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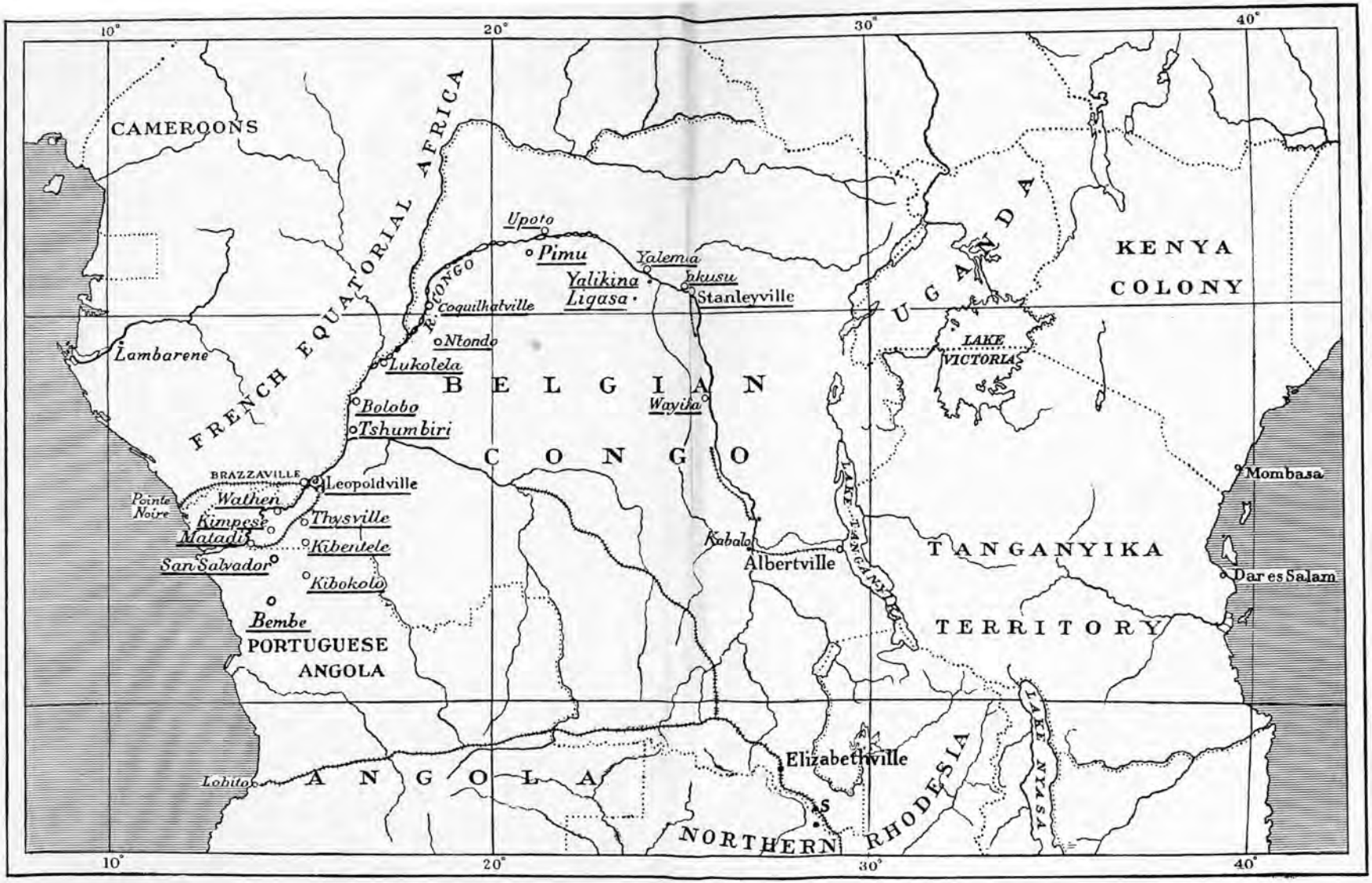
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Stanleyville
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Ntondo
Lukolela
Lambarene
BELGIAN
CONGO
Bolobo
Tshumbiri
Wayika
BRAZZAVILLE
Leopoldville
Pointe Noire
Wathen
Kimpese
Matadi
Thysville
Kibentele
San Salvador
Kibokolo
Bembe
PORTUGUESE
ANGOLA
UGANDA
KENYA
COLONY
LAKE
VICTORIA
LAKE TANGANYIKA
Kabalo
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Elizabethville
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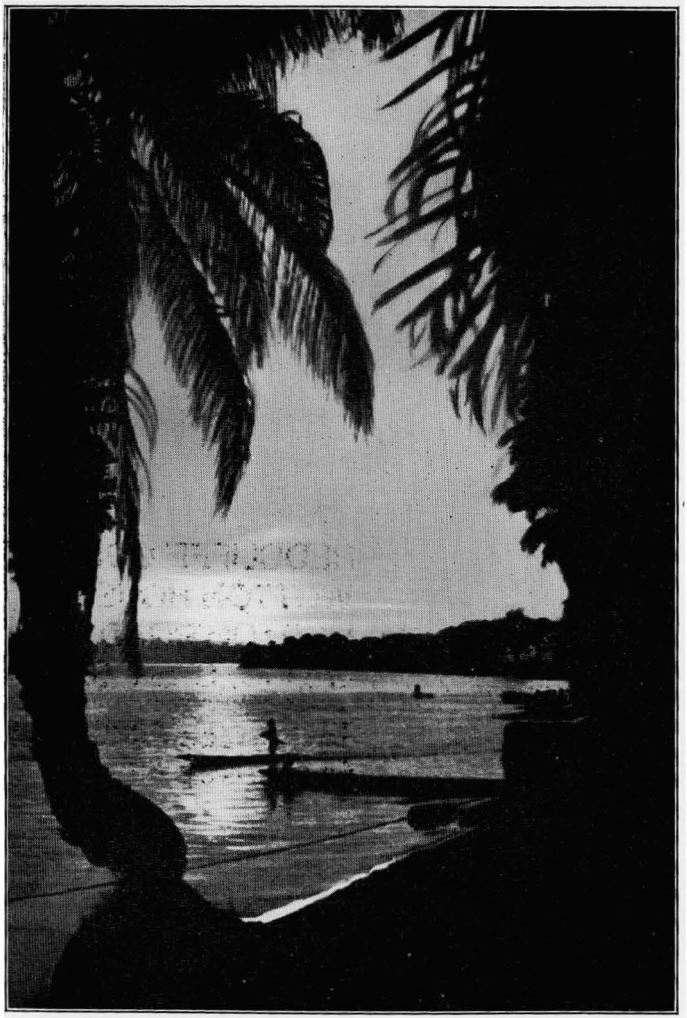

[*Photo by C. Zagourski*

BY CONGO WATERS

CONGO JOURNEY

BY

H. L. HEMMENS

Author of *George Grenfell, Pioneer in Congo*, etc.

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To the Memory of the Pioneers who first took the Light to Congo and of their successors who kept It burning; and in admiration of the men and women of to-day who hold It aloft as they press forward.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE

THIS book is the outcome of a tour which was made possible through the generosity of the Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement. The object of this journey was, first, that the Baptist Missionary Society might have a representative from the homeland at the Diamond Jubilee Conference of Protestant Missions in Congo which was held at Léopoldville, the capital of Congo Belge, in June, 1938; and, secondly, that a tour of our Congo Mission stations might be undertaken. The arrangements for this tour were made with characteristic thoroughness by the Congo Field Secretary, the Rev. C. E. Pugh, with the hearty co-operation of his colleagues everywhere. The existence of modern means and methods of transport permitted a stay of several days at each station and journeys were taken among village outposts in most districts.

Present missionaries are not mentioned in the text and they will be the first to approve this, but I wish here to pay tribute to my obligation to them and to missionaries of other Societies for the heartiness of their welcome, the generosity of their hospitality and the readiness with which they devoted time and strength to making profitable to me my sojourn among them. The reception which the Congo Christians gave to the white

stranger was marked by an enthusiasm which was vocal and, at times, embarrassing. State officials, too, from the Governor-General onwards, in both Belgian and Portuguese territories, extended a courtesy that added greatly to the pleasure and profit of the tour.

A trip of four months, in which almost every day was crowded, must of necessity provide a wealth of experiences and impressions. So it will be understood that the method of selection has been followed in this book. Much of what is written about any one station is equally applicable to other stations. Much more that might have been included has had perforce to be omitted. But it is hoped that readers will gain from this narrative of a sympathetic visitor's observations some understanding of the magnitude and effectiveness of our Congo enterprise. And if, moreover, its evidence that the Light has come to Congo stirs the churches at home to further service and sacrifice so that this Light may be taken into the darkness that still remains, those generous friends who made my journey possible will feel that their action has been well worth while.

THE JOURNEY

1938	
May 4th	Left London.
May 6th	Left Antwerp.
May 25th	Arrived at Matadi.
May 26th	By train to Kimpese
May 30th	By train to Léopoldville for B.M.S. Field Committee (*May 31st to June 7th*); Kimpese Board of Management (*June 8th to 10th*); Diamond Jubilee Conference of Protestant Missions (*June 11th to 20th*).
June 22nd	By train and car to San Salvador.
June 29th	By car to Kibokolo.
June 30th	By car to Bembe.
July 7th	By car to Kibokolo.
July 14th	By car to Kibentele.
July 15th	By train to Thysville.
July 22nd	By car to Wathen.
July 27th	By car to Thysville and train to Kimpese.
July 28th	By train and car to Kibentele.
August 2nd	By train to Léopoldville.

August 5th and 6th	. By aeroplane to Stanleyville.
August 7th	. By motor-boat to Yakusu.
August 15th	. By *Grenfell* to Yalikina.
August 16th	. By car to Ligasa.
August 18th	. By car and canoe to Yalemba.
August 22nd	. By canoe to Basoko and aeroplane to Lisala for Upoto.
August 23rd	. By motor-boat and car to Pimu.
August 25th	. By car and motor-boat to Upoto.
August 29th	. By mail steamer to Coquilhatville.
August 30th	. By car and iron boat to Ntondo.
September 1st and 2nd	. By motor-boat to Lukolela.
September 7th	. By motor-boat to Bolobo.
September 14th	. By motor-boat to Tshumbiri.
September 16th	. By mail steamer to Léopoldville.
September 21st	. By train to Matadi.
September 22nd	. Left Matadi.
October 11th	. Arrived at Antwerp.
October 12th	. Arrived in London.

PRESENT STATIONS

IN THE ORDER OF THEIR FOUNDING

Lower Congo :

1879 San Salvador.
1882 Kinshasa
1884 Wathen.
1899 Kibokolo.
1905 Mabaya, now at Bembe (1932).
1908 Kimpese, with the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society and the Svenska Missions Förbundet.
1911 Thysville, out of the Wathen area.
1920 Kibentele, out of the Wathen area.

Upper Congo :

1884 Lukolela (restarted 1925).
1888 Bolobo.
1891 Upoto.
1896 Yakusu.
1905 Yalemba.
1931 Tshumbiri, from the A.B.F.M.S.
1932 Pimu.
1939 Ntondo (A.B.F.M.S.). Doctor placed here.

NOTE.—*Kinshasa is synonymous with Léopoldville. Kibokolo is giving place to the Portuguese spelling—Quibocolo—but is retained in this book.*

CHAPTER I

THE WHITE MAN COMES

THE convoy of canoes that conveyed H. M. Stanley and his native escort down the Congo in 1877 clove a way through its waters which caused ripples that were the precursors of far greater disturbances that were soon to descend upon its pagan peoples. For Stanley was the first white man known to journey upon the river from its upper waters to its mouth. His discovery thrilled an expectant world and revealed a vast land that would offer ample scope to the pioneer and the adventurer. From that date the white man and his civilisation began to bear with an ever-increasing disintegration upon its primitive inhabitants.

In some dim, far-distant age, tribes of Bantu origin entered the Congo region and trekked westwards before the pressure of more powerful oppressors. Here, by the banks of the main river, 3,000 miles long, and by its many tributaries which together total another 13,000 miles, and in the seclusion of the sombre recesses of its vast forests, these tribes made their habitations and developed their ways of life. None of their many languages was reduced to writing, and so they had no history. What information of the past they possessed had

been handed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Thinly distributed as they were over great areas, and in consequence almost completely separated from one another, they were wholly isolated from the rest of mankind.

Their life was simple. A village was built on any suitable site. It consisted of huts of two rooms, generally rectangular in shape, made of palm with grass or leaf thatch, and with a single low opening which served at once as entrance and exit, window and chimney. The centre of the earth floor served as fireplace. The hut was really both store and sleeping place, for life was mostly lived in the open. The inner room was both a bedroom and a repository for articles of utility and value. The beds were merely mats spread on the ground and rolled up when not in use. The treasures consisted of goods for trading and bartering, and of foodstuffs. The outer room held articles not in general use.

If life was simple, it was also full. Men, women and children, too, had to toil in their struggle against nature in the raw and in the necessity to maintain an existence. The erection and repair of huts required application of brain and hand. If a man lived by a stream, he must fashion a boat and paddles from trees, and implements with which to fish. If he dwelt in the forest, he must know something of woodcraft, the haunts and habits of animals, and he must make weapons with which to hunt them and to defend himself against them and the human foes by which he was environed. He must devise instruments of iron and wood for use in home and garden. Woman played her part,

too. In fact, in Congo her work is never done. While the man would clear away the heavy jungle growth, the woman would remove the scrub and be responsible for digging, planting, gathering and marketing the produce. She was cook and maker of household utensils out of clay. Spinning and weaving of such clothing as was worn and of utensils needed for daily use were also her province. Children also had their part in the life of the village. A carefree infancy gave early place to an imposition of responsibility. Before he entered his teens a boy would join other boys, sharing their life and learning to fend for himself. A girl assisted her mother and, like the boy, early learnt all her elders had to teach her about the duties and mysteries of life.

So life went its way, while over all and amid all was the menace of the unknown. For while the Congo native knew full well that human enemies were about him and that life was an incessant struggle, he was acutely conscious also of hidden forces of darkness that inhabited the realm of his mind. In the recesses of his thought there lurked an idea of a supreme being too remote to have any concern with mortals. His universe was peopled with malignant spirits ever watchful to work him harm, and he must provide himself against them. Death was not the end of existence for him, but only the releasing of his spirit to live on somewhere else and to return as a capricious and harmful visitor to this world. Death was attended with appropriate ceremonies such as dancing and drumming, the burying of slaves with the departed, the decoration of the grave with

weapons and food, and much else. From this dread fear of spirits there developed the creation and use of the fetich, a tangible thing supposed to contain a force more powerful than the spirit. These were provided by the fetich priests who were able, through their reputed abilities, to wield power and to amass wealth. Fetiches existed in great variety and served a multitude of purposes. Other fetiches used as charms were employed to control the elements, to bring success in trading, to protect from war, pestilence or disease, or to ensure the safety of property in the absence of its owner.

Evil spirits were held responsible for illness. Diseases of many kinds were prevalent from a variety of causes. While simple remedies were known and successfully used, they failed more often. Then the services of the medicine man were requisitioned and, in return for the payment of a fee in kind, he would proceed to discover the spirit which was causing the suffering. If he succeeded, his fame would be enhanced. If he failed, he had his explanation ready. Either the patient lacked the necessary faith in him and his power, or his fee was inadequate. Illness or accident was attributed to the sinister action of another person and the services of the witch-doctor were summoned to reveal the culprit. This was accomplished through the poison ordeal with its attendant terrors and heavy loss of life, often of innocent victims. So, from birth till death, the native was aware of countless unseen forces and powers ever seeking to threaten his existence.

Thus he lived his life until the white man

arrived, and while, over wide tracts of the country, his conditions are still much the same, the white man's influence now reaches everywhere and, for multitudes in Congo, he has made life radically different from what it was.

On a Saturday afternoon in June, 1938, I stood above Stanley Pool on the hill which formed the site of the first B.M.S. station there. The beach on which George Grenfell constructed the *Peace* lay immediately below. Behind there stretched the series of cataracts over which the Congo plunges, with a roar like that of an express train, to a depth of a thousand feet on its final impetuous rush of 200 miles to the sea. In front there spread the broad waters of Stanley Pool, their placid surface broken by wooded islands. To the north, on the farther shore, one could see Brazzaville, the capital of French Equatorial Africa, and, away to the south, Léopoldville, the modern capital of Congo Belge, with its white population of nearly 2,000 and its native population of over 30,000.

We drove through the European part of this city which has been laid out by an administration with a genius for town-planning. Its broad avenues, with their cement road surfaces and electric lighting, are lined with green verges and trees, behind which stand spacious residences of Spanish architecture, hotels, and modern stores and shops. Here the Governor-General of the Colony has his headquarters. Here, also, are the administrative departments of the Colony and of the local Province, a magnificent hospital for Europeans, a medical research institution, a museum

for native arts and crafts, a zoo, plants for generating light and power, hotels, modern business premises and such like.

The main native quarter is separated from the European city by an extensive park and is in the shape of a square four miles in area. It, too, has been developed according to plan, its wide streets shaded with trees running at right angles to each other. To provide accommodation for natives dispossessed of their homes in this neighbourhood through the making of the park, a new suburb has recently been created. The administration lends financial aid to the natives in the building of their houses and, amid a great variety of dwellings, I saw some constructed of brick walls with red-tiled roofs which would do credit to an artisan housing estate at home. The motley population here has gathered from all parts of the Colony and from Portuguese West Africa. The B.M.S. churches in this area, which are only able to reach a minority of the people, include members from at least forty-five tribes. Large numbers of the inhabitants find employment in the many factories of the district, in the ship-building yards, as chauffeurs, or in business. While much is done for their welfare by the State, removed as they are from their tribal associations and sanctions, and living in an environment that is new and strange, many are caught into a maelstrom of attractions and temptations which swings them off their feet and carries them into its depths. In no part of the Colony is the need for a strong evangelical witness more imperative than in this modern metropolis.

The white man has brought to the native the

benefits of ordered government and many of the amenities of civilisation. The six Provinces into which the Colony is divided each has its capital which is a replica of Léopoldville on a smaller scale, and their influence reaches to the remotest villages. Communications have been developed to an amazing extent. The earliest of Belgian achievements, the narrow gauge railway which followed its tortuous course for 240 miles, from Matadi to Léopoldville, has been recently straightened and relaid with a broad gauge, with the result that the journey which formerly took two days can now be made in comfort in ten hours. Other railways have also been built between the centres of industry and commerce. Roads have been driven through all parts of the Colony and it is now possible to travel hundreds of miles by car. By the road from Léopoldville, the motorist can turn south down to the Cape, or east to Mozambique. Chiefs are encouraged to make and maintain the roads in their districts, native labour being used in this way instead of for the old form of porterage. Regular air services ply from one end of the Colony to the other and to Europe. Postal, telegraphic and wireless communications have attained a high pitch of efficiency. A missionary secretary in Léopoldville told me somewhat ruefully that he receives two deliveries of letters daily and sometimes imagines in consequence that he is in London ! But the great river and its tributaries still hold pride of place as the medium of transport. Traffic by steamer and canoe is to be found upon the 16,000 miles of navigable waterways which straddle the Colony like a web, and a vast amount of

merchandise is borne upon them. Medical, health and social services are playing a notable part in the arrest of disease and of mortality, for it has long been recognised that the most valuable asset of Congo is man.

The immense natural resources of the Colony are being developed and gathered on an increasingly big scale. The Katanga copper mines in the far east have the greatest yield in the world. Tin and iron are found in extensive deposits which so far have hardly been touched. Congo competes with Canada as being the largest source of radium. Diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, lead, nickel and platinum are among other minerals the resources of which are as yet scarcely realised. The export of ivory makes Antwerp the greatest distributing centre in the world. Palm nuts and palm oil form two other of the big items of export. Ground nuts are cultivated for native consumption and for export, as also is tobacco. Coffee, cocoa and cotton plantations are increasing in number, and rice is grown in some areas. More recently the sugar cane has been introduced and its product is taking the place of imported sugar and is also being shipped to Europe. The Government has huge farms and laboratories where experiments in agriculture are tried out, and elsewhere territory is reserved as a game preserve. And the past and present in these respects are relatively trivial compared with the potentialities of the future.

"Never in the world's history has civilisation made so rapid an impact upon so backward a people in so vast an area as the Belgian Congo,"

says Mr. Emory Ross in his *Out of Africa*. "Upon a country of peoples centuries retarded, religiously, socially and economically, among the most primitive in the world, has been thrust in two decades the fullest weight of all occidental invention, organisation, manufacture, commerce, transportation and acquisitiveness. Men, women and children, who never before had been more than a day's walk from the village, have been transported thousands of miles on conveyances never before seen, to work never before imagined, in the midst of laws and conditions never before experienced. . . . To the Congo native the total effect of all this is stupefying. He cannot take it in. Neither could any other folk if it had all been dropped down upon the darkened bush in a short generation. Fifty years ago, the Congo was unknown, untouched. For thirty years after, penetration was slow and slight, but during the last twenty years, and especially since the World War, it has been spectacular, overwhelming, unbelievable. To those participating in the enormous dividends of this period it has been intoxicating, this vast, new, quick wealth. For the native it is devastating in many ways. Anchor chains are parting and nothing seems to hold. Increasingly hundreds of thousands are definitely adrift. They are groping and staggering. Many have already turned the corner into active badness. Multitudes of others are looking for—they know not what—and may yet be directed into the Way that leads to good."

Away to the south-west lies Portuguese West Africa where too, the white man holds sway.

Indeed, his influence has been felt there since the fifteenth century. For long the scene of slave raiding and other evils, this huge land is being administered according to the genius of its European overlords. It, too, is rich in natural and mineral resources which, to some extent, are being harvested for the advantage of those concerned in them. Large deposits of diamonds, copper, gold, silver, petroleum and asphalt are known to exist. Copra, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber, ivory, sesame, ground nuts, maize, beans, linseed, palm oil and wheat, are among other resources. A remarkable road system, made by native labour, which links together the military, administrative and other European settlements in the Colony and which is affirmed to be without equal in Central Africa, now reaches a total of 25,000 miles in length. The railway which crosses the Colony from Lobito at the coast to Katanga in the centre of the Continent, is an outlet for thousands of tons of merchandise annually.

