master Dikunda represented to me the conveniences of civilized life known as housemaid, cook, firewood and coal-merchant, water company, dust-cart man, and errand-boy. When I return up river he will resume the little services that stand us in place of the work of the above-mentioned functionaries."

The same circumstances are described with equal vividness and unassuming courage in the account he sent to Mr. Grenfell :—

"I take advantage of the joyful Sabbath to

make my report of myself, after this quickly-flown fortnight (nearly) alone with my new neighbours. For the first thing, be assured that they are as friendly as one could wish. I like them more and more, noisy (back them for lung power against all Congo), excitable, jolly, free and easy, industrious (as Congo goes), and certainly more civilised in their ways than certain tribes who would call them 'bush-men.' . . . Now, before I say more, let me ask you not to be concerned by any report of my would-be crew having deserted me. They took the boat I might almost say at my own suggestion. That is, when the previous night they came and said they wanted to be getting home, I told them to take a boat and go if they were not too afraid. I so little thought that they would attempt a journey alone that I had let them keep the paddles in their own shelter. I thought of the possibility of their using them to make off; but, as I say, I was so much wishing I had not their impatience to hasten my departure, that I said to myself, 'If they go I shall be free to stay the longer, so I will leave

with them the means of skedaddling.' But I did not mean them to take the boat or the guns and cartridges, I must confess. I only hope no hurt will come to the lads, and that they will not get too hungry by the way. They went off the day before pay-day; in fact, they were asking for their allowance that day as they had got rid of the week's cloth, so I fear they will not have much chop on the way down. A soldier came up from Yaforo the next day, and said he had heard them singing and tapping a drum in the night, singing 'We have left our white man at Singitini.' The young impudents!"

"Well, I only want to say, don't you worry! I am in first-rate trim (having got over the result of that supper of fried cod-roes of night before last; it was only that the roes, like the river that same night, *rose*; better since.) I don't at present intend to take a passage down by this expected steamer when it returns, but if the one following comes after a respectable interval, I will ask for a passage by it to Monsembi."

It would be unfair to Harry White to try to picture this time of loneliness in Yakusu, though

he had no house and few comforts, as a time of great trial and suffering to him. He describes it in very cheery terms :—

"The folks here continue well-disposed, and the youngsters cheeky and merry as ever. These merry, laughing, dancing savages are a rebuke to my glumness of disposition. God forgive me for not being a more cheerful-minded and anger-free being after the smooth path He has led me by so long and the little trouble I have had."

He went down to Bopoto for Christmas and explained the trip thus: "I thought it would be just as well to go and show that I was alive and lively, after what might be called a trying time of hardships by good folk who don't know what an easy time one can make of such a stay. It is with thankfulness that I find myself able to show myself to brethren after over two months alone amongst untried strangers, in even better trim than when I left, and was left by, them."

Meanwhile the two months were utilised for making friends with his immediate neighbours and for exploring the surrounding districts. This latter task yielded very satisfactory results,

He journeyed up the Lindi River in a canoe, on one occasion being in momentary danger of being swamped, as they had to pilot their way through some ugly falls. Both here and on the banks of the Congo he found a large number of people who were in some senses more advanced than the tribes lower down the river.

The station lies in the sphere of Arab influence; and though this fact causes considerable disturbance at times, and creates some hostility to missionary work, it had given a quickened intelligence to the natives, as well as some slight acquaintance with civilised habits. He found half-a-dozen villages under the senior chief, Saidi, a few miles inland. There were 200 houses in each of the two largest villages, and the missionary received a very friendly welcome from the chief and his people. These discoveries convinced White that the Yakusu site would be an admirable one. Up to this time no land had been acquired. The request for land had been sent to the State; but White had only made a clearing round his tent. However, before leaving for his Christmas trip

to Bopoto, White heard that the necessary permission to found a station would be given. This decided him to make what preparation he could for building a house. Then the arrival of the *Goodwill* enabled him to get down to Bopoto, where he could collect the needful materials with which to return and found the station. But so convinced was he of the friendliness and good faith of the natives, that he left what stores he had on the site he had cleared. And it is with very evident pleasure and pride he tells afterwards that these were untouched during his absence, though there was no guard of any kind over many things tempting to a savage of Central Africa!