This inflow of European influence and civilisation which has surged with increasing volume and power about these primitive tribes of Central Africa, has carried on its surface a variety of men and women. Soldiers, administrators, educationalists, scientists, doctors, adventurers, prospectors, merchants and traders, each and all have played their parts in the upheaval which it has caused. In their company, from the earliest days, another class has been prominent; men and women concerned, not only for the well-being of the minds

and bodies of the natives, but supremely with their souls. These are the missionaries, called and sent from the churches at home to evangelise pagan Central Africa. It is to some consideration of their work and of the Baptist Missionary Society in particular, that we now address ourselves.

CHAPTER II

KIMPESE AND KINSHASA

My first, as well as my last, contact with Congo was at Boma, fifty miles from the river mouth where, during a halt of four hours, the generous hospitality of the bungalow of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of America was enjoyed. The same afternoon our boat arrived at Matadi, the port for ocean steamers and the terminus of the railway to Léopoldville. The evening was spent in happy fellowship with members of the Swedish Mission and, next morning, my companions and I set out for

KIMPESE

about ninety miles along the railway.

It is an axiom in missionary policy that the planting of a native Church is the goal of the enterprise and that to accomplish this an equipped native leadership is of prime importance. This is nothing new, for it has been so from the earliest days of the Christian enterprise when Jesus chose twelve men and ordained them that they might be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach. It was the practice of the Early Church and it was so in our own and other lands. It is on record that, thirty-four years after the crucifixion, a Welsh princess founded a school for the training

of evangelists to their fellow countrymen. The clergy and ministers of our own and other lands are, in reality, the successors of the men who were trained by the early foreign missionaries who first came to evangelise our pagan ancestors. The task of making disciples of any people is too large and complicated an undertaking for any staff of overseas missionaries to encompass it. Native workers possess advantages, such as knowledge of the customs, traditions and languages, which no foreigner can hope to gain. The native Church needs for its own sake that its sons and daughters shall be called out and set apart for this service in order that its spiritual life and evangelistic zeal may be maintained and deepened.

The Congo Church was encouraged from the beginning to recognise the responsibility of every member to make known the glad tidings to their untouched neighbours. An equal concern was shown by the missionaries to secure and prepare likely youths for the office of teacher-evangelist, and the responsibility for their support was placed upon the Church. Boys were obtained, partly to serve the missionaries in their homes and thus to free them for their work, but chiefly that these lads might come under regular and systematic training and constant influence for three or four years with a view to their proceeding afterwards to the ministry of the gospel in their own or other villages. This policy has been pursued at all stations throughout Congo. The thoroughness of this work may be judged from the fact that our Congo Church now has over 2,000 of these teacher-evangelists, and that the support they receive is borne by the

Church. The supervision of these men takes a large place in the missionary programme. They are called in batches to the central stations for a few weeks each year for fellowship with the missionaries and with each other, and for intensive training fitted to their office. In other cases, they are gathered together in districts for a like purpose. Part of the object of missionary itinerations is to oversee their work and to bring cheer to them in their oft-times lonely and arduous service.

It was realised early in the history of the Mission, however, that something more thorough and comprehensive in character was needed if full use was to be made of the material that was available, but it was not until 1908 that it became possible for plans to take definite shape. The American Baptists, who are working in the lower river area alongside ourselves, were conscious of a similar need and, as one language was common to both Societies, a happy partnership was arranged and a United Institution for the training of teacher-evangelists was founded at Kimpese. This partnership has been enlarged more recently by the inclusion of the Swedish Missions Förbundet. On the other hand, the range of its influence has become restricted because of the difficulties connected with the admission of students from Portuguese Congo. So far as the B.M.S. is concerned, Kimpese serves Kinshasa, Wathen, Thysville and Kibentele, though occasionally students come from Upper River stations.

Kimpese occupies one of the largest mission sites in Congo. It is shaped like a rough L.

Missionaries' houses are the first buildings which the visitor meets as he approaches from the railway station and these are followed by some of the native quarters. On turning the angle there is a playing field. Next come a large building used for classes and two smaller ones in a style that can be copied in the villages. Two more residences and a printing office flank the striking Bentley Memorial Church, and beyond is another house in which the Principal lives. The students' and workmen's quarters are grouped about the station. Most of the eighty or so students are married and are accompanied by their wives and families, for all receive training in the institution. Altogether, the station contains a population of over 500.

The purpose of Kimpese is expressed in its title —Ecole de Pasteurs et D'Instituteurs. It seeks to provide for the lower Congo region a native leadership well-trained in spiritual, moral, social and educational matters. A three years' course is provided in the normal school for students who intend to take up teaching, and a two or three years' course for those who prepare for the pastoral office. Courses are also held for the wives of students, for it is recognised that the example of a Christian home in a heathen village is far-reaching and that a man's witness is more powerful and effective if his wife can stand by him and share it with him. Schools for the children of students and workpeople enable them to receive an education, and they serve at the same time as practice grounds for the students.

The daily programme includes morning classes from shortly after six o'clock until nearly noon.

For three hours in the afternoons students are engaged on their garden plots, in the workshops, or in the practice school. There is also an hour and a half of private study in the evenings. Saturday mornings are devoted to agriculture and the afternoons are free. The subjects taught in the classes for teachers include the Old and New Testaments, comparative religion, arithmetic, writing, geography, history, French, Ki-Kongo, drawing, art of teaching, general knowledge, physical training and singing. The pastors' course is somewhat similar, a few subjects being omitted from it and doctrine being added. The women's school, like those for men, meets in the mornings, and its subjects are the New Testament, writing, simple arithmetic, geography, hygiene, home management, child welfare and sewing. The children's schools also have thorough curricula. On the practical side the men learn enough of building construction, including bricklaying, carpentry, masonry and thatching, to enable them to erect their own village houses and other buildings. Each family has its plot of land which it is expected to cultivate and to leave in good condition for the next comers. The students prepare the ground, sow and watch over the seed and its growth, and live on the produce, helped by a small weekly sum from the funds. The women have their home and family duties besides. Fruit grows well at Kimpese and the fame of its grape fruit is widespread.

My days at Kimpese coincided with the close of the academic year, when leave was taken of the students who had completed their course and were proceeding to their appointed posts. The Sunday

morning's service in the Memorial Church was planned with this in mind. The spacious building was thronged, and besides the hearty congregational singing, other music was rendered by the Kimpese choir and by a visiting choir from the American Mission at Banza Manteke. The service and the sermon were followed with reverent attention and with evident appreciation. At the Communion Service, in the afternoon, a sense of Christian fellowship that obliterated barriers of language and that gave a realisation of the presence of Christ, made the occasion both impressive and memorable. The next morning an end of the session gathering was held when diplomas and certificates were handed to the leaving students, words of counsel were spoken to them by the tutors and a visiting missionary, and three of the students testified to the influence of the institution upon them.

The staff consists of the Principal and four tutors and their wives, supplemented by three or four native tutors. A valuable medical work is attached, in connection with which in-patients are received and cared for, and large attendances of out-patients come for treatment. One of the features of the station is the water supply, which is obtained from a neighbouring stream by means of a hydraulic ram, the cost of which was borne by interested friends in America. The buildings throughout are lit by electricity, which is generated on the station.

Kimpese is more than an academic institution. It is true that its standards in this respect are high; but it is concerned primarily with moral and

spiritual development with the object of providing a leadership for the Congo Church and community that will carry it to the heights. This was impressed upon me when I sat with the tutors as they devoted a morning to a consideration of the examination results, for I observed then the care that is taken in assessing the work of both men and women students and, above all, their growth in character and grace.

Kimpese is the only co-operative effort of its kind in Congo. The three participating Societies are united in their determination to maintain its standard and to increase the service which it is capable of rendering to the work in lower Congo and beyond. But co-operation is always costly. It makes big demands in money and in personnel. It requires the adjustment to a common mind of men and women of different nationalities, backgrounds and outlooks. It involves the merging of individuality into the team spirit. It means the broadening of aim and programme to serve a wider area in which dissimilarities exist. But it also brings enrichment to each contributing partner. It exercises a widening and a deepening influence upon its leaders and upon those in whose interests it has been created. It gives a truer conception of the enterprise and of the Kingdom of God, and it is in harmony with the mind of the Master. It is all this and more which supplies persistence and zeal to those who believe themselves to be called by God to engage in it, and it is to be hoped that before long other areas will have their equivalents to Kimpese.

KINSHASA

When Bentley and Crudgington won through to Stanley Pool in 1881 and gained the goodwill of its turbulent tribesmen, the foundations were laid of a work destined to expand far beyond the bounds of their wildest dreams. Here, on a hillside overlooking the spacious waters of the Pool and with the constant roar of the river as it tumbled over the first cataracts in their ears, they built the first house as a haven of refuge and rest for missionaries after the laboured journey of seventeen days up country from the coast, and as a base for the up-river advance. On the beach below, Grenfell, with the help of native lads, set his hands to the building of the *Peace* after the engineers sent out for the purpose had succumbed on their way from the coast. The tale of that task, with its combination of faith and persistence, has often been told. Evening after evening Grenfell records that he climbed the path from the waterside to the house, perplexed concerning the next step to be taken on the morrow; but he adds triumphantly, "Light always came in the morning!" As I stood on that same hillside one afternoon, I tried to capture something of the thrill of that June day in 1884, when the steamer slid from the stocks to ride buoyantly on the water to begin that service which made her and her constructor famous during the next twenty years.

Less success was granted to the Mission, however. The people, who desired nothing of the white man or his ways, departed to French territory on the other side of the Pool. It was decided, therefore,

to move the station to a site three miles farther up the Pool. The guidance of a Higher Hand can be seen in this decision, for it is in this newer neighbourhood that Léopoldville, with its teeming population, has developed and presented the B.M.S. with an opportunity unparalleled in Congo. The four missionary bungalows and the subsidiary buildings on the present site are set in a row above the beach facing Stanley Pool, with Brazzaville directly opposite on the other shore.

Léopoldville is the magnet that draws people from all parts of the colony and beyond. Some settle there to find permanent employment in the many openings that offer themselves. Most stay for a time in work and then return to their homes to take back their experiences of new ideas and ways of life to their distant villages. For better or worse, the city affects them all. Christians in large numbers are to be found in the company of these immigrants, and these have to be sought out and guarded and guided amid the bewildering forces that operate around them. The vast heathen population comprises a parish in which need and opportunity are almost unlimited. Here, if anywhere in Congo, a strong and sustained Gospel witness is required, and it is happily provided.

We have three churches in Léopoldville. The first stands in the station grounds and is used for services for the English-speaking population. The congregations include the few white people who appreciate the ministry of our missionaries, and West African coast people and others who have found their way to the capital. The building itself, which stands in a prominent position, proclaims

the Protestant witness to all who pass by, and provides a spiritual centre for those who desire it.

The main native quarter is called the "Belge," and our church here is the focus of a many-sided activity which radiates among the thousands who throng its streets and homes. Here, on Sunday mornings, two services are held in succession. The first, at 8.30, crowds the building, every seat being occupied while other folk squat on the floor or listen from outside. At this service Lingala, the lingua franca of the upper river, is used. Meanwhile another company is collecting in the grounds and the sound of its voices can be heard inside the building. As the first congregation disperses through the doors at the west end, this second company surges in like a seething tidal wave through those at the east end for its service in Ki-Kongo, and fills the church in less than five minutes. This variety in language is excelled by variety in tribe, appearance, dress and much else, for these services are a microcosm of the composition of the capital's population. The spirit in which these congregations follow the worship and the zest with which they enter into it are proof that a want is being supplied. Meantime, a teachers' preparation class is in session in the new brick class-rooms in the rear and Sunday school follows. Also at the same time the third church building in St. Pierre, the newer and rapidly growing native suburb, is the scene of other public worship. And here also, among other efforts, a school in which French is the medium of instruction, and which is popular, is conducted during the week in premises which are at present inadequate for the purpose.

I had an illustration at St. Pierre of the strength of the attraction of the many openings in commerce and business that exist in Léopoldville. Our teachers here have to be among the most highly paid in our Congo Mission, owing to the standards of living; but even so, they can begin in business at four times the amount the Church is able to pay them. And heads of firms are eager to engage our young men because they are reliable and trustworthy.

Day schools, women's meetings, prison services and enquirers' classes are but a few among the many agencies through which, from week to week, the witness is given in both centres. The care of souls is by no means the least important of the missionaries' duties. Church members coming from other areas must be sought out and shepherded, and others departing must be linked with churches in the districts to which they go. Converts are won as the result of the work, and these, as well as amateur Christians, must be protected and piloted through the fierce and subtle temptations that lie in wait day and night to draw them from the strait way. Amid the much that they accomplish, the lament of the missionaries is that so many thousands go untouched through sheer inability to overtake the work.

Léopoldville is without equal in Congo as a strategic centre. Through the migration of its members and through its work among the unceasing stream of natives who come to the city, the influence of the Church spreads to the bounds of the colony. It is under the shadow of the Belgian administration and is surrounded by an

intense Roman Catholic propaganda. Nowhere else in Congo is there a stronger call for a B.M.S. witness that shall be worthy and adequate.

Léopoldville is the location of the B.M.S. Secretariate. The Mission is still in a state of evolution. In the early pioneering years, owing to the manner in which the Mission developed, with long distances between the stations, and means of communication few and irregular, it was natural that each should look to London for direction. But as these conditions altered and it was possible to visualise the work as a whole, it became advisable and desirable to create the office of Field Secretary and to use it as the medium of communication and administration. The importance and scope of this office has increased with the passing years. The Mission functions through district and field committees. In these the missionary perspective is extended from that of the individual station until it embraces the entire work. Problems that arise in any one area can be compared with problems in other areas. Missionaries who are vexed by troublesome difficulties can learn through discussion how their colleagues elsewhere have faced and solved them. The claims of the work in any one district can be balanced against those of other districts, and considered reports and requests can be framed in unison for submission to the Home Committee. The experience of missionaries of long service can be mingled with the enthusiasm of younger men and women. Fellowship and inspiration, which count for much in missionary life, are promoted. The Secretariate includes a central office for dealing with the many-sided financial affairs of the Mission.

The Field Secretary is the confidant and counsellor of his colleagues, and host to those who pass to and from their stations. He has also to make and maintain friendly relations with government and other officials in the interests of the work and to conduct business with them, and his house must be kept open to administrative and commercial representatives.

The Mission in Léopoldville is reaching outwards. Within less than a hundred miles of the capital there are tribes with a membership of 25,000 whose contact with the white man has been limited hitherto to a few infrequent visits yearly by a State doctor and tax collector; whose children are so scared that they flee at the approach of the white strangers; and whose villages still contain human bones as evidence that cannibalism was a practice of the near past. In the remote parts of this region the people had neither met a missionary nor heard the gospel. The condition of these adjacent and unreached natives had long appealed to the Léopoldville missionaries and opportunity was made a few years ago to establish contact with them. Other itinerations have followed and a response has come which suggests that a wide door is open. In one large village, after the chief and his people had listened to the gospel for the first time, a solemn council of all the sub-chiefs was held to discuss whether permission should be granted for the placing of an evangelist in their midst, and it was intimated that no objection would be taken to his coming. In another village, clean and ordered, the people crowded to a service. While the sun dipped and night fell swiftly, the

people learnt for the first time something of Him Who is the Light of the World. The appreciative grunts with which the message was greeted showed that they pronounced it to be good. Elsewhere boys have asked that they might be allowed to go to the Mission at Léopoldville for instruction in the things of God. Three married teachers have settled in as many villages, and, as the result of an appeal, their support has been guaranteed by the Léopoldville church. Thus the scope of its vision has been enlarged, and the Christian grace of giving for the sake of others is being exercised. The first converts have been won and baptized as the promise of the greater ingathering that is yet to be. On my last Sunday in Congo, in connection with the Matondo, or annual thanksgiving, of the Léopoldville church, five more men and one woman were baptized at Léopoldville as dawn broke across the Pool, the further fruits of this new enterprise, and, later in the day, teacher-evangelists from the area followed the apostolic example by giving reports of their work to the church which sent them out and supports them. A stretch of the river from Stanley Pool to Kwa-mouth is also calling for the gospel, and could be reached easily by means of a motor-boat. Beyond the district already visited there lies an area as large as Wales which is accessible to the gospel, a reminder that Congo still contains many unevangelized fields.

CHAPTER III

IN ANGOLA

SAN SALVADOR

ONE treads on historic ground at San Salvador, for the town was for centuries the capital of the ancient and once extensive kingdom of Kongo. Its line of rulers can be traced in unbroken succession for over five hundred years. The royal office has, however, been shorn of most of its dignity and authority and is to-day mainly titular. San Salvador was also the scene and centre of a widespread and prolonged Roman Catholic missionary effort dating from the Middle Ages which, however, crumbled with the passage of time, and is now represented by a melancholy relic in the shape of the ruins of what must once have been a great and noble cathedral. Here, too, Comber and Grenfell came in 1878, on their successful expedition of inquiry, to be followed a year afterwards by the first party of five missionaries.

While they engaged in adapting themselves to the hitherto unknown conditions of life, the members of this party made their initial contacts with the people, so that they might win their confidence, and set themselves the task of acquiring the unwritten language that it might be impressed

into the service of the gospel. They also began their itinerations into the surrounding towns and villages; enlisted boys as personal helpers with a view to winning them for Christ; prepared their first reading primers; translated the first Scripture portions; made and fashioned the materials with which they constructed more suitable dwellings for themselves; and filled out the time with the hundred and one things of the daily round and the common task.

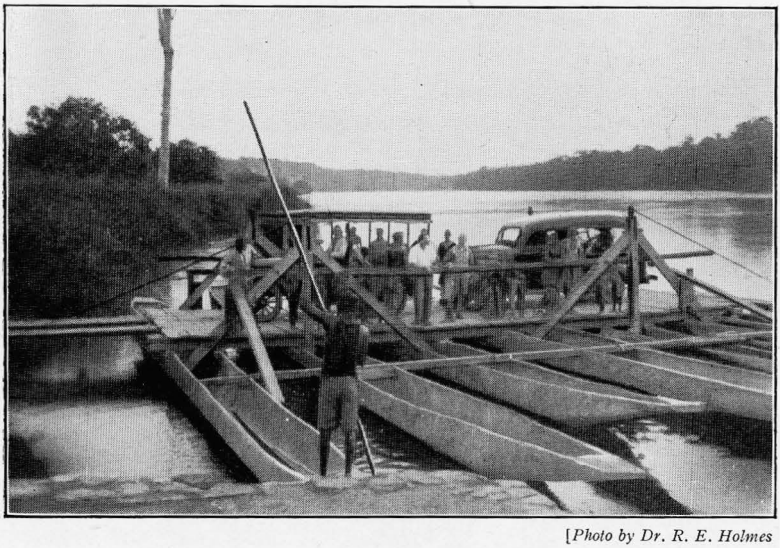
It is not surprising that, with so many burdens upon the missionaries, results were tardy in making their appearance, and when there is added on the native side, the inheritance of untold generations of pagan belief, custom and practice, the wonder is that any were found so early in the history of the work to take the bold step of coming out from among their fellows to range themselves on the side of Christ. The conversion of Mantu Parkinson, Comber's personal boy, and of Nlemvo, who served Bentley, were like the first sprouting blades that presaged the coming harvest. But it was not until eight years had passed by that the first little company of enquirers, carefully schooled in Christian doctrine and practice, were deemed fit for baptism and church membership. The baptism was conducted in a stream hard by San Salvador in the presence of a curious crowd who could neither guess nor measure the significance of the strange rite. The next Sunday, December 2nd, 1887, the church was formed after the four missionaries then on the station and the five converts had held their first communion service together and thus linked themselves with the Holy Church throughout all the

world in the ages past and the ages yet to come. The missionaries' bungalow in which they sat became a holy place. A plain table bore the simple fare, which consisted of water and a biscuit. Thomas Lewis has described the setting in words that are eloquent in their simplicity. "H. Ross Phillips conducted the service. We were sitting down for the first time with natives of Congoland around the Lord's Table and, before the end of the service, we were unable to speak to each other. At the close there were tears of joy running down every cheek. We stood in a little circle around the Table, and then moved by some mysterious power, not our own, we shook hands with one another across the Table—a token of Christian fellowship. In that simple way we formed the church at San Salvador."

The New Testament was accepted as the basis of authority for the infant church. Its members assented to three conditions—that each should be regular in their attendance at worship, should bear personal testimony to their faith in Christ, and should contribute every Sunday to the maintenance and extension of the work. Hundreds of similar churches have since been formed in widely separated areas, but all have been built generally on this basis.

Until comparatively recent times San Salvador was approached from the lower river by a hard journey through mountainous country. Now the way is made by means of the railway from Matadi to Songololo and, after that, by a three hours' car ride over a fairly good road. The Luvu river, which here forms the boundary between Belgian and Portuguese territory and which so often proved a delaying barrier, is now spanned by a

THE AUTHOR IN GEORGE GRENFELL'S PUSH-PUSH AT NTONDO



[*Photo by Dr. R. E. Holmes*

CROSSING THE CHOPO FERRY NEAR YAKUSU. IN THE PARTY ARE MR. WILKERSON, MR. ENNALS AND MR. HEMMENS

modern bridge. The mission station occupies a somewhat restricted site on sloping ground and is only separated from the adjacent Roman Catholic mission by a wall. Nearest the entrance are the chapel built more than forty years ago with stones from the cathedral ruins, and a school erected soon afterwards. Flanking these are two recent school buildings each with three classrooms. Next is the compound where the resident station girls are housed and then, in succession, four missionary dwellings, two of which have stood for over fifty years, and, finally, the boys' compound. Running parallel with this series of premises are the playground, printing press and other offices, the tennis court, dispensary, laboratory, out-patients' department and two other residences. The hospital buildings are divided from the remainder of the station by a public road. These were the first of their kind to be erected by the B.M.S. in Congo and are nearly thirty years old. The original accommodation has been extended until sixty-four in-patients can be received. Around the hospital and in the town are houses of various sorts where native nurses and the families of the patients live.

As everywhere, Sunday at San Salvador is a full day. A teachers' preparation class is held at eight o'clock when the Sunday School lesson for the day is studied under the leadership of a missionary. This lesson is taught in Sunday School at nine which is attended by station and town children. At the same time a preaching service is conducted by an evangelist in the town under a grass roof supported by poles. Public worship is held in the chapel at ten-thirty. On the Sunday of my visit

this was conducted by Ambrose, the able church secretary, whose knowledge of English enabled him to translate the visitor's address. The building was filled as usual and the praise was led effectively by a choir whose members also rendered two choruses. Other classes meet in the afternoon, and are followed by the young men's class which has an attendance of about a hundred. The day closes with the missionaries' hour of worship and fellowship in the evening. Enquirers' classes are held during the week.