After a brief stay at Bopoto, during which all the available stores for the new station were collected, White insisted upon returning to Yakusu, although he would have to be left without a colleague for some time. There can be no doubt that his earlier experiences in tramping the continent, and especially in his famous walk to Rome, stood him in good stead during these months of lonely pioneering work. Necessarily

progress was slow. His own description runs: "As for work, we are not going along alarmingly fast. There is time for reflection between the accomplishment of our various bits. Junks for piles were the only things I was waiting for, and finding nothing satisfactory quite handy, I have gone for some questionable stuff, and so got my framework up this evening. I cannot ask the Accra men to work in the great heat, or it would be more forward." Meanwhile, he found the natives willing to trade with him; and many of the nearer tribes helped him to secure timber for his logs and piles. Matters improved, too, when "the speedy work of the cross-cut saw prevailed upon a couple of Yakusu *gents* to knock me down a tree on the estate, and promise to do more helpful work." He was able to add: "I am very glad I came away, and even that my absence was prolonged, for I certainly get help much more readily, and, in fact, we are on a fair footing of mutual understanding—except about the big drum half a yard from my ear as I lie abed, and the moonlight wrestling party close by!!!"

Early in May he was gladdened by the appearance of the *Goodwill*, bringing Mr. Dodds to be his colleague. By this time he had erected what he calls "my roomy mansion (12 × 16 feet)." Into this room Dodds was squeezed with his camp-bed and trunks. They used it as their sleeping apartment, pantry and store, and as a bad-weather room; a broad verandah served as sitting and dining and good weather room. Both had only earth floors. It was impossible to get a house suitable for a lady ready at once; and though the two missionaries worked hard at the house and at a school shed, White was compelled to recommend his wife not to hurry out. The first zeal of the natives to help soon spent itself, and considerable difficulty was experienced in getting the help required to fell, saw, and transport the timber for piles and boards. The health, too, began to fail. On June 26th, 1896, he wrote to Mr. Grenfell:—

"Dodds is just indulging in his second rise of temperature again—result of chill on cold day of storm seemingly—and, like the last, not serious. I had a turn over last Sunday—101·8

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highest—a wonder for me, you say. It was preceded by a week or so of unaccountable lethargy, like that I had when Field came. Better since, save these ankles, which swell again as sure as there are two or three days of cold and wet. I don't bother much about the symptoms, though I can't help feeling disappointed with myself, for it goes along with lack of energy, or palpitation with exertion, and so on. But as I have to take my share to keep Yakusu going, it is no use dwelling on one's ills; and mind, the account is for your ear, not for the common table, for I don't want some worthy committee-man to have 'precise and confidential information' that White is in a dangerous state, and must be relieved. . . . I was not fool enough to ask Providence to give me a warranty of sound health in Congo. . . . It is no use putting you off with 'all right' in these days of undoubted washed-out condition. I don't know how far said poor condition excuses exertion. The fact is, I am villainously lazy, to the disgust of my better self. So little gets done, for which may the Good Taskmaster forgive me."

Almost for the first time a note of despondency appears in a letter dated July 25th, 1896:—

"I fear I'm a spent man. I can't regain my energy, it seems. I mean to try a course of arsenic and iron. It is my only resource. I should never have brought my wife to spoil her constitution for the sake of doing two or three years' woman's work for these folk, had I foreseen that my prospects of continuing a missionary any time were so poor. Her coming makes me determined not to pack for anything, till we have been together what will be a fair term for her, unless, of course, she also fails. But, there, I'll hope to pick up and begin to earn my keep again, as I certainly haven't earned even my coffee these three or four months past! And don't you bother about my low condition, even if it continue. I am bound to hang on. I hope I shall be able to get through a bit of work, and must begin to pluck up to start it at once. I'm glad not to have a big gang to manage."

However, his health improved again; and at the beginning of September he was cheered by

the arrival of the *Goodwill*, having Mrs. White as one of her passengers. She had been accompanied on her journey by Mr. Albert Wherrett, who was designated for Yakusu as Mr. White's colleague. Mr. Holman Bentley was also on board the steamer, and was much impressed with the splendid possibilities of the station, though very much hard work was required to make it really habitable and a centre for evangelistic effort.

Within two months a crushing blow fell upon the brave little band. The remorseless hand of death smote them. The newly-arrived colleague was called to rest from his labours almost before his work was begun. White wrote a very pathetic account of this time to Mr. Grenfell :—

"November 26th, 1896.