School occupies five days of the week and, by government regulations which apply to all stations in Angola, it is conducted in Portuguese. The boys' school includes a Portuguese national on its staff along with the native teachers. It meets in the mornings and the girls' schools in the afternoons, the remaining parts of the days being occupied with other interests and duties. The curriculum for the boys, whose ages range from six until well on into the teens, includes writing, reading, arithmetic, Portuguese and Congo history, geography and a little science. The girls follow a somewhat modified course with needlework, housewifery and mothercraft added. Drill and games are taught to all. The numbers of station and town scholars are about equally divided. The difference between the former and latter sections is marked. Many of the station girls remain for years after the customary marriage age and some find occupation as teachers and nurses. This is true also of the boys. In health, vigour and temperament, they are on a higher level than the average. A fine standard of achievement is reached and the

work will be even more thorough now that the new school buildings are substituted for the older ones.

The hospital exerts a wide influence. Out-patients come three mornings a week, the alternating days being occupied with operations. The average of a hundred or so out-patients first attend a short service with an address. A nursing sister then examines them and the more serious cases are passed on to the doctor while others receive medicines compounded by native dispensers. Many of the patients travel long distances, sometimes as much as a twelve days' journey or more. Once a month a baby welfare day is held, when mothers from villages near and far see their babies inspected and weighed and receive advice as to their care. Much ante-natal work is also done with good effect. The hospital includes a maternity section in which last year 267 babies were born. In all the wards the patients and their friends hear something of the gospel message and prayer is offered before each operation. New ideals and standards of health have been introduced through the hospital, lives have been saved, grateful patients have been the means of gaining an entrance for the gospel over a large area, and native nurses and assistants have received a training that will stand them and their witness in good stead wherever they may go and whatever their lot in life may be. A travelling dispensary and a full complement of doctors and nurses will still further enlarge the area of influence by taking this ministry of healing into the district.

The San Salvador church, with its 2,000 members, supports about ninety teacher-evangelists who are placed throughout a wide area. I had evidence of

their work in the villages through which we passed on the road to Bembe. In village after village, a crowd gathered to greet us, singing hymns, and sometimes led by a band and, through their teachers and others, voicing their thanks for the gift of the gospel. These people were mostly neatly dressed, and their villages were clean and cared for in contrast with other villages which had no teachers. These men are, in some cases, called to San Salvador once a year for intensive training. For the training of the others, the missionaries tour their districts and meet them for a similar purpose.

Church administration in San Salvador has its problems. Some of the people, through long familiarity with the message, have become gospel hardened. Differences in outlook between old and young reveal themselves in varying attitudes to standards of conduct. Colour feeling is sometimes shown. Old-standing native practices cause distress in the church. Government demands tend to create impoverishment, and the greater attractions in Congo Belge denude the church of many of its young men. But the church is rich in the quality of its native leadership and in the fidelity of the rank and file. A stay of but a week in the district was sufficient to enable the observer to note the generally higher standard of life that obtains throughout the area as the result of sixty years of gospel witness.

BEMBE

The journey of 240 miles from San Salvador to Bembe takes two days by car and a halt is made

for the first night at Kibokolo. San Salvador, with its sixty years' history, wears the dignity of a well-established work. Bembe, with a record of but six years behind it, possesses the freshness of a pioneer enterprise. Whereas so recently as 1932 there was no missionary and no station there, to-day there is an extensive range of buildings as the outward evidence of the work, and a church membership nearing 900, with thirty village out-posts in charge of teacher-evangelists, as the witness to spiritual receptivity and growth.

There is, however, another story behind this one. More than thirty years ago it was decided to mark the Silver Jubilee of the Congo Mission by planting a new station to the south of San Salvador, and Mabaya was chosen as the centre. With the aid of the Arthington Fund, a number of substantial buildings were erected, and experienced missionaries and a new recruit were appointed to open the work. But the expected response failed to appear. Famine, pestilence and war so impoverished the people that they moved elsewhere and the Mission was stranded. The Great War came hard upon the heels of these misfortunes. Supplies of food and other essentials for this lonely outpost proved difficult to obtain and so, in 1915, a reluctant decision was taken to abandon the enterprise. The missionaries were withdrawn and the buildings sealed. Two Christians only remained as the scant visible harvest of the labour of a decade.

For nearly twenty years no missionary visited the Mabaya area. Then two San Salvador mission-aries made an itineration through the district and, to their amazement and joy, they found a cordial

welcome from the people who had returned through the policy of the administration in bringing them to new villages bordering the high roads. "Thank God you have come!" exclaimed the faithful man in whose care the Mission property had been left, "We have been praying to God that you might do so. We know of the message that has come to us from God and we want missionaries to settle among us." Without any white leadership the seed sown in faith by the pioneers had been kept alive and had made its way through the tares of paganism. Some of these people had been beaten because they had gathered in the bush for prayer at night and on Sunday. Fetiches had been burnt and there were no signs of drumming and dancing, or drinking. The two missionaries spent ten days in the villages among these people who, without pastors or teachers, had been trying to find God. As the result of the appeal which they sent home it was decided to re-open the Mission and, after much prospecting and negotiation, Bembe was selected as the place for a station.

The site granted by the authorities is a U-shaped eminence which commands wide views of the surrounding undulating country. It is near to the State post. Five or six villages can be seen from it, while many others line the motor roads which radiate from it. One arm of the site is occupied by three missionary houses, small station buildings are set in the curve which joins it to the other arm where the church, houses for the station boys and girls and workshops are grouped, until finally another missionary residence is situated at the head. From the base of the curve, a road runs down

the slope to join the State road and, on one side of this, the medical section is built. This consists of two small brick buildings, one for maternity cases and the other for interviewing out-patients, treating sores, giving injections and ante-natal treatment. Two other simple buildings which stand alongside are used for in-patients. Much of the material of the Mabaya houses, now demolished, has been used in the creation of this plant which, considering its size and convenience, has been erected at a low cost to the Society.

The proclamation of the gospel here has met with swift response as the figures for church membership show. But there has been no haste in receiving members into the fellowship. On the contrary, as on other stations, those who indicate their desire to walk in the Christian way must undergo a long probation. They attend enquirers' classes for at least a year and, during this time, they receive instruction in faith and conduct and they must show an understanding of what they hear. Life in Congo is lived in the open and everyone knows what his neighbour does. So the convert's record is visible and clear to all and is tested by the known Christian standards. In due time cases of applicants for baptism and church membership are submitted to the church and visitors are appointed. These make their report at a subsequent church meeting which is a gathering of the church and not of a minority of its members. The cases are openly and freely discussed and any flaw in the candidate or question in the mind of a member may suffice to delay acceptance. I attended both a deacons' and a church meeting at Bembe

and was impressed by the care that is taken and the standard that is required. In the case of several candidates it was stated that they had been under instruction in enquirers' classes for five years!

Educational work, which begins with the boys and girls who serve in the missionaries' houses, has extended until throughout the district nearly 2,000 children are now under instruction. With no equipment and with pupils whose lives had been spent in pagan surroundings and whose minds were dark, remarkable changes have taken place. It is these station children in whom the greatest hope lies. They live in the atmosphere of the Mission. They receive a training designed to develop Christian character that extends over four years. They are still sufficiently near to normal pagan life to realise the depth and darkness of the pit from which they have been dug. The visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the dignity in their bearing, the light in their eyes and the joy on their faces which all speak of the reality of an inner change. Over thirty former station boys have passed the government examination and now serve as teacher-evangelists supported by the gifts of the church. The girls look forward to marriage to these men and to sharing in the making of Christian homes in the outposts of the district.

Amazing results, too, have followed from the medical work. The gospel of health has been ceaselessly preached. Soap made by the station girls is sold to promote new standards and habits of cleanliness. Infant mortality, once at a high figure, has been greatly reduced. The medical service is a magnet which draws the suffering to

the Mission, affords them relief and brings them within the sound of the gospel. It has cleared a path for the entrance of the missionaries and their message throughout the whole area.

The seed sown has blossomed in rich abundance. It needs intensive culture that it may produce even richer and abiding fruit. The Bembe church has suffered already for its fidelity. Its members are now realising that the practice of the new life runs counter to hoary and deep-rooted customs and sanctions, and that the inevitable conflict which this produces will be long and costly. And the missionaries know what they face in guarding and guiding what has been won and in reaching out towards the still untouched fields.

The road from Kibokolo to Bembe passes through Damba, a State post from which other roads also radiate. Around it several hundred Christians live, but there are difficulties in the way of settling teachers among them. The Angola missionaries have hopes of placing a resident missionary there and of establishing a training institute for teacher-evangelists that would serve the entire area. And such an institute is needed.

The work at

KIBOKOLO

stands in time about mid-way between that at San Salvador and Bembe, for it was in the closing years of the nineteenth century that it was decided to occupy this centre as a memorial to the five members of the Comber family who had died in the service of the Mission in Africa. The first missionaries who arrived met with a hostile reception from the

truculent Zombos whose home it was, for they had no desire for the white man to settle among them. So, disappointed and baffled, the missionaries retraced their steps towards San Salvador. On their way, they were the instruments by which peace was established between the Zombos and a neighbouring tribe who blocked their path coastwards for trading purposes. In gratitude for this service, the Zombos changed their attitude and now begged the missionaries to live among them, and they promised whatever site they might select.

The Mission, which began thus in 1899 amid storm and stress, continued amid tribulation and testing. The Zombos were coarser and wilder than the San Salvador folk and heathenism was deep-seated among them. Their ability to drive hard bargains and profitable deals had developed avarice and greed, and had stiffened their resistance to the approaches of the missionaries and to the appeal of the gospel. Year after year the missionaries uttered their message to apparently deaf people around the station and continued their wearing itinerations among the villages which spread over a wide area, with little tangible result. At the end of nearly twenty years the missionaries resolved upon one final effort before abandoning the work, and a series of special gatherings was arranged. These plans were, however, frustrated on the very eve of their fulfilment by a severe influenza epidemic which swept through the district. The energies of the missionaries were directed to succouring the sufferers and, when the scourge had spent itself, the survivors discovered that their safety was due to the care of

the white people. From that time their attitude to the gospel changed and the work advanced.

Conspicuous among the buildings at Kibokolo for the grace and symmetry of its structure is the stone-walled and iron-roofed church, which enshrines a story that is unique in Congo. The number of Christians had so increased and their growth in grace had so developed that by 1925 their desire to erect a worthy house of God sought and found practical outlet. The missionaries decided wisely that the people should themselves provide the materials for the new building. Suitable stones were known to exist four miles away, and it was suggested that these should be hewn, gathered and brought to the site. A passion for the enterprise seized the people. Men, women and children set out and returned laden. Meanwhile the foundations were laid, and soon the walls began to rise. Then it was discovered that the twenty thousand stones already collected were insufficient by half, and so another twenty thousand were collected and brought to complete the walls. The material for the roof was sent from home, and the building was completed and opened amid fervent rejoicings. And no wonder, for it was the people's own handiwork, and to create it they tramped altogether a distance of 320,000 miles, more than twelve times round the equator! The interior contains a striking evidence of the triumph of the gospel over superstition and fear, for the pillars and beams that support the roof were once part of a grove of fetich trees believed to contain the spirits of the dead and known to be the haunt of evil and of various kinds of cruelty, including

human sacrifice. Now these symbols of sin adorn the temple of the Lord, while many who worship around them have become new men and women in Jesus Christ.

Set in a valley, the grounds of Kibokolo testify to the fact that, from the days of the pioneers, the staff has included in its ranks men and women who believe in the glory of a garden. Avenues of trees line many of the paths and graceful palms raise their slender trunks skywards. Flower beds provide fragrance and beauty and fruit trees supply welcome food. The buildings line three sides of an irregular hollow square. Most are of a substantial order and are well adapted to their purpose. Some, including those in which the girls' classes meet and the in-patients' quarters, have of necessity been made of flimsy material and should be replaced by structures more adequate and permanent.

My stay at Kibokolo coincided with the annual Matondo or Thanksgiving which is among the chief of the festivals of the Congo Church. Its gatherings extended over four days. Many of the people had trudged miles, in some cases over seventy, to be present, and these received hospitality in neighbouring village houses. The Saturday morning of this festival was occupied by a lengthy deacons' meeting, when nearly thirty men and women considered cases for membership or discipline. The church meeting, which filled the chapel, followed in the afternoon. Sunday began with a meeting for prayer which was led by a native teacher and to which many failed to gain admission. Between this and the hour of worship

a neighbouring stream was the scene of a service when twelve men and eighteen women were baptized in pairs. The worship, which had to be conducted in the open air because of the crowds, was an occasion of praise to God for His gospel and His Church. The devoted church secretary, who led the afternoon meeting, shared with the congregation some of his impressions of the Native Christian Convention at Léopoldville and delivered an effective homily on the responsibilities of family relationships. A Communion Service brought the day to a close, and if the stillness and reverence associated with this act in the homeland were absent, the Real Presence was nevertheless realised. Monday morning's main occupation was a gathering of deacons and teachers. One could not fail to be struck by the alertness and virility of these men and by the frankness with which they discussed each other's affairs and work. Physical exercises, games and elocution which formed the afternoon programme, revealed the value of the school work in developing ability and character, and showed that hope for future witness lies in the boys and girls. A cinematograph display under the trees in the moonlight brought the Matondo to a conclusion. Here pictures of travel, humour and native life formed an introduction to Bible episodes which, presented in this graphic form, must remain in the minds of those who saw them. It would be well if every station could be equipped with a cinematograph apparatus.

Evil still covers this area like a dense, tangled jungle growth, and the way to liberty in Jesus Christ is long and tedious. Hoary tribal habits

and traditions hold the people in thrall and retard the development of personality. The entail of the past leads to a continued trust in native charms and medicines with oft-times disastrous results to the patients, rather than to faith in the skilled knowledge and attention of the Mission nurse. But, like the first disciples, these people have obeyed the call to follow and, though their response is oft-times halting and stumbling, their steps are set upon the path of their Lord and Master. For this is the irrefutable fact—the gospel has come here as elsewhere. By the preaching of the Word, the witness of teacher-evangelists, the culture of the enquirers' class, the enlightenment of the schools, the healing of medicine, the ministry of song and the example of Christian homes, the old way of life is yielding to the new. While the exercises of the Matondo Sunday were being carried through, a native market was in progress just beyond the station grounds. There the hours were spent in chaffering and bartering and in other habitual pursuits of the daily round. Here on the station the day was devoted by close upon a thousand people to the concerns of the eternal kingdom with a joy and zest that testified to its reality in their lives. And that kingdom has come to stay in Angola.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOWER RIVER STATIONS

I WENT from Angola to the Lower River area. A car carried me from Kibokolo to the Belgian frontier, where another car was waiting to take me to Kibentele. Here I spent a night and proceeded the next day by car and train to Thysville. A week was given to this station, to be followed by five days at Wathen and four days at Kibentele. At the beginning of the Mission the entire district of 3,500 square miles which it now covers was worked from Wathen; but owing to its growth Thysville was selected as a resident missionary centre in 1911 and Kibentele nine years later.

Wathen was established in 1884, after the temporary occupation of Manyanga. It is a hundred miles in a direct line from Matadi and seventy miles below Stanley Pool. It is over 1,700 feet above sea level and about three miles from the river. Its English name recalls the early benefactions of Sir Charles Wathen, of Bristol.

The station is indissolubly connected with the name and work of Dr. Holman Bentley, for he was associated with it from its opening until his death in 1905. The impress of his strong and sane leadership is still upon it. Here he laid the foundations of a work which has grown to a remarkable

degree. Here, too, he made his exhaustive language researches, compiled his comprehensive Congo Grammar and Dictionary, and translated the New Testament and the greater part of the Old Testament into the Ki-Kongo tongue. These are among his abiding contributions to the Congo Christian enterprise, and his name also is perpetuated in Kibentele.

The Wathen School was established almost concurrently with the station. Two boys were enrolled as the first pupils, and the numbers grew as the confidence of the people was gained and their consent was given to boys from their villages being sent to the station. The securing of this confidence was among the aims of the regular itinerations that were made by the missionaries. For it was their conviction that the spread of the gospel throughout Congo depended upon the rising generation being won and changed by it, and by its members being trained and impelled to pass on the message to their people. These station boys were good propagandists for the school, for their bearing and appearance, and their conversation, as they visited their home villages, told heavily in its favour, and applications for entry began to increase.

Evangelistic tours occupied much of the time of the missionaries. As the staff increased, the area was divided into four sections, each having a missionary in charge. But the spiritual response of the people was slow in coming, and it was not until 1888 that the first converts were baptized and a church was formed with eight members—six young men and two women. These were

added immediately to the evangelistic force, for among other things, membership was made conditional upon willingness to publish the message; and as the station boys completed their training they were placed in villages as teacher-evangelists. The advance continued to be tardy, however, and at the close of the century the membership was still under a hundred. Contrast that with the present membership of about 6,500 throughout the area; with over 500 teacher-evangelists in as many villages and supported by the church; with 8,700 scholars; and over 40,000 attendances at the dispensaries!

The school work associated with the three station areas may be regarded as a single whole. It has already been stated that the early missionaries laid stress upon education. Indeed, the Mission throughout Congo may be said to have been built upon educational evangelism. Its reach in this area has already been indicated, and it should be profitable at this point to consider the scheme of education.

The principle which underlies the educational work of a Missionary Society may be expressed as the recognition of the fact that the gospel is designed to reach the body and mind in association with the heart, and that anything less than this is incomplete in its range and will be only temporary in its results. Proofs of this are to be found in the long history of Missions. It is through our schools that the greatest results have come in Congo. Our educational plan in the Lower Congo area may be likened to a pyramid. Its base is composed of the hundreds of village schools

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which meet in the open air or under a roof of grass supported by poles, or in somewhat more substantial buildings. School is held here for two hours daily five days a week, and the syllabus includes a little writing and arithmetic, more reading and Scripture, and some singing and drill. These are the schools of which teacher-evangelists have charge, and these men also conduct services on Sundays and do pastoral work. The second stage in the pyramid is formed by the regional schools, which were introduced a few years ago. These are found in the larger villages and small towns and at the three stations. They number about twenty. In them the standard is higher and the teaching more prolonged and thorough than in the village schools. The scholars are drawn from the villages and towns in which the schools are placed and from neighbouring villages. In the latter case, ability to read is required of entrants, who attend as weekly boarders and supply their own food. The school hours are longer and French, which is much sought after, is taught. Nearer the pyramid's top is the senior school at Wathen in which French is the medium of instruction, and at the apex is the Kimpese Training Institution which draws its students from the area and from the American Baptist and Swedish Missions.

The Wathen school of to-day would give pleasure to all who have worked there through the years. Its 150 station boys and 50 station girls are supplemented by others from the neighbouring villages. The resident scholars in particular are healthy in appearance and active and alert in

deportment. The syllabus followed in the respective grades conforms closely to the State scheme. Recently a plan has been introduced by which twelve older boys have the privilege of a course in the carpenter's shop in which theory is admirably combined with practical work. A happy atmosphere prevails throughout the schools, and the morale and discipline are on the up-grade in the classrooms, the playgrounds and the dormitories, owing to the influence of the native teachers who have been trained in modern educational methods. Here again the applications for places far exceed the available accommodation and numerous would-be pupils are lost to the Roman Catholic Mission.

The eagerness for education in this area can be gathered from the fact that while I was at Kibentele the school entrance examination was held when forty boys competed to fill eight vacant places. The same is true of Wathen and Thysville. The quality of the education in the villages depends upon the ability and application of the teachers and upon the attitude of the village elders. Generally speaking, more boys than girls are receiving education. This is partly because girls have more domestic duties than boys and also because the normal goal for a girl is early marriage and child bearing. I watched a display during my stay at Thysville, which was given by boys and girls from a regional school. They were dressed in uniforms for which they had paid. The boys wore khaki caps, shirts and shorts with red piping, and the girls, cotton frocks and red caps. They responded to the directions of their teacher which were given in French with a precision and an enthusiasm which

spoke of leadership and discipline. And they showed a mental alertness and physical vigour that were much above the normal native standard. Another day, while passing through a village, I saw a typical school in session. The teacher had no inkling of our coming and the conditions were therefore normal. The building was made of mud walls with a grass roof. The floor was also of mud, the seats were logs resting on V-shaped supports and the platform was also of mud. The grass outside was neatly cut and the paths were bordered with red and yellow sand arranged in a diamond pattern, the work of a man who obviously took a pride in it. We found about thirty scholars present, and several were engaged in writing, their inkpots standing on the floor and their books resting on their knees. Here was one young man, among many such, holding aloft the torch of learning and the light of the gospel in a dark place and doing something to dispel its density without the stimulus of outside encouragement.

The teachers in the village and regional schools are the product of the station schools. In the regional schools they are known as moniteurs who, because of the demands of their office, have no pastoral duties. Some Kimpese students are employed in this capacity. The teacher problem is a difficult one. These men have ambitions and their sense of vocation is not yet strong. They are poorly paid and their lot is oft-times lonely and discouraging. Attractive and lucrative openings exist in business and industry, and many are drawn into these. They are not necessarily lost to the Church, however, for they bear their

testimony there, but the maintenance of the supply of teachers involves constant strain upon the missionaries.

THYSVILLE

is an important industrial and commercial centre. Until recent years the railway from Matadi to Léopoldville ran through it. Now the track has been diverted in order to obviate the steep gradients of the mountains and Thysville is now only at the head of a branch line. The railway repair shops are still here, however, and hundreds of natives are employed in them. The native city, which adjoins the works, contains a population of at least 4,000. The European city, on the other side of the railway, is occupied by civil servants, railway officials and clerks, and the business community.

The B.M.S. property is set in the European quarter and is hemmed in by other residences. Here we have two bungalows, one of which is the only two-storied B.M.S. house in Congo; a school chapel; quarters for station boys and other buildings. Thus everything is somewhat confined and cramped. The boys' school, for example, is obliged to meet in two successive relays each day, and other activities also overflow the accommodation. From this and other standpoints there are decided advantages in the fact that a not unnatural objection has been raised by the authorities to the continuance of our work in this spot. For natives come in crowds to the services, schools and dispensary, and Congo natives do not as a rule express

themselves in whispers. Accordingly the administration has ordered the work to be transferred elsewhere and has granted a new site for the purpose.