"The thing that I feared has come upon me. But I never feared it in connection with the coming of my new and dearly-loved colleague, 'Bert Wherrett.' Yet so it is. 'Bert,' brother in every way to us both, helpful and good of heart, modest and affectionate, has left us. God called him home five days since.

"I must let you see how dear he was to us. But you know of the friendship between my dear wife and him. And to her it has been a terrible blow. I know not what to make of her condition, for you must know I called her up from a heavy sweating, in which she thought to finally rid herself of a teasing little fever (the second return after that mentioned in my earlier note herewith) at two in the morning, Bert having risen to 106°, and beginning to struggle against having clothes kept over him, and having got into unconsciousness. . . .

"I may say that the previous night we had a jolly chat together. College times and other experiences—much laughter. We both were about the temperature that (with me, at any rate), generally moves the brain-works faster. For after trying his temperature (101·5°, I think) I laughingly remarked, I might as well test his instrument, and found myself 101°. I left him at nine without misgivings.

"But before I left I found myself 102°. I went down then and got into a sweat.

At 11 Inas came to call me from quite a hot, wet bath. I found him risen to 104°. At two I wrote to the wife: 'Dress and come—unconscious.' She soon came from her bed of feverishness, having never been satisfactorily rid of fever for three weeks. But I knew she would rather take the risks and see him die than let me bring her the message after hours of anxiety, perhaps. I sat by his head. The clock pointed to 5 a.m. I tried the thermometer under the arm again—a single point below 110° I think it was. I only glanced, and handed it to my wife, with what feelings! 'That is death. No case we know of has lived with higher temperature than that!' 'Then this is certainly coma,' she said. Another twenty minutes and a sudden gush from nostrils and mouth, and then the pulse was still, and the heart of dear Bert beat its last loving throb, and day dawned pale and cold. I must not close without letting you know of the great kindness shown to us both by State officers and Mr. Langheld. My poor girl's distress and nervousness the next few days were

very acute. But you have some idea of her pluck, and she has recovered from all except the lassitude after long days abed. For myself, I've been getting stronger every day for a month, and more especially since that sorrowful night. A little stimulant undoubtedly helped me against the night air into which I had frequently to go after my sweat-baths before I rose to watch till the end. Since, more respectable tonics have been freely in use."

Thus for the third time White was the only man at Yakusu, though this time his loneliness was transfigured by the presence of his wife. Wherrett died on November 21st; on December 19th the *Goodwill* arrived with Mr. Stephens as another colleague. As Mr. and Mrs. White had seen a great deal of Mr. Stephens during their stay at Bournemouth, this comradeship was very pleasant. But it was not destined to be of long duration. Within a week White was stricken down with a bad fever. No doubt the strain of Wherrett's death had told heavily upon him, especially as he was in fever himself at the time, and was anxious about his wife, who was just

NEW HOUSE AT YAKUSU.

recovering from one. And their only house was one room 12 × 16 feet!

On Christmas Day the two anxious watchers almost gave up hope of saving his life. However, God blessed their efforts, and the fever was conquered. The recovery seemed to him very satisfactory; he called the fever "the clearing up of old accounts," and braced himself for a further spell of service. This resolve was strengthened by the welcome intelligence that a threatened loss of the site at Yakusu had been averted by Mr. Baynes' prompt action, and that permission had been given to the Society to stay on. This increased the pleasure with which the missionaries took up their residence in the new house, which was finished at last. It consisted of two rooms, and was raised on piles six feet. This could not be considered an extravagant mansion, but it promised very much increased comfort. Mrs. White visited the people and soon won their hearts. The women brought their babies to her for medicine. But as the mothers liked to choose the bottles from which to take the dose, this dispensing needed con-

siderable tact. Yakusu also assembled at meal-times to see the white man eat, solemnly seating themselves round the verandah. Everything seemed promising for successful work. White had learned enough of the language to talk freely with the people. Mrs. White describes another satisfactory feature of the situation thus: "The relations of these people to the State were very friendly. . . . Our relationship, too, was very friendly, the Commissionaire of the Falls showing exceeding kindness to us invariably, specially when Mr. Wherrett died and during Mr. White's long fever." It might yet be that after many days these pioneers should reap some fruit from their work. But God had other plans for Yakusu and for Harry White. Before he was strong, Stephens went down with a bad fever; and whilst he was convalescent, the *Goodwill* brought Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, Mr. Cameron, and Mr. Beedham.