This site is among the finest in Congo. It is about a mile from the present position on a spur of the plateau on which Thysville is built. It is approached by a road which rises gradually through the native city and it slopes slightly towards the far side where the hill drops steeply to the plain. It is on this far side that the railway winds in and out in serpentine fashion as it climbs from the plain to the town. Marvellous and extensive views of the surrounding country are to be seen from it, and when the buildings are completed, they will form a landmark for hundreds of square miles of territory. The actual site measures approximately 450 feet by 300 feet and it will serve both present and future needs. The first buildings to be erected are the school and small dormitories for the station boys. The school is planned to include eleven classrooms with accommodation for about 300 scholars, and a master's or mistress's room, around a quadrangle, with provision for the extensions that must soon be faced, for there are opportunities and needs for big expansions here. The Matondo gatherings were held during my visit and this occasion was used to hold a rally on the new site, when it was my honour to lay the foundation stone of the school building to the glory of God and the well-being of His Church.

Next in order of construction will come the church, and the ground for this has been chosen in the centre of the site. Other projected buildings

include the medical section, for a dispensary and baby welfare clinic form part of the Mission and call for more adequate equipment. The size of the population and its proximity to the new site; its varied character, for it is made up of people of many tribes from many parts of the land; and the fact that the Roman Catholic Mission is now well staffed and furnished with extensive premises and equipment; all challenge us to provide accommodation that is both worthy and adequate to meet the great opportunity in Thysville and in the district. Services are also held in the prison. These and the human interest shown by the missionaries are greatly appreciated by the men. The missionaries at Thysville not only keep open house for their many colleagues who pass through, but for the West Coast men who are employed in the town.

A significant work is being carried on at Cattier, another railway repair centre on the main line. Here, between the well-built town which the company has laid out for its employees and the adjacent villages, the B.M.S. is represented by a substantial brick school chapel, set in spacious grounds with borders of eucalyptus trees. The interior is as pleasing as the exterior, with its cement floor, well-designed and well-made cement platform and clean walls. There are two vestries in the rear, a bell tower, and a teacher's brick house at the far end of the ground. A vigorous school exists and its members hailed us with the Belgian national anthem and other songs and three boisterous cheers. We had evidence of the good quality of the school and of the church work,

for the membership of the latter is over 160 and the building is thronged on Sundays and in constant use during the week.

Much might be written about the Matondo gatherings at

WATHEN

which were similar in programme and character to those at Kibokolo, described in the previous chapter. They were on a large scale and enthusiastic in their tone, and they included the baptism of over seventy men and women. Some of the buildings at Wathen have seen service from the early days of the Mission. Others are of a recent date, and have been built at an extraordinarily low cost. The printing press, which is almost as old as the station, still produces good work in the shape of literature for the schools and for other purposes.

One notable figure associated with the Mission in this area from its beginning was missing, for Nlemvo passed to his rest early in 1938. He was Bentley's first convert and, though others in San Salvador were baptized before him, he was the first in the Wathen area to confess his allegiance to Christ. He belonged to the family of a chief and refused the succession which was offered him because he would not go back on his Lord or forego His service. Between Bentley and him there grew up a relationship comparable to that of Paul and Timothy. He rendered invaluable assistance to his leader during the years when the unwritten language was being acquired and reduced to writing. He collaborated in the compilation of

the Congo Grammar and Dictionary and in the translation of the Bible. On three occasions he accompanied Bentley to England so that this partnership might not be broken and altogether he spent four years in this way. The blindness which overtook him in middle life seemed only to deepen his faith in the Eternal Light. He was a faithful leader of the Church and, as the years passed and he became a venerable figure, he was regarded by the Christians at Wathen, and later at Kibentele, as a father in God. To the earlier missionaries he was a valued friend and, as younger men joined the ranks, he was revered by them as an honoured counsellor. By the consistency of his witness and the strength of his leadership, his influence was profound. In November, 1937, the King of the Belgians signified his intention of bestowing the Gold Medal of the Royal Order of the Lion upon him in recognition of his services to the State and " as the reward of a life of modest labour, of fidelity and of devotion." This was the first occasion upon which a Congo native had been thus honoured. Nlemvo lived long enough to learn of this decoration, but not to receive it. It was presented, however, to his son, Lomami, himself associated with the church at Wathen, on the National Fête Day, July 21st, 1938, at Thysville, by the Deputy Commissaire of the Province, and it was my privilege to witness this ceremony and to listen to the official eulogy of Nlemvo and of Protestant Missions in Congo. It is to be hoped that a permanent memorial to Nlemvo in the shape of some equipment for the Mission will be set up in the place with which he was for so long associated.

Nlemvo is outstanding, but there are others in this area and elsewhere who reveal by the consistency of their lives and the quality of their service what precious stones for the Living Temple are to be found in this quarry of souls. One such is the pastor of the Thysville church who declined the headship of the native town of 4,000 people because of the greater claim of Christ and the more urgent call of His Church.

KIBENTELE

is set in the south of the area nearly sixty miles from Thysville. The station site was well chosen upon a plateau with commanding views of rolling hills and sweeping valleys. The station lay-out and buildings show that thought and care have been devoted to their planning, and the attention being given to the fabric while I was there, indicated a concern for their preservation. Some of these buildings, however, are obviously temporary in character, for this is a comparatively new station and accommodation for its many activities had to be improvised at the beginning. Others are proving inadequate to the growing work or need to be replaced by equipment that is worthier of the enterprise. Kibentele is but another example of the extent to which much is done with relatively insufficient resources.

The Kibentele district covers about a thousand square miles and its population is to be found in small villages. A sugar plantation which adjoins the railway at Moerbeke is an exception. Here a large area has been conceded to a company for the

cultivation of the sugar cane with such success that last year 13,000 tons of sugar were produced for consumption in the Colony and for export. It was my privilege to be taken over the factory by its courteous and capable manager and to watch the several processes from the time the cane is cut until the finished product is ready for despatch. Over a million pounds sterling have been sunk in this enterprise. Six thousand natives are employed and housed on the estate and our Mission works among them. But the bulk of the people are thinly spread about the area. One of the features of Kibentele is its itineration work by means of which each village is visited by the missionaries twice a year and, in some cases, more frequently. The villages are generally in the bush away from the motor roads and must be reached on foot or with the assistance of native carriers. It is by these itinerations that contact is maintained with the work of the 140 teacher-evangelists and 2,000 church members, the state of the church judged and encouragement given to persist on the Christian way and to win others to it.

Medical work which began with the Mission here, has grown to a considerable degree and its influence is far-reaching and many-sided. A range of small buildings, some of native material, in mud and thatch and others of brick, has been provided partly from current receipts, on a hillside where it catches the breezes. For the work here, as elsewhere, is recognised by the State, and receives grants in aid and drugs. Contributions are also made by patients. Ante-natal treatment, which is given fortnightly, and maternity work, have done

much to reduce infant mortality. In addition to simple complaints, sleeping sickness, small-pox, tuberculosis and other prevalent diseases are treated. Altogether about 25,000 attendances are recorded annually and the proportion of new patients who come steadily, testifies to the widening scope of this work, in which native infirmiers and others share. The training of these adds to the responsibilities and increases the influence of the two missionary nurses on the staff. Here, as in other centres, the healing art is combating ingrained fatalism, superstition and ignorance, and is preparing the way for the entrance of the gospel.

The treatment of lepers forms a prominent part of the medical work here. A village for eleven men and nine women has been built about a mile from the station. Here, through the initial encouragement of the State medical service and with its subsequent co-operation, these sufferers receive regular treatment and constant supervision with good results. The village is so situated that its inhabitants live in the fresh air. They are encouraged to tend their gardens and to grow much of their food, and to occupy themselves with various crafts. Their mental outlook has been changed from resignation to hope. A prayer house stands in the centre of the houses. Here services are conducted daily by a teacher-evangelist, who is himself a leper, and requests have been made by the people for a school to be started so that they may learn to read in preparation for an enquirers' class and church membership. I sat one afternoon in the midst of these people who bear the signs of their dread disease upon them,

and was deeply impressed by their cheerfulness and good-humour. This is a ministry near to the heart of Christ.

The singing of the school children is among the features of Kibentele. The Tonic Sol-fa system is so thoroughly taught that music is sung with understanding in perfect harmony and it was a sheer delight to share in a half-hour of songs with these boys and girls and their teachers who rendered familiar tunes in a manner that would do credit to a trained choir at home. They learn gospel hymns with the music and this is another channel by which the Light enters their minds.

CHAPTER V

THE YAKUSU AREA

THROUGH the good offices of the Administration I travelled by aeroplane from Léopoldville to Stanleyville at no greater expense than the river journey by steamer and with an economy in time and strength. Whereas the steamer takes twelve days to cover the distance of a thousand miles up river, the aeroplane makes it in two half days. A halt was made at the end of the first day's flight at Coquilhatville, the capital of the Province of the same name. Here I was met by a member of the American Disciples of Christ Mission who provided hospitality for the night and arranged for me to spend the afternoon at their neighbouring station of Bolenge, where a fine piece of work is being carried on, particularly in the training of teacher-evangelists. The next day, as also on part of the first day, the plane passed above thousands of square miles of forest which stretched away to the horizon and gave the impression that the land must be devoid of inhabitants. Occasional glimpses of villages corrected this, however. The main river was approached again about noon and soon we passed over Pimu and Upoto and landed at Lisala where the Upoto missionaries came to greet me. During the afternoon, magnificent views of

the river and of the numerous wooded islands around which it sweeps, unfolded before us and we sighted Yalemba, Yalikina and Yakusu before reaching Stanleyville where I was taken for the Saturday night and Sunday morning to our Mission House. During the latter afternoon I travelled by motor boat twelve miles down stream to Yakusu where a representative and tumultuous welcome was staged.

The initial impression of bigness made by Yakusu is deepened by succeeding contacts. The station lines a long river frontage with the two-storeyed, red-brick and tiled hospital near its eastern boundary, the stately new church at its western boundary, and a series of missionary residences between. The land behind, which stretches away to the forest, is well covered with buildings devoted to the many activities of the Mission. The area reached from this centre has been compared to more than twice the size of Wales or to England south of the Thames. It has already been made clear that the main stations in the lower river area and much of their districts are accessible by road. Here, as elsewhere on the Upper River, the means of communication is the vast system of waterways which spreads everywhere, though motor roads are being developed. On the main river and its tributaries, the villages are fairly close together. In the interior they are more scattered.

The Mission has now established itself in six hundred villages, each of which has its school-chapel erected by the people, and its resident teacher-evangelist, trained by the Mission and

supported by the church. The total church membership exceeds 5,000, with 25,000 scholars under Christian instruction. Compare this with the struggles of the early years when disease so decimated the staff that for a period the work had to be left without a missionary, when for five years there was no convert, and when at the end of the first decade, the membership numbered but eighteen!

No fewer than six languages are spoken in this area. The major tongues are Lokele, Lingala and Kingwana, while smaller numbers speak Eso, Kimanga, Linje or Torumbu. Besides the main station, sub-stations are placed at Stanleyville, in the east, with the prospect of another centre nearly sixty miles beyond on the road to Buta: Yatolema, in place of Yongama, to the south; and Yalikina and Irema, in the Lomami river area, to the west. Each of these centres has a residence with a missionary in permanent or periodic occupation. The organisation of the work is developed in harmony with State methods and tribal life. The village congregations and their teacher-evangelists are grouped in approximations of ten, each with an overseer who is charged with pastoral supervision. These groups are gathered into four districts each having a pastor at the head. These pastors, in consultation with the missionaries, arrange baptisms and have regular centres at which they conduct communion services. With five overseers or teachers and five missionaries, they form a Council, which has the direction of the entire work. The democratic nature of the church is expressed in the Annual Assembly which meets

in October and is composed of overseers and senior teachers. The right to frame church rules is vested in this body which also approves the annual report and deals with finance. Public meetings in the evenings allow a wider constituency to share in its inspiration.

The station buildings are extensive and varied. I spent a day of twelve hours in the seven schools. The kindergarten school is attended by 400 bright tots for whom the sole qualification for entrance is that they can walk. They assembled in force in their quadrangle and sang action songs and danced round the maypole to the accompaniment of their percussion band. Then the majority dispersed to their classrooms where, guided by native boy and girl student teachers, they learn to count, to recognise the alphabet, to read and to do introductory arithmetic, or to have simple observation lessons. Elsewhere, some were splashing in the bath, or playing in the sand pit, or having their rest time, or making letters in clay or playing musical stools, a variation of musical chairs. Here also they receive their first knowledge of the Friend of little children. It is not surprising that there is an eagerness to gain admission to this school.

Next in order are the boys' and girls' schools with memberships of 320 and 120 respectively. All are required to pass an entrance examination. The usual elementary subjects are taught, and on the boys' side, French is added, with that language as the medium of instruction. The girls also take drawing and painting. Many of the scholars who reside on the station have duties in the missionaries'

houses, in their gardens where they grow their food, or in the various shops for handicrafts. Scripture is systematically taught on a two years' basis. The teachers first have their preparation class with the missionaries and, in the following week, one theme is presented in several ways and from various angles. I listened while the story of Zaccheus was told by teachers and illustrated by pictures which they had drawn. On succeeding mornings questions were asked upon the lesson, its applications were shown and expression work was given.

Vocational training schools for those who have passed through these elementary schools provide further preparation for those who desire to become teacher-evangelists or infirmiers. The course for the former has been reduced, through financial stringency, to one or two years. Those who take it have advanced preparation in reading, writing, arithmetic and French, with hygiene and agriculture and, of course, religious instruction and preaching. They gain practical experience as teachers in the elementary schools. The medical students taking the infirmier course combine three years of practical training in the hospital with their course in the vocational schools.

In addition, there are schools for the girls who serve as teachers, for station workmen, and for wives. The curriculum in the last includes the New Testament, reading and writing, while other lessons are learnt in the weekly effort to keep the native cemetery clean and in practising hymns for the Sunday services. The pursuit of knowledge by these women who have begun it when their

youth is behind them, and far behind them in some cases, calls for high praise.

The practical subjects taken by the station girls include sewing, knitting, matting and embroidery during one week, varied during the following week by sewing and stitching books printed by the station press. The boys' school owes much to its capable native headmaster who is also active in the church work. I watched his conduct of a Tonic Sol-fa class in which, besides familiar hymn tunes, one which had not been previously seen was sung in faultless four part harmony for my benefit.

In addition to this extensive educational work, the training of teacher-evangelists takes an important place. Most of these men are recruited from promising scholars in the village schools who first become assistants to the teachers and are then selected for the office. Refresher courses of four weeks, which are of great value, are organised at regular intervals in the four sub-station areas. These teachers are collected by the *Grenfell*, the Mission steamer, from their remote posts, and accommodation is provided for them by the villagers, who also supply their food in return for payment. Similar, though more advanced courses, are held at Yakusu. Formerly four such courses were arranged annually, but the number has through necessity been reduced to two.

The ordinary teacher-evangelist receives a basic salary of one franc a month, which is increased by another franc for every subject in which he qualifies. There are fifteen of these subjects. The overseers receive a further franc monthly. Men

who have successfully passed through the teachers' training school may be paid as much as forty francs monthly. In any case, the rate of remuneration is distinctly low and, in view of the much higher salaries which these men can command in State and trading service, the fact that so many remain with the Mission is a high tribute to their loyalty and devotion.

As at all stations, medical work was attempted here from the beginning, for pain and suffering make a universal appeal to men and women who seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The early missionaries used such knowledge as they possessed and gained by practice to relieve the human ills which they saw on every hand. But they were the first to acknowledge their impotence to treat any but elementary complaints and to appeal for qualified medical colleagues to stand alongside them. The Stapleton Memorial Hospital was erected in 1904, and though it is now devoted to other purposes, it still stands as a witness to the healing activities of the early years. Nurses joined the missionary staff from time to time, but it was not until shortly after the close of the Great War that the first qualified doctor was appointed to begin a work that has become pre-eminent in Congo and far beyond.

The present hospital was opened in 1924 and contains a stone laid by His Majesty the King of the Belgians when he was heir to the throne. It includes men's wards with forty beds and women's wards with twenty beds. This accommodation is often much exceeded. There are also the administrative block with lecture rooms and laboratories,

an out-patient department and dispensary, and ante-natal and baby welfare sections. A maternity ward just completed and paid for by subscriptions from Belgian friends and from current receipts, and which, by gracious permission of the King of the Belgians, is named *La Maternité Reine Astrid* in memory of his late Consort, will relieve the pressure on the present buildings and provide the additional accommodation needed for the ever expanding work. Some idea of the extent to which the hospital is used can be gained from the statement that the in-patients in one year number over 900, with 250 major operations and over 6,000 individual out-patients. The area from which the out-patients are drawn is illustrated in an analysis made during my stay. The thirty patients in two of the wards represented sixteen districts and thirteen language areas.

The breadth of the scope of this work may be gauged in other ways. The State medical service covers the Colony and is concerned with the stamping out of endemic diseases such as sleeping sickness and yaws, which sap vitality and carry off their victims to an alarming extent; and in the general raising of standards of health and living. As the result of approaches which were made some years ago by the Government administration on the one hand and the Mission on the other, the Yakusu doctors were appointed and recognised as State medical officers for this area of 10,000 square miles. They hold a similar office with five of the large trading companies. This involves the regular inspection and treatment of the entire native population and its registration from a health standpoint.

It means that the doctors are in frequent contact with the people. One of them spends six months of the year in touring the district and the other four and a half months. This work and its results are amazing. Sleeping sickness, which once ravaged the district and was the cause of hundreds of deaths every year, has been almost entirely eradicated. The incidence of yaws, a disease which causes much suffering, has been reduced by more than fifty per cent. Precise information regarding the extent of other diseases has been secured to form a basis for future action. What this responsibility involves is shown by the statement that one Yakusu doctor with his native assistants recently examined 13,000 people in a fortnight's visitation and vaccinated 1,100 others in a single day. Besides the benefit of this service to the people, it has given the Mission a place of honour with the Government. Through the contacts it has made with officials and company representatives, all too prevalent misconceptions and misunderstandings of Protestant Missions and their aims have been dispelled and corrected. It has earned money for the maintenance of the work. It has opened doors for the entrance of the gospel and has made the people more receptive of its message. It may be said with justice that the medical work of Yakusu combines the mass treatment of disease with that concern for the individual which is the mark of the Christian religion.

The policy of decentralisation adopted a few years ago has issued in the establishment of district dispensaries and in the birth of an order of trained medical assistants. These young men, known as

infirmiers, follow a three-years' course of instruction in the following subjects—French, arithmetic, church history, religious knowledge, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, medicine, surgery, laboratory work and practical nursing. The Yakusu medical school is recognised by the Government and has the power to grant the Government diploma of " Infirmier " upon the satisfactory completion by its students of five years' training and instruction. The medical school also grants its own diploma after three years' training. These men are placed in district dispensaries where they examine and prescribe for patients, perform minor operations and diffuse knowledge of the laws of health. They also make their evangelistic witness. Twenty-two boys and two girls are now receiving this training. No fewer than 14,300 attendances are recorded annually at the fifteen dispensaries.

The existence of leprosy has led to yet another extension. The State has granted a large site near to the river bank opposite Yakusu from which it has cleared the forest preparatory to laying out roads, building houses for 150 lepers and their families and planting gardens which will supply them with food for the first year, after which the inhabitants will do their own cultivation. The settlement is placed at the junction of three tribal territories and is built in four sections for members of the four tribes for whom it is designed. It is expected that the community will become self-supporting, as its members will cut wood from the forest and sell it to the Mission, cultivate bananas and other produce for sale and obtain fish from the river. They will find other useful occupation

as well, have their school and evangelistic work, and be given a new outlook on life, in addition to receiving the skilled and systematic treatment that will bring them new hope and health. This venture will not cost the hospital more than fifty pounds annually. It is the ultimate aim of the Mission to have four such colonies.

This Yakusu medical enterprise is maintained at a low cost to the Society and at least six times as much money is earned and spent on the spot as is supplied from home for the running expenses. And other openings might be entered if only time and strength permitted. As it is, a standard and an example have been set that have had their influence upon the State and upon other Missions.

Yakusu's printing press is in continual use. It prints a quarterly magazine for supporters at home and another one monthly for the native church. A wide range of lesson-books for the schools, hymn-books, scripture portions and other material is produced, while work is done for other Missions and concerns. Much of the work is sent to other Missions and is translated by them for use among their own people, and in this way its usefulness is extended. It is a self-supporting department and a valuable adjunct to the evangelistic and educational effort. Work is done in the six languages which are in use in the Yakusu area.

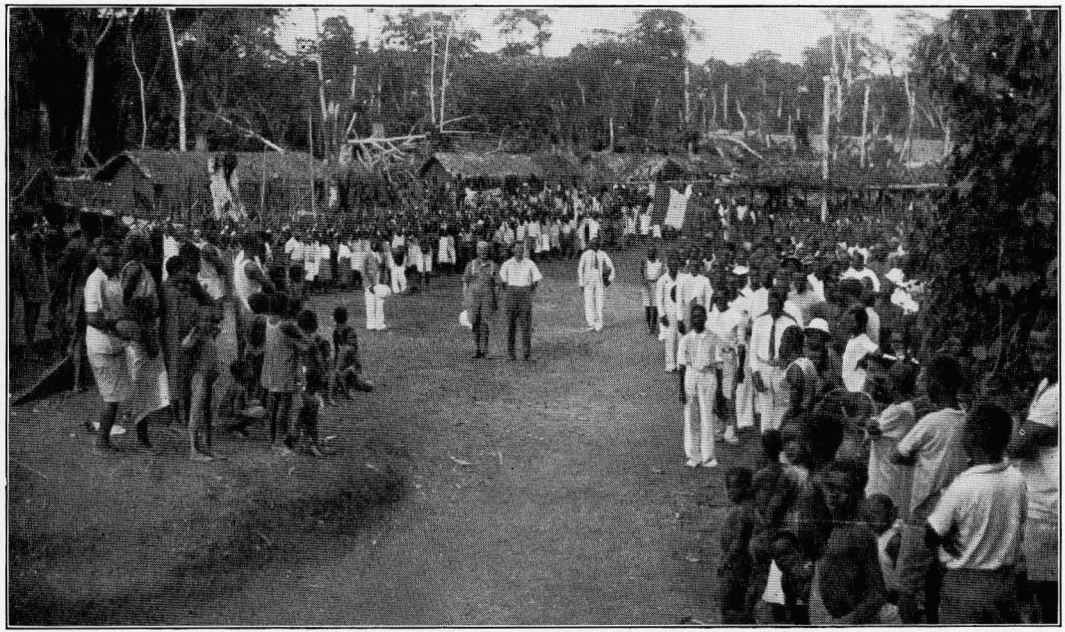
The importance of Stanleyville will be clear when it is remembered that it is a provincial capital and the centre of the administration and the headquarters of large commercial and trading interests. Its native city contains many thousands, while the

surrounding district includes a big village population. Here again the B.M.S. should be represented on a scale commensurate with the conditions and the opportunity. Until 1938 our property consisted of a house for a resident missionary couple. A Sunday morning here is an unforgettable memory. As is customary, one veranda was thronged by 250 children who came for their service, and two others were packed with 400 adults, mostly men, who assembled for theirs, while others stood in the grounds. The Mission House is a place of hospitality for missionaries of many societies, and others passing through make use of it. The white population, like the native one, is cosmopolitan. At least ten different nationalities are to be found in it. The vast African Moslem belt has its limits in the neighbourhood and adherents of that faith live in the city.