To the dismay of the Whites, they learned that Mr. Beedham had come to set them free. The Congo Committee were concerned about White's state of health, especially after the last

severe fever, and insisted upon his starting for England at once. He wrote to several friends telling of his home-coming, and all in a tone of regretful submission. One, dated Yakusu, March 31st, 1897, ran as follows:—

"We are packing for the homeward journey. You may hope to see us in August, perhaps. The men on the river won't have me stay longer, and bid me pack in spite of my strongest protest against leaving just now. 'Tis a frightful shattering of hopes and plans. The future has all gone by the board, for 'tis but a poor chance I have of recommending myself for another term in Congo, seeing I am regarded as in such broken condition after only a little over two years out. . . . There are alleviations, but it is a sorrowful parting from work."

Seeing that Mr. Stephens was so poorly, Mr. Cameron at once urged him to return also, offering to stay in his place. This plan was agreed to, and on April 5th Yakusu was left in charge of Messrs. Cameron and Beedham, and the *Goodwill* carried Mr. and Mrs. White and Mr. Stephens towards the coast.

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Thus Harry White bade adieu to Yakusu. It had been the child of many prayers and longings and efforts. The passion for going forward was very strong in White. Perhaps he did not sympathise sufficiently with the desire of other missionaries to consolidate the work at older centres; but certainly no one can understand him who does not make allowance for his conviction that he was to be the instrument for founding the new station in the heart of Africa. His desire was granted to him, though he entered his kingdom through much tribulation. It is certainly remarkable that his furlough was so prolonged, and that no advance could be made during those years when he was being schooled in patience. He took up the new work on his return with unfaltering faith and courage. No tribulation could damp his ardour. God let him found Yakusu, and then God took him away, and others entered into his labours.

TUMBA.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY."

"THE homeward journey" had a meaning which none of the three missionaries realised, when the steamer carried them down the broadening bosom of the Congo. They reached the Pool in safety; and though White had another slight fever there, the journey was soon continued. At this point they came to the, as yet, unopened railway track, and Mr. and Mrs. White gladly availed themselves of permission to descend to Tumba in an empty coal waggon. This preliminary testing of the railway could not be said to give promise of the boon it was to be in later years. The party waited from 10 o'clock one morning till 2 p.m. next day before the start, hourly announced as due "shortly," was actually made. They stopped at 7 o'clock, and realising the difficulty of getting a tent up in the dark, and being promised a start at

daybreak, they spent the night on a narrow wooden bench in the waggon, covered by a tarpaulin, soothed by mosquitos, and pillowed on coal dust! This sumptuous accommodation for a lady who had been living in a one-roomed shanty, 12 by 16 feet, with a mud floor, and for a man who, after all, had sufficiently recovered from fever to travel, is another example of the luxuries of a missionary's life! The start was not at daybreak, but at mid-day, and after the half-day's run, another night was spent in a waggon. On the third day the start was made at daybreak, and Tumba was reached before mid-day.

Sad news greeted the tired pair. Mrs. Pople had passed away the previous evening. Mrs. White wrote: "The little babe was lying on the table, such a sweet wee mite. And that afternoon the mother was laid to rest by the side of her husband. The little lad then became my care, and I am bringing him home."

Mr. Stephens had come from the Pool by a different route. He rejoined the Whites at Tumba, and the reunited band, increased by

the little orphan baby, left Matadi for Liverpool on June 21st.

For some days all went well. The sea air seemed to be bringing back strength to the jaded nature. The group of fever-worn missionaries turned hopeful eyes to the homeland. As he was on the point of leaving Yakusu, White had written to his sister: "In a few weeks after getting this you may look to see us in person. You have all been very, very kind in the way you have written, and in the love you have bestowed on our little Alice. It is very good, to think we shall so soon see you again, and especially that that little 'pickle-pudden' will so soon be hugging us!" These anticipations seemed likely to be fulfilled.

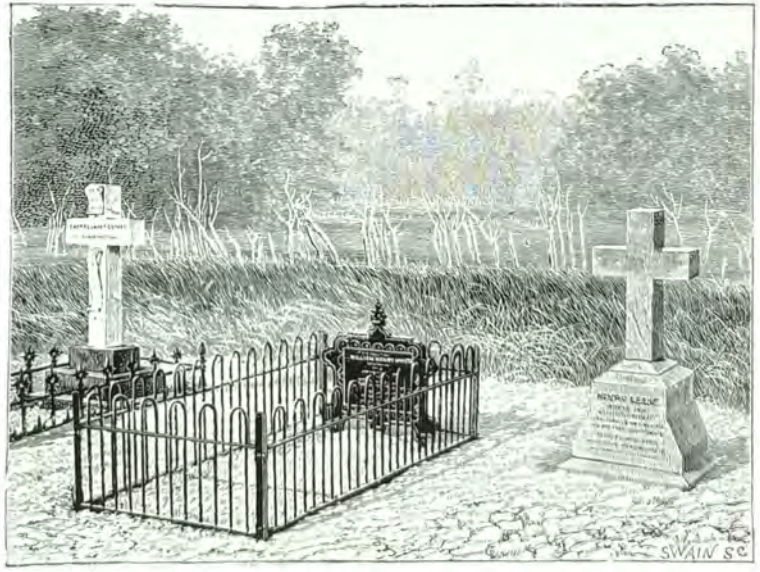
The heart of the father, whose love for his child was beautiful, though he had not seen her since she was six weeks old, yearned over his darling. But "our Father in Heaven" could not allow him to see her again on earth.

On July 1st White caught a chill, and fever followed. Everything possible was done that love could suggest. But the strong constitution

of earlier days had been undermined by the severe strain of lonely service and repeated fevers. The frail body could not resist this fresh attack; and after three days' battling, he died.

And yet in his death he was not separated from the children whom he always loved so dearly. The poor wee orphan died the day before Mr. White; and they laid the tiny body on the breast of the strong man.

It was not simply "coincidence" that the ship was just off Mayumba, a small place on the coast where Tom Comber was buried. The captain and officers were most kind. The ship was stopped, the coffin was carried ashore, and the earthly house of this tabernacle, in which a spirit of rare nobility had dwelt for nearly thirty-three years, was laid to rest beside that of an earlier Congo hero. "'Tis a peaceful spot," wrote his devoted friend, Mr. Stephens. "At the back a wide lagoon, and the hills covered with trees rising in the distance. Seaward a sandy beach and the rolling waves, ever to beat a ceaseless requiem 'Until He come.'"



GRAVES OF COMBER AND WHITE.

And it was thus Harry White's "homeward journey" ended.

"Home" at thirty-two! It was a very short journey. But to remember that the Son of God died at thirty-three, having "finished the work" He was given to do, ought to nerve every young man to do the best with the earlier years of his life, and ought to reconcile anyone to being asked to say, "It is finished," though the working day has been short. It may be said with truth of Harry White that he had lived well. If we judge by human standards, it cannot be laid to his charge that he wasted one of those precious thirty-three years.

It is literally true that he laid down his life for Africa. Had he been content to remain in England, in all human probability his life would have been a long one. Perhaps it might have been longer on the Congo, had he been content with quieter service, involving less hardship for a European than his lonely toil at Yakusu. But if life is measured by intensity rather than by extent, none can refuse to Harry White the tribute of a well-spent life.

And to the end his thought was not of himself but of his work. When the decision to go home was arrived at, he wrote to a friend: "I shall, if allowed to complete the journey, be home well within the three years since starting —a disappointingly short term; but I quite agree with my brethren in their argument for my packing for home—that the worst thing a man can do for the Congo Mission is to die on the field; much better to clear out before the last stage of weakness is reached, at whatever cost in cash or in disappointment of self-made plans. It will turn out that the disappointment is part of a great, wise, God-made plan, I doubt not." This shows how calmly he faced the prospect of death.

It was his earnest prayer that, if it were possible, the "God-made plan" might include his return to Africa. But we cannot help believing that if that were not God's will, he would welcome the call to higher service. It would have been hard to live on here, an exile from Africa.

This same love for Africa would make him

quite content to know that the "God-made plan" included the successful prosecution of the work at Yakusu, though by other hands than those which laboured at the foundations.