Now, in recognition of the need of more adequate space for the work, the State has conceded an ample site, in an accessible position on which the church erected will be more suitable for the present activities, and for the wide expansion which the situation offers. The years of persistent seed-sowing in the adjacent Bamanga area around Stanleyville are now producing a rich fruitage which also holds the assurance of a greater in-gathering in the future. In village after village along the high road that leads to the northern frontier and in the basin of the river Lindi, school chapels have been built or are in course of construction. Schools have been established through the leadership of Yakusu trained teacher-evangelists,

and hundreds have been admitted to baptism and church membership. The State policy has resulted in the people being brought on to the main roads where their villages are now built. We passed through many of these on a fifty miles' tour one afternoon and stopped at three to greet the teachers who had come in from their districts and to be welcomed by the congregations and school children. In two, over a thousand adults and children awaited our arrival, and in the third six hundred were present. The children sang hymns and action songs with the aid of home-made Belgian flags, wands and drums, in perfect rhythm and admirable discipline and gave other evidence of the happiness that had entered their lives through the advent of the gospel. A site for a residence in this district has been presented by the State, and strong pleas were made by the people for a missionary to settle among them. One of their leaders said, " We are like a garden which has been cultivated a little, and some produce has come. Now, if we are not cared for, the jungle will come back and the good work will die."

Altogether, accompanied by missionaries, I spent four days touring parts of the district and, by means of the *Grenfell* or by car, 450 miles were traversed. Even so, I was told that I left three-quarters of the area untouched. We generally set out just after dawn and finished shortly before or long after dusk. We skirted the forest by the river banks, or penetrated its depths by road. Every here and there we crossed plantations, concessions or reservations, where cocoa, coffee, cotton, palm trees and rubber were being intensively



[*Photo by Dr. R. E. Holmes*

WELCOME AT BAMANGA

or extensively cultivated, or where ambitious research operations were being carried out. These vast estates gather together thousands of natives and their families, who come for employment, and these offer a favourable field for evangelisation. Many of these are our own people from other areas, and these need shepherding if they are not to be drawn away into another faith or to drift back into paganism or materialism. We passed through scores of villages, large and small, and stopped at many for receptions and services.

Everywhere we had evidence of the faithfulness of the teacher-evangelists and of the enthusiasm of the people. When, for instance, we reached a place called Yawalo by the river, we found a huge crowd lining the steps from the water to the village. They had made arches of palm fronds for a mile along the path to the school chapel. The children welcomed us with singing, dancing and shouting. Several chiefs, dressed in monkey-skin caps and leopard skins and ornamented with necklaces of leopards' teeth, had come in from neighbouring villages to take part in the proceedings. The path, like the village, was beautifully clean, and was lined with people. The chapel likewise was festooned with flowers, ferns and flags, and was crowded by a thousand people. The pastor came from a cannibal tribe and one of the early missionaries recalls that he first saw him running from a feast with a piece of human flesh in his hand. He has long been among the foremost leaders of the church. In the heart of the forest we found a community which had lately been moved to the road by the State, living in

flimsy temporary huts, engaged in clearing the jungle that they might plant their gardens. Notwithstanding this, they had already built their chapel.

Most remarkable of all, we saw in Yasendu a girls' boarding school which is entirely a native effort. It originated through the concern of the teacher, supported by the chiefs, that the girls of the villages might be educated and kept from the moral dangers of tribal life. The chiefs asked the teacher to accept responsibility for them, the scholars put up the necessary huts and the work has now been maintained for three years at no expense to the Mission. Fifty girls are now in residence in a compound that adjoins the teacher's house, and everything we saw and heard led to the conclusion that it is a distinct success. A similar school has since been started in another village.

The early years at Yakusu were marked by an urge to read the white man's Book. Boys made the hazardous and unknown journey along the river in frail canoes, or through the forest on foot to the station so that they might purchase the slender reading primers that would assist them in spelling out their letters. Their elders pleaded for teachers to be settled among them. That enthusiasm has continued through the four decades that have followed, and it is apparent to-day. One evening a letter came to us on the *Grenfell* from a chief, who asked for a teacher to be sent to his village and promising, as is always the case, that a building would be provided and that the teacher would be maintained. This request was endorsed by twenty-four signatures, half the adult

population. As an earnest of their determination, the people had already begun to collect the poles for this building.

Wherever we went we found signs of the ability and devotion of pastors, overseers, teacher-evangelists and infirmiers. The stability and quality of the witness largely depends on them. They mostly work in isolation and with little contact with the missionaries. Their faithfulness is at once an inspiration and a rebuke. Some disappoint and fail. But here again the wonder is that so many remain loyal and steadfast in view of the subtle and manifold temptations with which they are surrounded, and in face of the numerous legitimate attractions and openings in other callings which they might enter.

At Yalikina, placed where the Lomami enters the Congo, I met 110 teacher-evangelists who were taking a month's refresher course consisting of daily classes in reading, writing, dictation, arithmetic, hymn singing, scripture teaching, preaching, the art of teaching and physical training, and above all, having fellowship with one another and with the missionaries. One of the most faithful district pastors presented an appeal on behalf of hundreds of villages away to the south-west which need the gospel and are ready to receive it, if only the lead is given.

My visit to Yakusu began on a Sunday and ended after the next Sunday. The commodious new church building where I shared in the services is a worthy tribute to the skill of its creator and constructor. It is ecclesiastical in design and is built of red brick and its walls have a finished

appearance. Its roofs are of tiles and iron sheets. Its spacious and lofty interior, its side aisles and transepts, and its cement floor, platform and pulpit, promote an atmosphere of worship. The singing of the choir of boys and girls and of the congregation, mostly composed of men, echoes round the building and adds to the devotional spirit. Nor is the singing of the kindergarten children to the accompaniment of their percussion band incongruous. Floral decorations suggest the holiness of beauty to the worshipper. From first to last the ordered service was one into which a stranger could enter with profit to himself. The church stands at an extremity of the station like a guardian of all that takes place there, and its tower points to the sky as a reminder that God is over and above everything that is done.

Achievement is written over the Yakusu area; but opportunity is even more prominent in the minds of its missionaries. For they are conscious that while great things have been accomplished, much more remains to be attempted. This opportunity may pass, for forces hostile to evangelical witness are entering in to possess the land. The staff is largely young in years, for no fewer than ten recruits have joined it in the last four years in place of those who have retired or been transferred elsewhere. The call that came to Joshua to arise and go over Jordan has been heard by them and they are eager to obey it.

CHAPTER VI

YALEMBA WITH LIGASA

YALEMBA is the last station founded by George Grenfell. Here he found a brief haven after his voyagings of two decades on the *Peace*. Here he settled in 1905, fretted by protracted negotiations with the authorities during a period of tension before their unwilling grant of a site. Here, while his last illness was upon him, he began operations, and from here he was taken to Basoko, where, surrounded by young colleagues from Yakusu and by native lads who loved him as a father, he died on July 31st, 1906.

But there lies behind this beginning another of the romances of the Congo Mission. Many years ago, when Arab slavers terrorised Central Africa, a small boy was torn from his tribe on one of their raids and carried down river. Here he was sold to a Dutch trader and eventually he came into Grenfell's hands. He became a member of the crew of the *Peace*, and by his ability he rose to a position of trust. Better still, he developed into a fine Christian. This lad, Disasi, always cherished the hope that some day he might be re-united to the tribe from which he had been wrested. Years passed by until, one day, when the *Peace* was in the neighbourhood of Yalemba, he lighted upon

people whose tribal markings resembled his own. He made inquiries and discovered his mother, to whom he made himself known. An urge to evangelise these folk led him and his devoted wife, Longene, to settle among them in 1902 as a teacher and he built a school chapel. For many years also the steamer crews for the *Peace* were recruited from Basoko near by. Some of these learnt to read and write, and on their return home they also started a school. Yakusu played its part, for boys from Yalemba received their education there. So the ground was prepared, and when Grenfell came to establish the Mission he discovered a church of eighteen members and a door open to him among the people. It was a privilege to meet both Disasi and Longene in their home just outside the station boundary.

My way from Yakusu to Yalemba was made first by the *Grenfell* to Yalikina at the junction of the Congo and the Lomami. Then we turned inland on the south side of the river for a road journey of about forty miles to the south-west to

LIGASA

a sub-station. Once again we passed through a succession of forest villages decorated for the occasion, in which companies of adults and children greeted our arrival with an enthusiasm which spoke of their joy at our coming.

Ligasa was opened about twelve years ago to cope with the expanding opportunity among the Topeke tribe. These people are of a fine physique, and, though responsive, are timid and impulsive.

For generations they were cowed by their aggressive Lokele neighbours. The station site has been claimed from the forest and is in a delightful situation on sloping ground surrounded by luxuriant tropical growth. Its buildings, which are the reverse of palatial, include a residence for a missionary couple, a smaller house for visiting missionaries, a building consisting of a leaf roof supported on poles with an earth floor for services and station schools, a smaller building for the kindergarten, a dispensary and small houses for in-patients and compounds for boys and girls.

The day that I spent here was arranged to give as comprehensive an idea of the work as possible in the short time that was available. The children of the station and village schools performed physical exercises and sang. The kindergarten children, too, sang an action song which told of their daily activities. After referring to the drum and bell which call them to school, they continued :

"We get lots of wisdom to talk and read and write ;
We go to the river that we may be clean children ;
Then we go to the village that we may rest and be strong ;
And we thank God for everything."

I saw the boys and girls in their classes engaged respectively in reading, writing, arithmetic or French. I also shared in their worship and scripture lesson which is taught daily. Meanwhile the kindergarten was in session with some of the senior station children acting as teachers.

Different classes were recognising letters or easy words, or engaged in doing simple arithmetic. Normally these schools meet at different times through lack of sufficient materials. While the station school includes sixty-six boys and seven girls, here, as elsewhere, more scholars have to be refused than can be admitted for want of funds. Half of the time of the older children is spent in varied service on the station, and many afterwards become village teachers.

Once in every two months a united Communion Service brings the members scattered throughout the thirty-seven village congregations into fellowship with each other and into contact with the central verities of the faith. This is usually held on a Sunday, but on the occasion of my visit the service was changed to the middle of the week so that I might be present. The company that gathered for the first service numbered at least 500 and overflowed the accommodation, and about half that number, all church members, remained for the Communion. Once again, in the unusual environment of the mid-African forest and under the roof of a rude building, the Unseen Presence and the consciousness of the universal reach of the Christian Church became a vivid reality.

The life of a missionary couple is a partnership that involves responsibilities of a varied and onerous character. Here is the weekly programme of a wife. Her mornings for five days are spent in supervising the kindergarten school. Another period is devoted to the conduct of an enquirers' class for women and another to a women's meeting. Other women from farther villages come at all

times to receive guidance in the Christian way. On the medical side she superintends baby welfare and deals with midwifery cases, and, as she says, "Only the difficult ones come to me." She trains the station girls and, with their help, makes suits for the boys' wear. She runs a home, cares for her husband and for orphan babies. Added to all this, her week-ends from Friday afternoons until Monday mornings are spent in company with her husband in itinerations among the villages to conduct services, to deal with enquirers and to act as adviser to the women who come to her for guidance. It is with good reason that the B.M.S. counts the wives of missionaries among the effective members of its staff.

The villages in the Ligasa area are large and fairly close together. One just beyond the station boundary is said to contain 800 children. As a consequence the schools are big and must have more than one teacher. The registered scholars exceed 10,000, and these are under the care of seventy-six teachers, whose support is found by the church. In addition, four men act as superintendents of the village churches and schools, and their wives give attention to the women and girls. The response to the gospel is gathering momentum. The church members in good standing number about 600 and baptisms are at the rate of about 150 a year, while 1,500 are in enquirers' classes.

We came to

YALEMBA

from Ligasa, first by car and then by canoe down the Lokombe river into the Congo. Here we

turned upstream to visit two adjacent villages. The path leading from the bank on which we landed was lined by children, who were flanked by rows of other boys and girls while the church members and others awaited us in front of the school chapel at the top. A hymn was sung to the tune of "Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag"! Nobody could explain how this air had penetrated this remote district, or why it had been pressed into the service of the gospel, though for three of the missionaries it must have revived memories of route marches during the Great War. What we saw and heard here enabled us to realise how greatly the gospel has brought new order and thought to these people. We reached Yalemba by canoe after nightfall, following a journey enlivened by the weird, monotonous chanting of the boys who paddled us, during which we skirted a long island before travelling down-river.

Of the four missionary residences at Yalemba, three are constructed of wood and one of brick. These form a terrace fronting the river. Behind or about them on the site which stretches beyond the limits of the forest are a corrugated iron building, once the church and now used for the main school, a brick kindergarten school, a brick dispensary, and the large Grenfell Memorial Church, with compounds for the boys and girls and other smaller buildings.

The language problem is especially difficult here. No fewer than eight languages are spoken in the area. Four are to be found within easy reach of the station, two more in the hinterland to the rear

on the north bank of the river, and the other two on the south side. It has not been easy to decide which one should form the chief vehicle for the message. In the early days Heso was adopted and, in addition to its oral use, much literary and translation work was published in it. More recently, Lingala, the lingua franca of the riverine area, the use of which is spreading inland, has been chosen, though Heso is still employed for more intimate group work.

The station schools have an enrolment of 350 pupils, of whom 270 are boys; 110 live on the station, the remainder coming daily from the neighbourhood. According to grade, 120 form the kindergarten school, and the others compose the main school. As at other stations, the station children are fed according to native standards and grow their own food; and they receive a minute allowance each week and three suits a year. They spend their mornings in classes and, except in the case of a few who teach in the school, they occupy their afternoons in indoor and outdoor service of various kinds. Again, as in other places, the thirst for knowledge is keen and there is talk of introducing a fee for children from the villages. The school week extends from Monday to Friday, and the station scholars are sent to their homes during the week-ends as a measure of economy in maintaining the work. They must bring with them on their return a certificate to show that they have attended a Sunday service in the villages. The main school parades for drill and physical exercises at six o'clock, and they enter into this with zest, for they appreciate marching. Shortly before nine

all assemble in the church for worship and the daily Scripture lesson, which here again consists of a single theme each week. It happened that my visit coincided with the end of the term service, and the opportunity was taken to remind the children of their standing as station scholars, of the subtle temptations by which they would be surrounded in their villages, and of the power of Christ to guard them and to enable them to bear their witness. For they have entered upon a new and untried path and many questionable and degrading attractions are about them and many voices seek to lure them into the old ways. The missionaries give close attention to the schools, for five of them make this work a part of their responsibility. This undoubtedly tends to thoroughness, and it gives the efficient native master and his assistants an understanding of the importance of the school. Part of the school is now obliged to meet in the open air for their building was blown down in a recent gale.

The kindergarten school here is as pleasing as those elsewhere. It is in charge of a trained kindergarten teacher with obvious benefit to the children. Here a tribute may be paid to other missionaries who undertake this work without any specialised preparation, and who, nevertheless, are doing it well. Almost all the missionaries whom I have met have of necessity assumed responsibilities far removed from those for which they were trained and from those which they expected would occupy their time and attention. And they are proving themselves worthy.

The welfare of the church is largely confided to

its deacons. The station diaconate meets each month, and the district body of eighteen men and twelve women in each alternate month on a Friday afternoon and a Saturday morning. The women also have a separate preliminary session in which matters concerning women members and enquirers are sifted before they are brought to the notice of the united body. In the main meeting questions of church discipline, applications for membership from enquirers and for the restoration of those who have lapsed and repented are carefully considered. Church rules are also discussed. The deacons further visit the churches in the area to confer with the teacher-evangelists and to supervise the work and foster its growth.

Forty of the teachers, mostly from the district north of the station, had been called in to share in the services of the week-end. This particular area begins from the confluence of the Aruwimi and the Congo and is triangular in shape, being bounded by the left and right banks of those streams respectively. In the first years of the Mission an understanding was reached with the Roman Catholic Mission by which each consented to concentrate upon its existing area. Gradually, however, this agreement was broken by the Roman Catholics, who penetrated the entire Protestant region. So our missionaries felt themselves no longer bound to remain outside the Aruwimi country, the more so as frequent and urgent calls to establish teachers had long been received from many villages. Twenty of these are now occupied, and though the advance is tardy owing to persistent opposition, it is becoming more rapid. It would

be greater and speedier if only regular visitation on the part of the missionaries were possible.

Westwards down river company concessions extend over huge tracts of country. These employ thousands of natives who are engaged in caring for the palm trees, gathering the nuts and extracting the oil. They have been drawn from other areas, and include many Christians. One company alone has several posts around which these people are assembled. The State has a post at Basoko. Hitherto difficulties have been placed in the path of the settlement of Protestant teachers and in the establishment of schools. In any case, effort among adults is handicapped, for the men are engaged in work all day. One teacher has now been placed here, and it is hoped that others will follow. With the purpose of ministering to the Christians native laymen have been selected at each post, and these render voluntary service in maintaining contact with them. At Bandu, hard by Basoko, a house built by the B.M.S. is used by the Yalemba missionaries for regular week-end visits for evangelistic and teaching work.

On the medical side the State maintains at Yalemba a dispensary to which patients travel from remote areas on both sides of the river to receive attention from the missionary nurse and the native infirmier. This work is now associated with the Yakusu hospital; 36,000 attendances a year are recorded, while in-patients are received in the meagre accommodation, and ante-natal, baby welfare and maternity treatment are given. Some of the missionaries have State recognition to conduct medical inspections of the population, and this

results in the application of preventive and remedial treatment and in presenting numerous openings for the gospel.

Sundays associated with special events or with festivals in the church calendar have their place on the mission field. Bible and hospital Sundays are observed at some stations to the broadening of the outlook and sympathies of the church members, and to the benefit of the bodies concerned; and, of course, Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas are kept. My stay at Yalemba was made the occasion of a Harvest Thanksgiving celebration. The church was decorated with palm fronds, and offerings of vegetables and other food and implements of fishing and hunting were placed in position about the pulpit and elsewhere. The congregation occupied every available inch of space and many were obliged to remain outside the building. The praise included familiar harvest hymns, while Jackson's *Te Deum* and Stainer's *God so Loved the World*, translated into Lingala, were well rendered by the choir. The offerings brought or sent in from the villages amounted to sufficient to meet the year's allowances of the teacher-evangelists. Rain interfered with the later round of services. Nevertheless, meetings for men and women church members, for former stations girls, for boys and girls and for infants were held in the afternoon. These were followed by a service, when thirty-six men and women were baptized in the river preparatory to the communion service.

The motor-boat attached to Yalemba, *Ndeko*, which means "Friend," justifies its name, for it is

an aid to district work and is recognised by the natives as the bearer of good tidings. It is constructed to accommodate six persons, including the crew, and to carry equipment and provisions for a fortnight's journey. In the course of a year it makes three or four trips of this duration to cover the entire riverine work on the main stream. It is used on six of the long week-ends which the missionaries spend at Bandu. It carries missionaries south and north from one bank of the Congo to the other. It conveys arriving missionaries from Basoko and departing missionaries in the opposite direction. The Yakusu doctors, when visiting the Yalemba area, use it four times a year to carry them to and from Yalikina. On occasion it runs up to Stanleyville, and State officials sometimes hire it to facilitate their journeys. In an area such as Yalemba, where so much of the itineration must perforce be made by water, the *Ndeko* is an essential part of the station equipment.

The church membership in the entire district now reaches 1,400 and nearly 3,000 are enrolled in enquirers' classes.

In each of the three districts which make up the Yalemba area, constantly widening opportunities exist for extension. Territories and their villages are accessible and are clamant in their appeals for teacher-evangelists. The tragedy of the situation is that the regular and thorough training of native teachers which was formerly so marked a feature of the work here has of necessity been abandoned through cuts in grants consequent upon diminished home resources. And Yalemba is unfortunately not singular in this respect. This

neglect is fatal to the future solidity and stability of the church and calls for serious attention by all concerned for the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in Congo.

CHAPTER VII

UPOTO WITH PIMU

THE journey of 200 miles between Yalemba and Upoto was made by one of the most ancient and one of the most modern means of transport. As the Yalemba motor car and boat were temporarily disabled, the services of fifteen stalwart paddlers were secured to speed a canoe through the twenty miles of water that lay between the station and Basoko near the mouth of the Aruwimi. They set out in the darkness of early morning and we later watched the dawn break over the river. We travelled at seven miles an hour in the way men have journeyed from the dawn of time. At Basoko I stepped into an aeroplane which flew at over a hundred miles an hour. The swaying of the canoe made writing impossible. The steadiness of the plane made motion almost imperceptible and writing a pleasure.

A wait of an hour at Basoko was used to visit the white cemetery and to see the grave in which Grenfell was buried. The stone slab which marks the spot is in good condition and the ordered state of the entire enclosure speaks of the care that is given to this quiet sanctuary.

The pioneers who selected Upoto for a station centre must have possessed an eye for natural

beauty. The original site which lay close to the river was purchased for 800 brass rods, two pieces of cloth, two mirrors, two knives, two forks, two spoons and some beads and shells! After many years a piece of land was secured higher up the slope and the station is now well above the river and commands extensive views of the water which is studded with forest-clad islands and fringed with broad expanses of similar country in all directions. From the aeroplane especially, as also from the river, the iron church with its red roof stands out amid the rich green of the surrounding ground and the name of the station, picked out in the earth in large letters with oyster shells, proclaims the existence of the Protestant witness to all who see it. Four missionary houses face the river with the other buildings in the rear extending back to the forest.

The early years were crowded with excitement and adventure, for the Lingombe tribe which is scattered throughout the area, is among the most turbulent and debased of the Congo folk. It is believed that this people migrated from the north-east and suffered disintegration in the isolation of the forest. Their customs horrified the early missionaries and undoubtedly they included much that is evil and gross. Theft was considered to be a terrible crime and offences against the moral code of the tribe were punished in an inhuman way. But much that was worthy and sane according to their conditions of life governed tribal standards of conduct. The fear of evil spirits and the power of the witch doctor held the people in a cruel thrall from which there was no escape. Yet in the

dim recesses of their minds there was some conception of a supreme being. One missionary has discovered names for this being which suggest that the belief comes from remote times. He is known as the creator, the beginner of the forest, and the one who could not be seen. Interspersed with savage customs were many high ideals. An old man would never set out on a journey without praying for protection. He would likewise pray before hunting and fishing that his venture might be prospered.

Much of this belief and practice has disappeared, however, with the advent of modern conditions. The trader and administrator have introduced new ways of life and modes of thought into the district before which the old tribal sanctions and tenets have lost their power to hold. Here the establishment of trading companies with vast concessions of land has drawn together thousands of men into their settlements. Their wives have, in most cases, not accompanied them and they have sought consolation and satisfaction from such women as are available. One result is that venereal disease has spread like a plague with devastating effects. The wives left in the villages have also fallen a prey to the temptations with which they are environed. The white man's rule has further demolished the old bulwarks and although now a tardy attempt is being made by the State to reconstruct them through more authority being placed in the hands of the chiefs, it is questioned whether this has not come too late to be of effect. Increased wealth which has poured into the hands of the men has resulted in still further demoralisation.

No guidance has been given as to the ways in which this should be spent and it is generally used to purchase more women. Girls of tender years are taken to the homes of old men with the result that young men cannot find wives. Here again, the State is seeking to remedy this condition by taking action against old men who take young wives. Palm-wine drinking has spread through the district with the encouragement of some members of the white population, and is causing havoc within the church as well as outside it.

Yaws and leprosy are also widespread. Some years ago it was estimated that seventy per cent. of the population suffered from the former disease. Its prevalence among young people was particularly great. Efforts made by the missionaries have done much to free the area from its ravages and the State medical service has rendered valuable aid.

The Upoto district is situated on both banks of the river. Of recent years a system of roads has been developed which is probably without equal in Congo. The villages have mostly been brought to these highways and the task of reaching them facilitated accordingly. In the rear of the station, two lines of villages, some of which are occupied by teachers, stretch to the north and north-east, and a third runs to the west. On the south side of the river, advance has been made east and south-east. But the biggest area of operations is to the south-west by means of a road that runs behind and parallel to the river. It is here that Pimu is situated.

PIMU

long a centre of work, is now a station in the making. It was in 1932 that it was decided to devote the generous Smith bequest to the establishment of a medical mission in this place which lies about sixty miles in a south-westerly direction on the opposite bank of the river to Upoto. The district had for long been worked with good effect by the Upoto missionaries. Temporary accommodation was made and a missionary couple were transferred from the ordered life of an older and larger station to create the new venture in the heart of the virgin forest. Immense labour was necessary to clear the ground of giant trees and other dense growth. At first, native labour was secured with comparative ease, but as months have lengthened into years, the will to work has suffered a decline. Notwithstanding this, great strides have been made. Three missionary houses now face the road which runs along one side of the site. One of these is temporary in character and will give place to a more permanent dwelling for nurses. A dispensary, well-equipped with laboratory, operating theatre, X-ray apparatus, lecture, store and administrative rooms, has been completed. In the rear are the hospital buildings, built of pisé bricks with tin roof, with men's and women's wards which contain together thirty-eight beds, maternity ward and private ward. A portion of the site contains thirty native houses built by the State for patients and their families during the periods in which the former are receiving treatment. The State meets the cost of their food.

The cultivation of pea nuts has been begun with the double object of providing two hours' employment each morning for the patients and of supplying them with food. Experiments are also being made in the production of soya beans and other vegetables. Efforts are being promoted in this village to foster a spirit of mutual helpfulness between the families, for while a Congo native will assist any who are in need within the extensive ramifications of his family connections, he draws the line at anyone and anything beyond. Services for patients are held daily including Sunday. A site for a leper colony has been reserved by the State about two miles from the station, but its development as well as other projects, awaits the strengthening of the medical staff.

Eight boys are attached to this work and render valuable assistance. Two of these are graduates of the Yakusu medical school. The work of the doctor includes the training of these helpers who attend three lectures daily besides gaining practical experience in the general routine. Itineration in the district is restricted by the shortness of the staff on the one hand, but is facilitated by the good road system on the other. Most of the villages are near to the roads and can be visited once a year for the examination of the entire population, while the doctor is never more than four hours' journey from the station. The responsibility placed upon mission doctors is illustrated by the statement that everything that happens is laid at their door. It is true that there are no coroners in Congo, but there is a sensitive public opinion. Success in treatment brings prestige to the Mission, while

failure prejudices its influence. In many cases patients are only brought for treatment when their condition is desperate and sometimes hopeless. The power of this work still in its infancy is revealed by the fact that some patients make a five days' journey to see the doctor. The fact that the annual attendances exceed 30,000 is an indication of the extent to which this work may be expected to grow when a larger staff is available and the equipment is completed.

The Upoto area extends for at least seventy miles beyond Pimu along the road still lined with villages which are here inhabited by Lingombe clans and the Boswa tribe. The dialects differ from that used by the main section of the Lingombes, and the people are wilder in appearance and manners. But the message has taken firm root and teachers are placed in many villages. Many of these came to greet us and I met two of the superintending pastors going their rounds to visit the schools and to interview the teacher-evangelists. The quality of the work is largely conditioned by these overseers, for while the missionaries are only able to itinerate once or twice a year, these men are always in the neighbourhood. At Basu Disi, a village where we halted for lunch, the scholars gathered around us and in them we saw the rough material out of which the living temple of God is being wrought in Congo.

While

UPOTO

has had its station school from the beginning, it was decided some years ago to look in another

direction for the recruitment of teacher-evangelists. Formerly many boys who received training were attracted from the service of the Mission by openings in the companies. In other cases the gap that existed between the time a lad left the station school and became old enough to assume the responsibilities of a teacher-evangelist was a period when some also fell away. And again, those who did become teachers sometimes found difficulty in securing wives who, by training and desire, would be fit helpmeets for them. So the plan of enrolling older boys and young men in their 'teens, but already married, was adopted with marked success. More than fifty of these couples and their children live on the station at a time and receive preparation for the work to which they feel called. Their quarters form a T-shaped settlement on the north side of the station. Houses with walls made of pisé blocks picked out in red and white, and roofs of palm material, are so built that either walls or roofs can be repaired or renewed independently. They have a clean and finished appearance, and like other buildings here, are such as can be reproduced in the villages. The value of this is obvious for, while the raising of native conditions and amenities of living is in harmony with Christian ideals, it should be done in a way that is possible to the people.

The training course comprises prayers in the church each morning at six o'clock, followed by two half hour periods in which reading, writing, arithmetic, dictation and French are taught. An interval for breakfast precedes ninety minutes of

manual labour in which carpentry, masonry, plastering and other branches of building are practised; and fifteen minutes of vigorous physical exercises. Two more hours divided into three equal periods are occupied with Old and New Testament teaching, church history and homiletics, teaching method and singing. In the singing class the hymnbook is used as the textbook with a view to improving the praise of the village congregations. The wives have their school in the early mornings when, in addition to the usual basic subjects, attention is given to hygiene and mothercraft. The men spend the afternoons in further manual work and the women in domestic duties. Saturdays are free from school and in the afternoon men and women set out in canoes to the neighbouring islands to fish or hunt for food or to collect palm nuts for trading purposes. Other schools provide for the station and village boys and for the younger children.

Beyond what is taught in the classrooms, the life on the station furnishes missionaries with opportunities for the exercise of personal influence. This is also true of missionary itinerations. For it appears to be the case increasingly in Congo as at home that converts are won not by mass methods but by personal contact. Some word spoken, some glimmer of light, some groping after a better way, some conviction of sin, some verse of a hymn, draws the enquirer or the prospective teacher to discuss the palavers of God with the missionary. Congo has its equivalents to Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the rich young

ruler and others, and only those who have shared the life of a mission station, even for a short time, can appreciate the degree to which time is spent and vital force is expended in this care and cure of souls.

A generous gift has made possible the erection of an institute in which this training of teachers will be conducted in conditions more adequate than those of the past and from which a supply of men and women equipped for their important work will go forth to make good the gaps that inevitably appear among the 130 men at present in the ranks and to enter the many doors that are open. With the help of their wives, they will establish Christian homes in the midst of non-Christian surroundings and make a common witness before the entire community.

A meeting with the deacons of the Upoto church resolved itself into what Methodists would call a conversation on the work of God. These men are troubled that the state of the church is by no means all that it might be and that the unevangelised districts are not being visited because of an insufficient missionary and native staff. They suggested that some of their number might be set apart to cultivate the inner life of the church through visitation. They voiced their views about the frequency of changes in the missionary personnel and, by their references to them, they revealed how abiding is the work done by the early missionaries here. Then they asked questions of the visitor. "Why do Christian nations still go to war?" "How many churches are there in Britain?" "Is the work in other countries

independent of the B.M.S.?" "Will you tell the B.M.S. in England of our thanks and of our need?" It was a profitable and stimulating morning in which I felt that I got near to the spiritual heart of the church.

The Sunday worship was notable for its atmosphere of reverent quietness. Usually two morning services are arranged for Lingala and Lingombe speaking people respectively, but on the occasion of my visit, a united gathering was planned at which the congregation filled the church. The singing was vigorous and the sermon and its translation were followed with close attention. In the afternoon a Communion Service was held and conducted partly in English and partly in Lingombe, when the attendance of local members was supplemented by the presence of teachers and members from the south side of the river.

It should be clear from what has been written that nowhere in our Congo Mission is the impact of western civilisation upon a backward people more disturbing and destructive in its effects than in this area. While echoes and evidence of old pagan conditions surround the missionaries and affect the Church, the chief opposition is presented by the relaxation of old standards and the adoption of new ones. The Roman Catholic faith is strongly represented in the area and is winning adherents by ways which cannot commend themselves to Protestants. The new elements are like quicksands which threaten to swallow those who venture upon them whether they struggle to escape from them or suffer themselves to be overcome by them.

It is a tribute to the uplifting and sustaining strength of the gospel that so many walk with sure step along the narrow path that leads to life eternal and that their hands are stretched out to rescue others who are in danger of losing their balance.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MIDDLE RIVER AREA

THE journey from Upoto to our middle river stations was broken to enable me to visit

NTONDO

on Lac Tumba, where the American Baptists have a Mission. I was fortunate to be able to travel for the two days which were involved in going from Lisala to Coquilhatville by *La Reine Astrid*, the latest and largest mail steamer on the Congo. This stretch of the river is among the most beautiful of its entire length. Its wide surface is divided by wooded islands and its volume is reinforced many times by tributaries large and small. From Coquilhatville to Ntondo a good road driven through swampy ground runs for most of the eighty-five miles, and this was covered in a car. An iron boat took me across the lake to Ntondo in less than half an hour. This station was founded twenty-three years ago, when the work was removed from another place after many years' experience there. Ntondo is the vigorous centre of a witness in a territory of 4,500 square miles, which contains 50,000 people. It has four two-storeyed missionary residences; a large hospital with a well-equipped administrative block, operating theatre and two wards; and a compound of twenty small

houses in which well over a hundred out-patients from distant villages can be received during the period of their treatment; 105 boys and 60 girls live on the station in three compounds while they receive their education. Admittance to the schools is conditional upon each entrant paying a fee of twenty francs and bringing a simple clothing suit. The children give service in their gardens and in other ways, and spend about four hours in school daily. Five buildings are used for the schools. These are made either of adobe brick or of mud. The eleven regional schools and 122 village schools have an enrolment of 570 and 3,550 scholars respectively, the boys being about twice as many in number as the girls.

The Ntondo district reaches out to the Lukolela area and meeting-places for worship and school are to be found in 133 villages where the work is maintained by 170 teacher-evangelists, five superintending pastors who conduct communion services and seven assistant deacons. The church membership is about 3,000, of whom two-thirds are women. On the medical side nearly 300 in-patients are registered in a year and over 3,000 individual out-patients. British Baptists have maintained the happiest relationships with their American brethren from the beginning of Congo Missions, and the future should see a development of those relationships in the work at Ntondo.

The way from Ntondo to

LUKOLELA

was made by the motor-boat attached to the latter station, across the lake and once more into the

Congo, and it occupied part of two days. A stop was made the first night at Irebu, where the tributary from the lake enters the main river. Here we slept in a native teacher's hut. The next morning we set out before dawn and reached Lukolela at noon. Thus in time the distance between the two stations is nearly twelve hours. A projected motor-road should shorten this and render communications more easy.

Lukolela was the first station to be opened on the upper river. The pioneers had scarcely settled here in 1884, however, when the people, partly owing to disputes with neighbouring tribes, began to cross the river into French territory. Other migrations followed and sleeping sickness also took its toll of those who remained. In ten years this once populous district became so empty that the missionaries and much of the station plant were removed to Bolobo, and such work as remained was supervised from that station. Within the last twenty years, through the opening up of coffee and cocoa plantations and other trading concerns, the people have returned to the district in such numbers that it was decided to make a new beginning in our witness by placing a missionary couple there. They arrived in 1925, and from that time the work has made a great advance.

The visitor to Lukolela now lands on the beach to find a wide road running up the slope, past one of the oldest mission houses in Congo, to the new brick house at the top. He notices the girls' brick compound, the brick dispensary, the church and other buildings, as outward signs of development, while grass plots and flower beds impress him by

their orderliness and beauty. Much of the site has been cleared of forest growth and fruit trees have been planted in its place. The forest to the rear is being reclaimed to provide gardens in which food for the station children can be produced.

My Sunday at Lukolela was notable in several respects. Its engagements began with the largest baptismal service ever held on the station when forty-six men and women were baptized in the Congo in the presence of a large crowd. A feature here which I had not noticed at other stations was the testimony given by each of the men candidates regarding their conversion before they went down into the water. The congregation at public worship which followed in the church filled every inch of floor and window space and many others had to remain outside. Fully a thousand people joined in the earnest and reverent worship, which was conducted by the native pastor, and listened with patience and appreciation to the address which was translated. In the afternoon a record number of church members, including those baptized earlier in the day, partook of the communion at which glasses which had been presented by the North Finchley Church, London, were dedicated to God and used for the first time.

This Sunday bore eloquent testimony to the expanding work here. Other evidence is to be seen in the growth of the church membership in the district. For each of the past two years the baptisms have exceeded 130, and the members in good standing approach 750, with nearly 500 in enquirers' classes. Centres are established in

forty-two villages, with fifty teacher-evangelists who are supported by the church. These teachers are called to Lukolela for a fortnight's refresher course three times a year, their accommodation and food being supplied by the station congregation. Here they are given tuition in elementary school subjects, while special attention is paid to the New Testament and to preaching classes.

A governing principle here is that the Mission should not do for the people what they are able to do for themselves. The church has made willing and generous response to the several calls that have been made upon it in recent years. The teacher-evangelists are, of course, a first charge upon the funds. The church meets the cost of lamp oil used at the many week-evening meetings, which are held owing to the fact that many members are engaged in work for companies throughout the day. Much of the material needed for the schools is also paid for from church money. The members have paid for the roofs of the new boys' compound and the teacher's house on the station and for village school chapels. The Christians of one village were responsible for the station dispensary and those of another village for the children's church. Individual members have given the station drum and the cost of its transport to its present position. Half of the annual thank-offering is sent to the Society's home funds. Systematic giving is expected and promoted. The Bolobo revival, about which more will be written later, has had its effect upon the Lukolela church, not only in regard to the increase of its financial support, but also its evangelistic zeal. Preaching bands of men

and women respectively make regular visits on Sundays and week-days to neighbouring villages to bear their witness among the people.

Medical work has its place here, too. Over 1,600 out-patients and 6,000 attendances are recorded in a year, and, as everywhere, many of the people demonstrate their preference for treatment at the Mission by travelling long distances for the purpose.

The present staff consists of a married couple whose life is obviously exacting and lonely. Lukolela, a door that was once closed through necessity, is now flung open. Opportunities that should be seized are being taken advantage of by others, with the result that children and adults pass into hands which are fashioning them according to a pattern which is not that of evangelical Christianity. Here, as in other places, we are being challenged to lay hold of what remains before it is too late.

BOLOBO

two hundred miles above Léopoldville and a twelve hours' motor-boat journey down river from Lukolela, was founded in 1888 among a people whose passions knew no restraint. Disorder reigned and killing was a daily occurrence. The pioneer missionaries persisted in their endeavour amid a mixed reception. Temporary dwellings were erected, and in readiness for the following Easter a school chapel was erected in which, for the first time, a wondering congregation of these Bobangi tribesmen listened to the story of a Saviour Who by His death and

resurrection had opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

State and company steamers make Bolobo a place of call, and few days pass without one or more vessels being moored to the beach. This is among the reasons why an unusually large native population is gathered here about the station. A considerable trade in ivory goods and in wicker furniture has been developed by the natives, who find a profitable market for their goods among the passengers. This has promoted native craftsmanship on the one hand and the acquisitive instinct on the other. Many have become rich according to native standards of life. Contact with white people and the wider world has resulted in the adoption of European dress, especially by the men, and in the building of better houses with brick walls, tin roofs, cement floors and more elaborate furniture. It has influenced thought, which finds its reflection in the church.

The work here has been marked by many significant events, and by none more important than the revival which began in 1934. The missionaries had long been disquieted by the low spiritual quality of the church and by the apparent ineffectiveness of their message. They communicated their misgivings to friends at home, and for two years the prayers of many were directed to this situation. The preaching and teaching of the missionaries placed a renewed emphasis upon the Cross and the Holy Spirit. At length a conference was arranged with the native deacons when probing questions were presented and considered. The immediate result seemed to be disastrous, for the

deacons resented what they deemed to be a reflection upon themselves, and they resigned in a body. But the missionaries held on in unity of heart and mind and with expectant faith.

The first sign of a new movement came when a station boy who worked in the carpenters' shop was led to surrender through reading a booklet and related his experience of the new life in public. Other youths followed, and revival spread like a tidal wave through the community. There was open confession of sin, difficult for the African as for others nearer home. A new spirit, which expressed itself in joy and power, took possession of the church. This found its outlet in evangelistic zeal, and youths travelled long distances to share with others the secret of their changed lives. The emotions stirred by this revival were wisely guided into settled channels through weekly classes for instruction in the faith, Bible classes and meetings for prayer. The movement began among youth, but before long the number of women enquirers so increased that experienced native Christian women were appointed to minister among them. The movement also spread to the men.

The reality of this revival is proved by its effect upon daily conduct. Old standing evils have been fought and abolished. The general life of the community has been cleansed and uplifted. Homes have been changed and children are being nurtured in the way of God. School chapels that were unworthy in construction and condition have been replaced by others which are fitter to be the houses of God. The note of joy predominates in worship

and service, and an unprecedented liberality marks the giving of the church. The church membership has been more than doubled in two years, and now exceeds 4,000. The Christian community has likewise increased, and over 4,000 are receiving preparation in inquirers' classes.

Bolobo influences a district that stretches for 120 miles along the south bank of the river and inland for 170 miles to Lac Leopold II, and it includes an area of over 10,000 square miles. The population immediately about the station is dense. Villages that together contain 4,000 people lie around the station boundary. Elsewhere the territory is somewhat sparsely inhabited, though the extremity towards the lake contains many villages. Modern means of communication hardly exist as yet, for, unlike other districts, there are no roads and itinerations have still to be made by canoe, bicycle or on foot. Here many tribes, including the Bobangi, Basengele, Batende and Bolia peoples, are to be found. Bobangi is the language that is used by the missionaries and most generally understood by the people.

The medical work, which dates back to the early days, took a leap forward in 1908, when the first missionary doctor was appointed to the staff. Up to this time a building known as Melbourne Hall, after the church in Leicester of that name which gave it, had been set apart for out-patient work, and two small mud-walled huts were provided for in-patients. With the coming of a doctor, a fund for building a hospital was raised by the Liverpool churches in 1909. The hospital was completed and opened in 1912, and it was then regarded as

among the best in the colony. Materials deteriorate and requirements alter in Congo, however, and a few years ago the Home Committee was faced with the alternatives of modernising the existing plant or of providing new premises. The former course was adopted, and with praiseworthy economy and skill the hospital was reconstructed and reconditioned in 1937. Brick walls were substituted for the old materials and the roof was raised two feet to make a solid, light and airy set of buildings with cement floors and mosquito proofing. Besides the administrative section there are two main wards for men and women respectively, and five small rooms, each containing two beds for maternity or infectious cases, or for patients who desire privacy. Altogether there are forty beds, and besides, a large and a small operating theatre, dispensary, ulcer shed, office and out-patient department.

Out-patients are seen every morning for about six hours. The afternoons are occupied with injection cases and the preparation of dressings and medicines for use in the hospital and district dispensaries. A baby welfare clinic is being added to these other activities; 330 in-patients are treated in a year and 48,000 attendances are made by out-patients. Yaws and sleeping sickness are rife in the area, and as many as 300 new sleeping sickness cases are treated annually. The staff is responsible for the yearly medical examination of 18,000 people. In addition to patients from the Bolobo area itself, many people cross the river from French territory to receive attention from the Mission in preference to that provided by any other agency. The training of infirmiers occupies much of the time of

the two doctors and two nurses, and a policy of developing district dispensaries is being pursued. Two have been established so far, at which nearly 20,000 attendances were recorded last year, and others are projected with Government aid.