The early days of Yakusu were days of storm and stress. But the latter days have seen "the calm shining after rain."

Not in vain did Albert Wherrett die. Not in vain did Mr. and Mrs. White lay the offering of their love upon the altar of that distant station. Increasingly it has been found that the site is one of great strategical importance. It is admirably placed as regards people accessible within a given radius. Its position in the Arab zone has secured a breaking away from the old order of things which is a preparation for the new working of God's Spirit. It is famously situated for food resources. It offers fine promise of future developments. The difficulty of many dialects is not peculiar to any station—it is the appalling difficulty which faces all missionaries in Central Africa. But there are many signs that one dialect—the Kiswaheli—is establishing itself over a large

district as the dominant speech. This is a bright harbinger of better days.

Many tokens of blessing have been given to the missionaries who have laboured at Yakusu. A school has been gathered, services are held regularly, good buildings have been erected, and books printed in the Kiswaheli tongue. The earlier efforts are being justified, and the Lord is saying: "I have set before thee an open door."

There was another part of the "God-made plan" which was hidden from the eyes of husband and wife, as Mr. and Mrs. White commenced their sorrowful journey from Yakusu. The brave, gentle wife, who did so much by her wisdom and devotion to aid her husband in his life work, and bore so patiently the long separation whilst he was preparing a home for her at Yakusu, was called to rejoin her husband in the Father's house, after a very brief separation. She was permitted to spend two years with their little girl, and then she was allowed to see the face she had loved and lost awhile.

No estimate of Harry White's life could be

adequate which did not recognise the gracious influence exerted by his wife. No account of work on the Congo will ever be complete which leaves unmentioned the story of her work in Africa, though much of her service was to "stand and wait." She was a woman like minded with her noble husband in devotion and courage, whilst fitted to temper his ardour with her practical judgment.

A perusal of the letters received by Mrs. White after her husband's death was known, gives some understanding of the admiration, and even reverence with which his character was regarded by those who knew him best. In this respect the messages from his missionary colleagues are specially valuable. A few extracts may indicate their love for him: "He was so self-denying and so devoted in his work. We are so glad to know he lies beside dear Mr. Comber." "We have lost a brave fellow-worker, and an ever-willing helper." "We feel confident that a more genuine-hearted worker could not be found than was your dear husband. I was especially impressed by his

self-forgetfulness." "He was so brave, so steadfast, so determined to do what he thought right at all costs, that he will be a great loss to the Mission, and will be especially missed by those who knew him intimately." "Your husband was a brave, great-hearted, unselfish, and godly man, one who won for himself the profound respect of his colleagues. His originality of thought and great outspokenness might sometimes have made it seem that differences of opinion between him and his brethren covered some deeper unfriendliness. That wasn't so at all, I believe, and certainly S—— and I, who argued with him so much, respected and loved him intensely. You mustn't think he laboured in vain, or spent his strength for nought. His was pioneering, foundation-laying—the day will disclose it. For his life of such rare devotion and self-sacrifice, I have great admiration."

The missionary referred to in the above extract sent the following tribute: "I need hardly assure you of my love and respect for your dear one. The marvellously patient way in which he bore his sufferings in Congo have

been an inspiration to me since first I knew him. He bore without a murmur what would have killed the majority of men. Often, as I have thought of what he did, I have wondered what a missionary life his would have been had he been strong and well, and my own life seems poor in comparison."

The same missionary's wife wrote a very tender letter, in which she says: "My husband and I loved your dear one very sincerely, and we have to mourn a true friend. I always felt drawn to him; he was so considerate for one in a hundred small ways, while feeling weary and often sick himself. I shall never forget that prayer of his at Tumba. Last night, as we walked on the verandah, we said, 'He was one of the noblest men that will ever set foot in Congo!' I know he was misunderstood by some, but [my husband] says he lived above most of us."

A second reference to "that prayer at Tumba" occurs in the letter from one of his best-known colleagues: "This meeting [at Tumba] with our brother stands out pre-eminently in my recol-

lection, because of the impression made on several of us by his earnest prayers at our gatherings for family worship. He seemed in a very real sense to be helped by the Spirit in expressing our feelings and needs; and I am sure we all felt more truly the reality of spiritual things while he led our devotions. . . . Harry White in many things was unlike any other man I ever knew, and one might not always agree with his methods of work; but his intense missionary enthusiasm and whole-hearted devotion to the evangelisation and enlightenment of Africa made him well worthy of a grave beside T. J. Comber, the founder of our Congo Mission."