The boys' school at Bolobo is a model of its kind which is known and admired for its quality far beyond the bounds of the Mission. It came into the care, a few years ago, of a Belgian Protestant master who has given himself with enthusiasm to its advancement. New buildings made of sun-dried brick were erected, partly with the contributions and labour of the village people. These consist of a spacious quadrangle with five rooms on each of two sides and a master's room at one end, the other end being open. These are bright with whitewash and the 150 scholars are taught to care for the furniture and fabric by a daily scrubbing of benches and sweeping of floors. The aim of the school is to develop Christian character and to prepare the boys for life in their villages. The assistant moniteurs are partly trained in the school for pastors and, in addition, they spend two hours daily in the preparation of their lessons and another hour in keeping the school records up-to-date. They teach according to modern pedagogical theories and methods. A thorough course, harmonised with Government regulations, is followed. Several text-books, which this master has written, are used in the school and have been adopted elsewhere. The master was on furlough at the time of my visit, but I saw the thirty-six weeks' programme which he had prepared with detailed precision and left behind him for

every teacher, class and lesson during this period of his expected absence.

Theory and practice are combined in the classes. As far as possible, every subject is related to village life. Geography, for example, is taught with the life of the village and the land as a beginning and a background. By means of sand-trays the boys are stimulated to construct a model village and to understand, for instance, why washing and bathing places should be made below the village and not above it. Through the construction of other models, further talents are developed and the making of things that will be of use in later life is learnt. A model village built by this school was among the exhibits that attracted general attention at the Diamond Jubilee Conference at Léopoldville. The necessary teaching of the metric system is given by means of other apparatus. The project method is also employed for teaching other subjects including measuring and surveying. Hygiene is taught to show that most of the many illnesses from which the people suffer can be avoided by proper attention being paid to cleanliness and regular habits. The same thoroughness that is given to other subjects is also paid to Scripture teaching, to singing and to physical exercises. This school is making a notable contribution to the uplift of the people along lines that are in accord with their special conditions, and it is producing lads likely to become leaders in their communities. Some of the moniteurs have already left to become village teachers with evident benefit to the children whom they teach.

Membership in the girls' school of 250 is secured

according to the same standard as that of the boys', namely, ability to read and write. For many years this school has been housed in the building named Melbourne Hall. Owing to its dilapidated condition, another building, more suited to the purpose, is planned and, pending its erection, accommodation has been provided in a mud building with grass roof and earth floor. Scholars have to pay for their materials and they value them more as a result. The teachers are old girls of the school. One section of special interest is a senior class for betrothed girls in which they are prepared for their future home life. A lesson in mother-craft was being taught during my visit, a Yakusu text-book on that subject, translated into the Bobangi language, being used for the purpose.

The boys' and girls' schools are partly fed from the village schools and partly from the station kindergarten school of 250 children, although far more than that number apply for admission. Here, the phonetic system is used for the teaching of reading and the brighter boys and girls are able to read and write in three months after entry by this method. The syllabus is like that of other similar schools. During the revival, choruses from the Children's Special Service Mission book attained great popularity and I listened to a translation of *I will make you fishers of men*, sung with evident relish and gusto.

The Bolobo printing press has long enjoyed a deserved reputation for the quality and range of its work. It serves other Missions besides the B.M.S., and its staff, several of whom have been employed for more than twenty years, and its

plant, are usually working at full pressure. Its compositors set type in several languages including English, French, and Portuguese, as well as native tongues. The *Congo Mission News*, the quarterly magazine of the Congo Protestant Council, is printed here and I saw men and machines at work on the Report of the Diamond Jubilee Conference, a new edition of 8,000 copies of the Bobangi hymn-book, a Church History in Ki-Kongo, two schoolbooks in French and the gospels in Basengele. The carpenters' shop adjoins the press and here doors, windows and other requirements were in process of making for the new buildings in course of erection.

In 1931 the need for more systematic training found expression in the formation of a school for pastors, and I was taken to see the quarters now being built on a new site for the students who, in most cases, are accompanied by their wives. These quarters consist of twelve brick-walled, tin-roofed houses with cement floors arranged in pairs, each with a single room and with cookhouses near by. A memorial gift has made possible the erection of a school building in which twenty or so men will in future receive their training. The full course covers three years and includes a complete study of the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament. Church history is taught by the use of the lives of outstanding personalities who figure in it and, in addition, there are courses in homiletics, preaching, general knowledge and discussion of problems, while the men visit the villages for practical evangelistic work. As previously stated, they take other subjects in the

boys' school and practise teaching in the kindergarten school. These men proceed, on the completion of their training, to the service of the Church as teacher-evangelists, some in village and others in regional schools. In some cases they conduct as many as four schools daily, one for "awakened" married women, a second for boys, a third for kindergarten children and girls, and a fourth in the evening for moniteurs. The 130 village teachers, who include several who have given twenty or thirty years to the work, are called to the station in batches once a year for refresher courses lasting about ten days, in which, again, theory and practice are combined.

So far, the activities mentioned are carried on during the daytime. Others are held in the evenings. Here is the weekly programme :—

Monday : Enquirers' Class for Men ; Revival group and School for Prayer.

Tuesday : Two Enquirers' Classes for Men.

Wednesday : Enquirers' Class for Women ; Enquirers' Class for Men.

Thursday : Meeting for Christian Women ; General Meeting of the Church.

Friday : Choir Practice.

Saturday : Bible Class ; Prayer Meeting.

Sunday at Bolobo begins with morning worship, when the church, which accommodates a thousand people, is usually crowded and some are obliged to follow the service from outside. On communion Sundays the congregation of church members is much larger, for the numbers are swollen by those who come from neighbouring villages, and there are several other communion centres throughout

the district. The rapid growth of the church membership, nearly a thousand having been added in 1938, makes the conduct of the central communion service an increasing problem and the enlargement of the church is being mooted. The singing at the morning service was led by the station choir, and native pastors take their turn with the missionaries in preaching the sermon. An interesting section of the congregation is formed by older women who are among the fruits of the revival. A children's service is held concurrently and a third service follows for hospital patients and their friends. Schools for younger children, for boys and girls and older girls, and for men and women, meet in the afternoon. These are mostly taken by native workers in association with the missionaries. Preaching bands visit the villages close at hand to conduct open-air meetings. Here there is no lack of speakers, one man succeeding another, and the visible audiences are supplemented by others who prefer the shelter of their huts to coming out into the open.

The girls' compound includes one building which I had not noticed elsewhere, a school-chapel built of brick and simply furnished with wooden benches. Here prayers are conducted daily and the girls are encouraged to use it for their private devotions. The compound is divided into four houses, and a system of marks has been introduced for such things as keeping their dormitories swept, their bodies clean and their clothes tidy. Recognition, in the shape of simple, special treats, is given each month to the best house.

Reference has been made to the work about

Lac Leopold II. Here, scattered in many villages, a thousand church members live. The work is in the care of a superintending pastor with several teacher-evangelists. At Ngongo, the main centre here, the people made the bricks for their chapel and carried on their heads, twenty miles through the bush, the tins for the roof which had come from England. There are many open doors and requests from the people for the gospel in this district. The Bolobo missionaries are only able to make irregular and infrequent visits, and I listened to the earnest plea of the pastor who has given twenty-eight years to the work, that the long recognised needs of this area might be responded to by a more settled missionary superintendence and leadership. He expressed the readiness of his people to make the bricks for a house, provided the materials for the roof were supplied from home.

This is typical of the situation in the Bolobo area as I was able to judge it. The harvest which is prolific at Ngongo, is plenteous everywhere. The prayers for revival have issued in an ingathering unprecedented so far as our Congo Mission is concerned, and the future reaping may be still greater. Our missionary staff is sore pressed to handle this vastly increased responsibility and both its members and the Church look for the strengthening of its numbers. I was made aware, through conferences with deacons, pastors and teacher-evangelists, that the Church is awakening to the larger part it should play in this new day, and its members hold a fervent hope that we in the homeland will not be found lacking in ours.

My departure from Bolobo to

TSHUMBIRI

was delayed owing to a heavy storm, as if to prove that Congo missionaries, in spite of modern methods of travel, are still at the mercy of the elements. No schools could be held while it lasted, the out-patient attendance was reduced and building operations were suspended. We set out in due course, however, in the motor boat on a river that was still made choppy by the wind, to travel the thirty miles between the two stations without mishap.

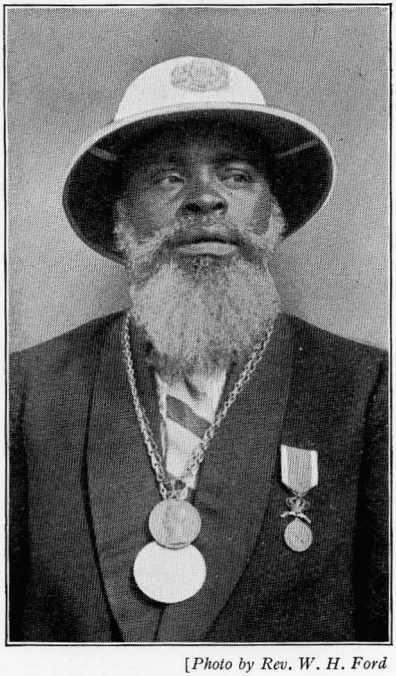
Tshumbiri is among the oldest stations on the middle river, and its foundation by the American Baptists was contemporaneous with Lukolela and Bolobo. Ten years ago, however, the Americans found themselves under the necessity of curtailing their commitments and, in 1931, the station and its plant were transferred to the B.M.S. which designated a married couple to supervise the work. The original buildings were mostly old and they soon proved inadequate to meet the growing demands and, in consequence, Tshumbiri is still a station in the making. The station site is situated on a sharp slope rising from the beach. The lower portion is occupied by a brick building used for many years for the church, but long since too small for this purpose, and it now accommodates the schools. Then there come an early missionary house which is to be demolished and other small houses and buildings of simple materials which it is intended should give place to others that will be more worthy of the enterprise. A road has been driven through the upper part of the site

and this will be extended to the beach as soon as the old buildings are removed. On one side of the upper part a small brick house is used to accommodate a single man and, higher up, in line with this, is a new missionary residence which was erected in 1937. On the other side the walls of the new brick church for 600 people were rising during my visit. A memorial gift is providing the greater part of the payment for this. In the rear a site has been laid out for a house for the second married couple whose presence here is greatly needed.

Since Tshumbiri became a B.M.S. station the progress has been thorough and rapid on the sure foundations laid by the Americans. During their occupation the number of those baptized and enrolled as church members reached a thousand. In the seven years since then that number has been doubled. The actual members in good standing in 1930 were about 300. To-day they are three times as many and there are at least 400 in enquirers' classes. The station schools include forty boys and twenty girls. The entrance examinations had been held just prior to my arrival and sixty boys had to be refused admission. Applicants for admission to the girls' school had also to be disappointed. In order to save expense to the Society the girls assist the village women to cook their food and to do other household duties in return for which these women feed them. Another interesting fact about the work here is that, in addition to the regular contributions expected from church members, the enquirers are encouraged to give systematically in order to break down the

[*Photo by H. L. Hemmens*

AN OUT-PATIENTS' SERVICE AT THE PIMU DISPENSARY



[*Photo by Rev. W. H. Ford*

MANKOTO : CHRISTIAN CHIEF OF TSHUMBIRI

idea which is widely held that the monthly gifts from members are in the nature of a payment for the communion.

The dispensary here which is in charge of a Bolobo trained infirmier, bears the inscription, *Dispensaire Madame Renard,* 1935. This building was paid for by the French Government in recognition of rescue services rendered by the Bolobo and Tshumbiri missionaries when a French aeroplane crashed in the adjacent forest, and the Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa and his wife lost their lives.

Four tribes are to be found in the district—Batende, Batoma, Banunu and Mpe, while people from the French side of the river are touched as well. Among these tribes fifty-two teacher-evangelists and two superintending pastors are maintained by the church. It was my privilege to meet thirty-eight of these men who were in the midst of their annual refresher course of a month's duration, to listen to the instruction they were receiving and to have fellowship with them.

One of the superintending pastors is placed at Mushie, an important State post 150 miles inland, where he is in charge of several teacher-evangelists and where half of the church members live. The members at Mushie have built their own large church and are concerned that arrangements should be made for a missionary to spend part of each year in their midst to give leadership to the work. Roman Catholic activity here, which is already strong, is becoming more vigorous and the maintenance of our witness by native leadership alone is growing difficult. Something more than a brief

visit by a missionary at long intervals is called for.

Of Tshumbiri, as of other stations, it can be said that the opportunity outreaches by far the capacity of the present available staff to grasp it.

CHAPTER IX

OURSELVES AND OTHERS

WHILE missionaries of the B.M.S. were the first to enter Congo and its ranks to-day include a larger number than those of any other Society, other Missions have taken a worthy and notable part in the evangelisation of its people and their representatives are to be found in all parts of the country. Several Societies followed early in the wake of the pioneers and others joined them later, particularly during the two decades since the Great War.

Co-operation between denominations at home is often an advantage and an assistance, but on the Mission Field it is a necessity. There the available force is relatively small in relation to the extent and complexity of the need. The objectives and the methods and problems of all are the same. Common sense as well as Christian faith point the way to association and not to isolation. Similarity in principles and doctrine, in practice and church order, were among the many factors that drew together, from the beginning, missionaries of different Societies in Congo. Until recent years, missionaries entered the land through a single door and along one path—the narrow bottle-neck from the west coast. The hardships and vicissitudes

of the early years, the sharing of each other's houses, a common experience of set-backs and disappointments, the emergence of similar problems as converts were won and churches were formed, were a few of the forces which drew missionaries from America, Britain and the Continent together in increasing measure as the years went by.

In process of time this informal intercourse assumed more tangible shape and Conferences were held at intervals to promote fellowship and to formulate a common policy. The first of these Conferences of which a permanent record exists is the fourth which met in 1907. At this distance of time it is interesting to recall the major subjects which were then discussed. These were :—

1. Should a Christian marry an unconverted person ?
2. Should a Christian buy a wife ?
3. The institution of a Conference of Native Christians.
4. The native Christian and dress.
5. Planning the missionary occupation of Congo.
6. The dress of the missionary.
7. Is it desirable that unmarried women missionaries be appointed to Congo ?
8. Co-operation.

Some of these questions still await solution. Others, like No. 7, have been settled. The mention of this subject at the 1938 Conference was greeted with laughter and applause, for single women missionaries are everywhere in Congo to-day and their witness is an indispensable element in the work.

The co-operative movement received a great

fillip from the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. From that gathering there came a Continuation Committee and the suggestion that similar bodies should be established in every mission land. Congo was the first to take action and the Congo Continuation Committee was formed in the following year with a secretary who added this burden to his missionary duties. The activities of this body prospered and expanded so greatly that by 1928 it had developed into a representative organisation known as the Congo Protestant Council. A whole-time secretary was appointed and his salary and the expenses of his office were guaranteed by constituent Societies and individual donors. Its declared aim is to " unify and develop the work of Protestant Evangelical Missions in the conventional basin of the Congo, to foster the Native Christian Church; and to relate the Protestant Christian Community effectively to the Authorities, and to Christian bodies in other lands."

Through the Council, the forty or so Missionary Societies with nearly 1,300 missionaries made up of twelve nationalities, placed at 234 stations, are able to speak with one voice on matters of common concern. It is necessary at times to approach the Government on questions of administration, to make protests when its policy tells hardly against Protestant Missions and their adherents and unduly in favour of Roman Catholic Missions; and to oppose with effect instances of persecution and cruelty to Protestant Christians by Roman Catholics. The advantage of doing this with one strong, vigorous and tempered voice, rather than with

many individual, weaker tones, will be obvious. On the other hand, the Government appreciates the fact that its relationships with Protestant Missions can function through a single channel instead of through many. The Council demonstrates what Protestant Missions stand for and aim at and this is necessary, for misconceptions and misunderstandings still exist. This can be understood, for both in Congo Belge and in Portuguese West Africa, most Protestant missionaries, of whatever nationality they may be, must be to the administrators aliens who hold an alien faith. Missionaries must keep these facts steadily before them, even though it may not be easy for Britishers and Americans especially, with their innate predilections and characteristics, to do so. While their first aim is to make Congo men and women into good citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, they should also remember their obligation to make them loyal subjects of the respective Powers into whose possession their lands have come.

Almost from the beginning of its history this co-operative body has published its quarterly periodical, *The Congo Mission News*. This circulates among the missionary body and far beyond, and has proved a medium through which the experiences and experiments, the problems and perplexities, of any area are shared by all, and it has served to keep the Congo field before friends in many parts of the world. Its value may be judged from the assertion of a senior missionary that it has helped " to fuse the missionary workers into a big united family. It has largely annihilated the sense of

distance and to many a lonely, harassed missionary with heart-breaking problems, it has proved a precious bond of sympathy, counsel and friendship."

Six times a year a periodical in French, *L'Evangile en Afrique*, circulates among French speaking native Christians, in school and out of school, in Congo and other parts of Africa. It contains articles of general interest, in addition to those on religious subjects, and is already playing its part in the development of the native Church.

To meet the needs of the many missionaries travelling to and from furlough through Léopoldville, or visiting the city for other purposes, the Council was instrumental in securing the co-operation of six Home Boards, including the B.M.S., in the erection of a Hostel where they might find convenient accommodation. This is much used and valued and it is on a sound financial basis under the immediate management of a capable Congo Christian. This Hostel also houses a Union Bible Depot and Bookshop which was established for the service of all Missions with the help of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and which functions in the care of a Christian layman who sacrificed a commercial career that he might devote himself to this work.

The Belgian Government has developed, as has already been stated, an efficient medical service in the Colony and is paying ever-increasing attention to remedial and preventive measures in order to promote better health conditions among the people. Its appreciation of the medical work of the Missions has been shown in many directions. It is necessary that each party should be kept in contact with the

doings of the other and that, as far as possible, the programme of the Missions should be brought into accord with that of the State. These relations are facilitated and furthered by the medical committee of the Council.

Another sphere in which a considered Government policy is finding expression is that of education, and here again, the Missions must give heed to what has been formulated and as far as can be, must adapt their plans and methods to it. Within the Missions themselves wide disparities exist in regard to the aims, theories, methods, equipment and efficiency of the education that is given. A central body can render valuable service in acting as a clearing house for ideas and practices, and as a bureau of enquiry and information. The need for this has long been recognised as pressing and it found expression at the 1938 Diamond Jubilee Conference in the appointment of a whole-time educational adviser to the Missions.

The promotion of Bible translation and the provision of Christian literature form a further realm in which co-operation is an economy. While it is true that, owing to the multitude of languages found in Congo, much of this important work must be done by Societies singly for their own areas, there are many lines along which joint action is possible. Lingala, the lingua franca of the upper river, is coming into use elsewhere. The Council has inspired the compilation of a Grammar and Dictionary in this language and, more recently, it has taken steps to speed the translation of the New Testament into it. Text-books and reading books prepared and printed in one language are

brought to the notice of Missions in other language areas with a view to their more widespread use. In other cases, the texts of books written in French are circulated so that they may be translated into native tongues. Thus, the work of one man or woman is made available for a much wider constituency and the labour of producing original books is lessened. Here, as in other directions, the aid which the Council can give to the missionary body generally is but at its beginning.

The Council, through its secretary, acts as a bureau of information and inspiration, by means of regular circular letters to all Missions and missionaries in Congo, to native Christians and to pastors of Protestant churches in Belgium, and contact is maintained with Mission Boards at home.

The Council aims to instil into the minds of native Christians an understanding of the catholicity of the Church. Our western denominational labels are meaningless to these sons and daughters of Africa, and no one would suggest their labelling themselves with the title of any Missionary Society. So the Council has adopted the name, *L'Eglise de Christ au Congo*, for members of all churches connected with the associated Societies. By the use of this title it is hoped gradually that each member of a village church will come to regard himself or herself as part of the entire Christian body in the land and, ultimately, of the Church Universal.

It was only to be expected that our own Society would bear its due share in the successive stages of this co-operative enterprise, for it is in accordance with our tradition to do so. Indeed, from the

beginning, our missionaries have been in its van. They would not desire that their names should be mentioned. But, in laying the foundations and in raising the superstructure, in the secretarial and editorial offices, in the leadership of committees, in linguistic undertakings, and in council and executive work, our men and women have played a part the value of which is recognised and acknowledged by all.

This brotherhood of missionaries in Congo found a vivid and revealing expression in the Diamond Jubilee Conference of Protestant Missions, when 150 representatives of the constituent Societies assembled at Léopoldville for eight days in June, 1938. The Conference opened with a Pageant which was presented on rising ground overlooking Stanley Pool and in close proximity to the original B.M.S. site. There, in the presence of the Governor-General of the Colony and other officials, members of the commercial and business communities, Conference members and several thousand native Christians, a striking representation of outstanding episodes in missionary history and present day activities was performed. Most of those who took part were natives, whose innate talent for the dramatic found ample scope in the events that were portrayed. The Pool and the narrow beach made an effective stage and the hillside a natural amphitheatre. The five scenes which were played included H. M. Stanley's arrival at the Pool on the conclusion of his famous journey down river in 1877; the coming of Bentley and Crudgington to the same place after they had won a way up river four years later;

the crushing of the Arab slave trade by the administration; the conquest of witchcraft by modern medical missionary effort; and the educational work of the Missions. These scenes were interspersed by fine choral singing by a large native choir whose members gave effective interpretations of music both familiar and strange.

The Conference which followed related itself to the world-wide missionary movement by accepting the themes of the enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council at Madras in December, 1938, as the basis of its discussions. Papers were read upon these themes—The Faith by which the Church lives; The Witness of the Church; The Inner Life of the Church; The Church in relation to the Community; Church, Mission and State; and Co-operation; and with these as a background, most of the time was devoted to their discussion in groups with conditions of missionary life in Congo as a foreground. Each group contained a variety of outlook and knowledge, as the members composing it came from widely differing fields, were connected with several Societies and were at diverse stages of their missionary life. It was clear that, while a general uniformity existed in regard to situations and problems, the manner in which they were being met was by no means the same. It was obvious also that the attitude of the younger missionaries sometimes diverged from that of the older men and women. But there was no variation in the intensity of the search for solutions.

The findings of the groups showed what are the chief concerns of the missionary body. While

deep thankfulness was expressed at the growth of the Church in numbers and in grace, missionaries were called upon to pray and work to plant a greater measure of the Spirit of Christ in its members so that their evangelistic zeal might be fed. The need of systematic Bible instruction was voiced, so that a sane body of truth might be secured that would exemplify itself in a humble walk with God and in brotherly love. The reaching of a higher ethical standard by members was also emphasised. It was evident that many members regard admission to the Church as the goal of the Christian life and not as its beginning, and this needed to be corrected. Much time was spent in considering the question of worship. Western forms and methods have been generally introduced and followed. It is difficult to see that anything else could have been done by the early missionaries, but it is acknowledged that in some respects the church worship that obtains throughout Congo is alien to African life and thought, and the Conference urged that it should be brought into closer harmony with normal native modes of expression. The need of giving guidance to converts so that they may be the better able to carry their religious profession into the affairs of daily life and conduct was stressed. Many young men trained for the service of the Church are taking advantage of the increased openings in commerce and business. Hitherto there has been a tendency to regard these as being lost to the Church. It was recognised at the Conference, however, that they have a great part to play in introducing Christian standards into business life and in bearing a Christian witness

among their fellows. It was even suggested that the Missions should introduce commercial courses into their school curricula so that Christian youths might be trained for industry!

Useful suggestions by which greater co-operation may be achieved included the making of renewed efforts to unify the educational programmes of the Missions and to relate them more closely to the policy of the Government. Increased attention should be devoted to industrial training so that better conditions of living may be promoted; and especially to agricultural training with a view to maintaining village life which is in danger of disintegration. Attention was drawn to the value of health education through the teaching of hygiene and baby welfare. All these and other activities were held to be parts of the expression of the gospel.

The evangelical standpoint of the Conference was defined in its declaration that the Church lives by faith in God as a loving and holy Father, in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, alone able to deliver and transform believers, and in the Holy Spirit as the guide to all truth. This is the faith which brought this Congo enterprise to birth and sustained its leaders throughout the weary early years, and throughout the later decades in which so great a triumph has been won. It found expression again and again in the sessions of the Conference and particularly in its periods of devotion and praise. It animates the missionaries of to-day for, while minor distinctions of tradition, belief, interpretation and practice must exist, yet in regard to the fundamental matters, there is no divergence, but a unity that is real and vital. This

faith has produced an amazing harvest. The gospel has been proclaimed to millions. The church membership now exceeds a quarter of a million with at least four times that number in the Christian community. 14,000 Congo men and women are engaged in the service of the Church. The schools include 330,000 scholars. Hospitals and dispensaries treat an average of 2,000,000 cases annually. The Bible has been made available for thousands and the New Testament for thousands more. Little wonder that Mr. Alfred Stonelake asserts in his recent book, *Congo, Past and Present*, that " it is our deliberate conviction that no missionary money is being better expended in Congo to-day than that being used in forwarding the work for which the Congo Protestant Council exists."

It was a happy circumstance that advantage was taken of the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee Conference to arrange at the same time a Native Christian Convention. In size this was the largest of its kind yet organised, and in the comprehensiveness of its programme it was the most complete of any. It was attended by 220 delegates, who represented eighteen different language areas, ten Missionary Societies and thirty-five stations. While its conception and conduct were in the hands of missionaries, most of its speakers were natives. The fact that its membership was gathered from all parts of the Colony was a continual demonstration to its members and to outsiders of the wide sweep of the gospel. The deep and broad changes which missionary enterprise has produced made it necessary to begin the Convention with a backward look. To many present day Christians

the things of the past are almost legendary and incredible. Veteran natives spoke of the evil conditions that obtained before the missionary first arrived in the land, and a missionary told of the pioneering years. Whitsuntide came in the midst of the Convention and so the thoughts of its members were directed to the Power that is always available for them. As many speakers rehearsed in the tongues in which they were born the wonderful works of God, it seemed to observers that Pentecost was being re-enacted before them. Present problems and future possibilities formed the themes of other addresses during the latter days and these were discussed with vigour, for the Congo native is a born orator and debater. One speaker at the Conference said that among the reasons for the spread of the gospel in Congo was its association with joyful song. United praise was an outstanding feature of the Convention, for its members broke into full-throated harmony on every possible occasion. The proceedings reached their climax in a Communion Service which was the most representative of its kind ever held in Congo. Those who took part in it gained a new and thrilling understanding of the power of the gospel to overleap the barriers of tribe and language and of the love of Christ crucified which embraces all mankind.

The Convention made a profound impression upon all who shared in it. I had evidence of this as I toured our mission stations, for, in many places, I was present at meetings when members of the Convention spoke of their experiences and passed on its message to their fellow church

members. Its effect on the missionaries who watched its course may be judged from a resolution adopted by the Diamond Jubilee Conference that some of the native speakers should be used for special spiritual service in regions other than their own. And hope was expressed that, in future Conferences of missionaries, native leaders would be found sitting alongside missionaries to the profit of all and to the furtherance of the work.

Both the Conference and the Convention, which were tangible illustrations of the things for which the Congo Protestant Council stands, confirm the judgment of the Phelps-Stokes Education Commission that, "Probably Congo Missions have realised a greater degree of co-operation than those of any other Colony visited."

CHAPTER X

THE LIGHT SHED ABROAD

THE founders and pioneers of the Congo Mission held the conviction that they were following the guidance of God in setting themselves to this enterprise. They discerned evidences of His directing hand in the coincidence of events which brought the Mission to birth. The extensive explorations of David Livingstone in Central Africa, his descriptions of human need there, and his selfless devotion which culminated in his lonely death in the heart of the Continent in 1873, had drawn the attention of Christian men and women to that part of the world. In particular, they prompted Robert Arthington, of Leeds, in 1877, to challenge the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society to send an expedition to Congo to enquire into the possibilities of missionary work there. His famous letter, in which he argued his case and guaranteed the expense, stirred the Committee to action. Hard upon this there came the news of Stanley's epic journey down the Congo river and his revelation of a vast land and of a needy people. At the same time, the Cameroons Mission, 800 miles to the north, included two ardent young men in whom the urge to embark upon a prospecting and pioneering enterprise was

seeking expression, and whose thoughts turned frequently Congo-wards. These two—Thomas Comber and George Grenfell—were chosen to explore the ground.

It was this assurance that held the founders and pioneers to their course amid the tragic losses and heartbreaking disappointments of the early years. That guidance can be traced in every new advance into unreached territory and into every fresh form of witness. It is evident in the succession of men and women who have followed in the pathway made by the pioneers, and in the company of those who walk along it now. It can be seen in the response of the people to the gospel and in the building up of the Church in their midst. None who knows the story of the Congo Mission and who understands something of its present situation can doubt that the Baptist Churches of Britain are committed to this enterprise by the Will of God and that its completion is in harmony with the Divine purpose.

Our task in Congo is far from finished, though missionary reports and addresses may on occasion give the impression that it is on its way to completion. They tell of the conquest of hoary evils, of striking and sweeping advances, of numerous conversions and additions to church membership and of the triumphs of grace in human lives. All this is true, and nowhere on earth is the power of Christ to save and keep men and women seen in such strength as in Congo.

But Congo is a stronghold of Satan, and will not capitulate without a struggle that is intense and prolonged. We do not yet fully appreciate

the fact that the Congo people are the inheritors of centuries of superstition and evil. Fear of the unseen and the unknown is hedged about them with a density from which release is difficult. Tribal laws and customs have created and consolidated a system of life from which it is hard for the individual to break away. The pathway of the Christian pilgrim is lined with attractions and allurements that seek to drag him once more into the sins of the past and to entice him into the new ones that have followed in the wake of the white man. Apprehension and understanding of Christian truth are so slow and elementary that long years must pass before these people can grow into the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. The number of suspensions from church membership is at once a cause for distress and rejoicing. Only the missionaries themselves know how much of their time and energy must be occupied in dealing with members who have lapsed from Christian standards of conduct, and who, for their own sakes and that of the Church, must be suspended from the fellowship until such time as they show repentance. But the fact that these suspensions are made by the native leaders and the Church is evidence of the high and hard standard required in the disciple, and of the will to keep the Church clean and pure. A significant story, with an amusing aspect, was told at the Diamond Jubilee Conference, of a missionary couple (not of the B.M.S.), in membership with a certain native church whose voices were sometimes heard in their bungalow raised in heated argument. For this they were brought under discipline by the

church and suspended from its membership until such time as they could live together in harmony!

It cannot be emphasised too often or too strongly that, notwithstanding the fact that men and women undergo at least a year of preparation in an enquirers' class, during which time they are under the constant observation of their neighbours, before they are admitted to baptism and church membership, the missionary's responsibility for them is only at its beginning. For his task is to found and establish in Congo a Church of the Living God that shall resemble the pattern of the Church of the New Testament. It is obvious that this must take time and that men and women themselves well grounded in the faith are necessary for this purpose. Missionaries of experience are required for this most important of tasks and those who are the best trained in this respect are the most vocal and insistent in the call for colleagues of the highest qualifications. It was this need that led the United Field Committee in 1938 to send home an appeal for young trained ministers already possessing pastoral experience to come to the aid of the present missionaries and to strengthen their hands in their endeavour to build up the Church.

For the same reason the training of teacher-evangelists is a matter of prime importance. Our work in Congo, a land sparsely populated in scattered villages, has been mainly developed through the work of these men, often not much more than boys. Lads on stations and in the villages have been moved by a divine urge to offer themselves for this service, or they have been selected for it by the missionaries. Too often

they know little more than the people themselves. They work for a pittance in the isolation of their village surroundings, visited by the missionaries twice or thrice a year at the most. No compulsion exists that will bring the children to their schools or the adults to their services. The marvel is that work which so frequently is fine and praiseworthy is done by these men. Evidence of this has already been cited. In some cases, as we have seen, systematic training is given on stations, or in central and district refresher courses. But far more needs to be done. The missionaries are the first to recognise this, and are concerned that, amid the press of other duties and the restriction of financial resources, this vital part of their task is sometimes among the first to suffer. It needs again to be remembered that the Church in Congo is spread among hundreds of villages in small communities and that its well-being depends in large measure upon the quality of these teacher-evangelists. The missionary, from sheer force of circumstances, can only make occasional contact with his district and he must therefore multiply himself through the men whom he trains and sends forth to hold these outposts. The extension of the work, in areas which are accessible and needy, depends upon the increase in the number of teacher-evangelists. The supply is unequal to the demand, and this emphasises the call for trained men. Old conditions of life, which are now made more complex and hazardous through the incoming of western civilisation, form another reason for the existence of a strong witness in the villages. The growth of Roman Catholic Missions

with inducements and facilities for education should spur us to the intensification and improvement of our village work. The Congo Mission needs more missionaries with teaching equipment and experience to undertake the preparation of its native leadership.

The B.M.S. has been commended many times for the symmetry of its work. This is intended to mean that it makes its appeal to all sections of the communities among which it is placed by every means that makes for the furtherance of the gospel, in the conviction that the gospel is for all and for every part of all. But its leaders at home and overseas are first in acknowledging that many gaps still exist and that in some ways and places its witness is out of balance.

Missionaries' wives have shared the risks and responsibilities of their husbands' lives and work in Congo from the day when Mrs. T. J. Comber set foot in the land with her husband and died after six weeks' service at San Salvador. They have made work among women and girls their special sphere. A few unmarried women joined them at intervals, but it was not until 1908 that their appearance in the ranks became a fixed policy. To-day almost every station includes single women in its staff. Work among women and girls perforce lags behind that among men and boys. In most areas the proportion of male church members outnumbers that of females. Woman has had a low status in Congo society. She is not free to act as she pleases, for she is at the disposal of the men. Her duties are more varied and onerous, and consequently she has less leisure for the things

of God. Nevertheless, immense strides have been made in reaching and winning women for the Kingdom. Many of the women church members are veritable mothers in Israel to their sisters, and they exert a sweetening influence within and without their homes. Hundreds of girls have entered the Christian way and are managing homes that are Christian in which they are leading their children to the children's Friend and helping them to walk in His footsteps. One has only to meet the girls at our stations to see in their well-conditioned and joyous bearing signs that they know a life which their mothers never knew and that a better future for the coming generation is assured. But much more remains to be attempted and accomplished before work among the women equals in extent that among the men.

Similarly, medical work has had its place in the missionary programme from the outset. Indeed, it was often the key with which the door of human hearts was opened when others had failed. However little knowledge the pioneers possessed, their Christian love, when confronted by appalling human suffering, constrained them to use it as the many occasions demanded. Two doctors joined the staff in the first two decades of the Mission, and both died at their posts after short terms of service. Soon after the formation of the Medical Mission Auxiliary in 1902, the first hospitals were built and doctors and nurses were appointed to staff them. To-day the Society has hospitals at four stations and nursing sisters at most of the others. Either separately, or in association with the State, a widespread ministry of healing is being

exercised to body and soul. The State medical service in Congo Belge is on a scale and of a quality that evokes admiration. Much of it has been entrusted to our care, and it is clear that the people place a special value upon our hospitals and dispensaries because of the Christ-like character of those who direct and serve in them. Here again the call of suffering is so extensive and poignant that the increase of our force is demanded.

The translation of the Bible and the provision of Christian literature is another side of the Christian witness that was undertaken from the earliest days. In a land which possessed no written language, its people could have no knowledge of reading and could own no books. The provision of this material has been complicated by the far-spread areas in which we work and by the multiplicity of languages spoken by the peoples who occupy them. While one language is common to Angola and the lower river stations, it has been shown that almost every station in the upper river basin contains tribes speaking several languages and dialects. This has increased the labour of Bible translation. The lower river people alone have the complete Bible in their own tongue. Most of the upper river peoples have the New Testament and some parts of the Old, while for others the translation of the New Testament is still proceeding. It has also added to the task of preparing or translating books and booklets of a religious character for general reading and for school use. While it may no longer be correct to say that the library of a teacher-evangelist can be contained in a pocket handkerchief, the material available is still woefully

small. Heroic efforts are being made by our missionaries to remedy this state of affairs, and a deserved tribute must be paid to such bodies as the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the United Society for Christian Literature and the Scripture Gift Mission for the co-operation they give in filling this gap.

Our fathers set their hands to the Congo Mission at a time when prudence and other considerations might well have deterred them from doing so. In the seventies of the nineteenth century the churches were engaged in raising what for those days was a large denominational fund. For many years the missionary income had been static or declining, and any thought of advance was damped by recurring deficits. Eager young missionaries in China, chafing under their precarious foothold in a few towns at or near the coast, were urging the occupation of the then newly-opened hinterland. And the Society had extensive commitments in India and smaller, though appreciable, responsibilities in Cameroons, Ceylon, Brittany, Italy, Palestine and the West Indies. It was in such an hour and in such circumstances that the challenge came to the Society's officers and Committee to claim Congo for Christ. They accepted it without hesitation, and the churches followed their lead. Offers of service were forthcoming. Gifts of money were made in large sums that indicated interest and in small amounts that spoke of sacrifice. People were moved to prayer that success might attend the enterprise. And when death and illness took heavy toll of the thin missionary line that was

pressing forward towards the interior, and when some hearts at home failed them because of fear, leaders at headquarters and the men and women at the front held on their way, undaunted and undismayed. For every missionary who fell, more volunteered to fill each place. The gifts of the churches increased as the costliness of the venture became clearer, and the pulse of our people was quickened by each hardly won advance.

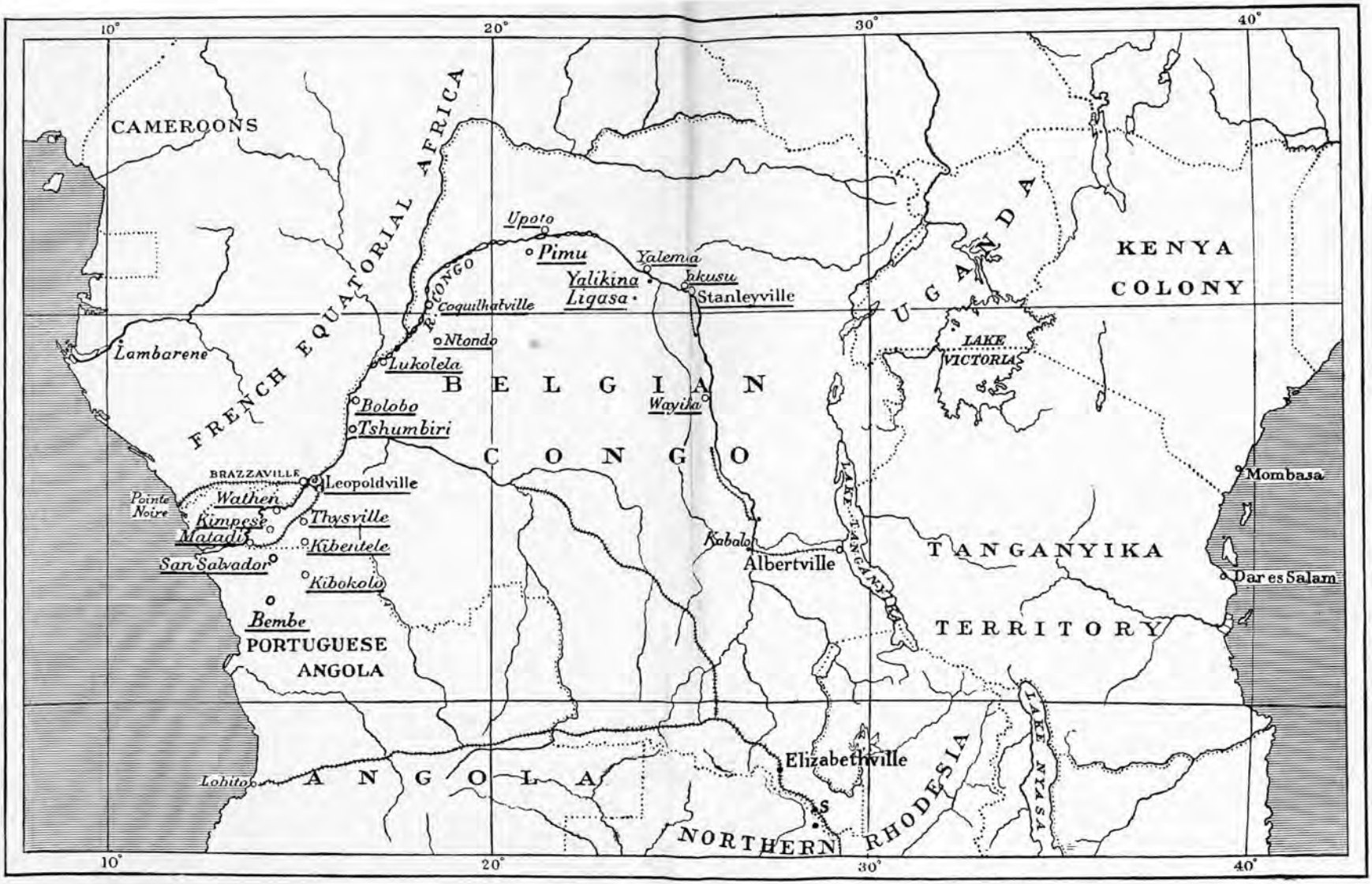
Our present responsibility for the evangelisation of Congo is greater than that of those fathers and of their successors. The former believed that this enterprise was of God, and that it must therefore succeed. The latter had few encouragements to fortify them, for at the end of twenty years the entire Congo church membership was only 500. We have the knowledge that the success of this enterprise is far greater in extent and degree than our predecessors dared to hope. As I have shared in the worship of thousands of men, women and children in big station congregations and in tiny village school chapels, and have seen the light in their eyes, the joy on their faces and the rapt attention with which they have listened to the message, I have been moved to give thanks for the power of God in Jesus Christ that has wrought these changes in sixty swift years. I have met men and women whose conversion is as radical and enduring as any recorded in the classics of religious history. I have seen those who have walked for years with pure hearts and white garments amid the evil that surrounds them. I have shared with boys and girls the joy that has come into their lives through their association with the

Christian Church and its way of life. I have been a welcome visitor in many native homes in villages from one extremity of our wide field to the other, and have been gladdened by the contrast between them and the heathen habitations that I have also seen, for they are signs of an upward movement towards a new and holier way and outward proofs of an inward change that affects the whole of life. I have looked at men and women whose physical conditions have been changed through the ministrations of missionary doctors and nurses, and whose bodies are accordingly fitter dwelling-places for the spirit of God; and I have watched little children who, through that same service, have better chances of living full lives than their fathers had. I have been introduced to men who have grown hoary in the exercise of their ministry as pastors, deacons or teacher-evangelists, whose fidelity is at once an inspiration and a rebuke and whose consecration is eloquent of what the Holy Spirit can accomplish in the soul of an African; and I have heard of young men and lads offering themselves for these same offices. I have seen men and women holding the Book of God as a cherished possession and reading it with a reverent application that speaks of its worth to them; and I have handled the little libraries that are the teacher-evangelists' most valued treasure.

The light has indeed come to Congo, and its bearers are in every part of the land. The central stations stand out as beacons in the surrounding darkness, and from their glowing flames smaller torches have been lit in thousands of village outposts. Their shining has supplied hope to those

who lived amid the gloom of darkness and despair. They have given guidance to those who in their ignorance have missed the right way. They have furnished strength to those who have been caught in the quagmires of superstition and moral evil. They have provided the assurance of safety and security to those in bondage to fear and the power of evil spirits. They have illumined minds that were clouded by ages of isolation, and they have brought healing to bodies that were bruised by the ravages of disease. Forces that held sway in the darkness of paganism have retreated before their gleams. Practices that were the product of paganism have been surprised and discomfited and have had to acknowledge defeat. Deep-seated evils have been revealed and have been uprooted. A discontent with things as they were and are has seized upon multitudes and has constrained them to turn their questing faces towards a better day.

The light has come to Congo. It is for us to see that it shall never go out. We must honour the memory of the men and women who first took it there, and we must be steadfast in our support of their successors who hold it aloft today. We are called upon to strengthen their hands lest they grow weary and the light which they hold shall flicker. We are challenged to increase the number of those who will stand with them that they may advance into the darkness that still remains and to furnish them with every instrument which they need to make the light shine clear, until all Congo knows Him Who not only is the Light of Congo, but the Light of the World.


10°
20°
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CAMEROONS
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
R. CONGO
Upoto
Pimu
Yalemba
Yalikina
Ligasa
Ikusu
Stanleyville
Coquilhatville
Ntondo
Lukolela
Lambarene
BELGIAN
CONGO
Bolobo
Tshumbiri
Wayika
UGANDA
KENYA
COLONY
LAKE
VICTORIA
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Wathen
Kimpese
Matadi
Thysville
Kibentele
San Salvador
Kibokolo
Bembe
PORTUGUESE
ANGOLA
Kabalo
Albertville
LAKE TANGANYIKA
TANGANYIKA
TERRITORY
Mombasa
Dar es Salam
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NORTHERN RHODESIA
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