A message sent from Mr. Dodds, who was with him at Yakusu, declares that "our Society never had a more devoted missionary on the Congo River than he was." Mr. Dodds adds: "There is much in his life and work which I perhaps only know besides yourself, which may well inspire one to nobler and more persevering service in the same cause for our Master—his endurance under pain, prolonged and severe,

his perseverance in service, his intense desire to finish that he had set his heart upon—but he was unable—but God knows all."

But a peculiar value attaches to the estimate of his character and work formed by our beloved leader, Rev. George Grenfell. Mr. Grenfell saw very much of White, and was a wise counsellor and true friend to him. The following extracts from his letters will be read with sympathetic interest:—

"A truer or more whole-hearted man I never knew, and a more self-denying or self-forgetting yoke fellow one never had; and during my intercourse with him, I learned enough to imagine something of the marvellous gripping of the hooks with which his earnest soul made itself fast to that of his oldest and dearest friend, as well as something of the gap his going has made in your life. My life is all the richer and fuller for its contact with Harry White, and my memory of him is one of my most treasured memories."

"He was a man who lived his faith, and was not given to talking or writing much about it.

I have met no one who has prized less what this world counts good or great, or who has been more loyal to the 'Heavenly Vision.' One could not be long in company with Harry White without realising that the things spiritual and unseen were the great verity of his life, rather than the things handled and felt, and that for him Christ was King."

These extracts are from letters to two of White's life-long friends. To his wife, Mr. Grenfell wrote: "It has not been given to all my colleagues to know and appreciate our brother White, as it has been my privilege. I have lost a friend and brother whose self-denial and self-forgetfulness have from the first been an inspiration for me, notwithstanding what I may have thought of some of the ideas I have been rude enough to label as more or less 'quixotic.' However, these ideas never interfered for a moment with my loving regard for an affectionate and whole-souled fellow-worker, whose heart, like my own, was at the front. I cannot help thinking that He who knoweth the hearts of all His servants has recognised the

worth of Harry White's, and given him a fitting resting place by the side of the hero of our work —a resting-place I envy him, but of which I am in no way worthy. This world is all the poorer for me because Harry White has dropped out of it; but the ties that bind me to the world to come are all the more intimate and real, because he has passed on before."

The weaknesses of his nature were those common to men cast in the heroic mould. He dreamed dreams; and though sometimes the dreams were realised, partly because the dreamer clung to them, at other times his views were impracticable, and he clung pertinaciously to them when wisdom counselled withdrawal. His indomitable will kept him working when he ought to have been resting in bed; and the early breakdown was due partly to his needless exposure to hardships. The incessant strain of fever overpowered in some degree the equable temper of earlier years; and there were signs of irritability, due to physical exhaustion, which were in sharp contrast to the natural sweetness of his disposition,

and which might have been avoided by more prudent care for his health. But these were the faults of a most loyal and unselfish spirit. The frequent references by his brethren to the fitness of his resting-place by the side of Thomas Comber is a beautiful tribute to their recognition of his devotion, his heroic patience, his purity of character, his unquenchable enthusiasm. The fitness is also explained by remembering that the name of Harry White must always be connected with our Society's "Forward Movement" on the Congo. It owed very much to his toil and faith, to his pleadings and prayers and self-sacrificing service. "His heart was at the front." It was this which in life made him the constant fellow-labourer of Mr. Grenfell, one of the founders of the Mission, and which in death made him worthy to lie beside Mr. Comber, another founder of the Mission. Tom Comber entered the Dark Continent from the coast, longing to carry the torch of truth to its benighted inhabitants. His eagle eye sought to pierce the darkness which shrouded Africa's bleeding heart. To Harry

White fell the honour of bearing the torch to the farthest station near the Falls. There he began tenderly to bind up the wounded heart. He only just began, and then his work was done. Others have succeeded him, and are proving themselves worthy to rank with our noblest spirits. But White founded Sargent Station, Yakusu, as he had a hand in founding Bopoto. The spirit of the man who first committed himself to the Congo, greets the spirit of the man who reached the end of the waterway; "and in death they were not divided."

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