

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTMAS, 1914

A WAR-CHRISTMAS in the virgin forest ! When the candles on the little palm which served us as Christmas tree had burnt to half their length I blew them out. " What are you doing ? " asked my wife. " They are all we have," said I, " and we must keep them for next year." " For next year ? " . . . and she shook her head.

On August 4th, two days after our return from Cape Lopez, I had prepared some medicine for a lady who was ill there, and sent Joseph to a store to ask that their steamer might take the packet down there on its next journey. He brought back a short note : " In Europe they are mobilising and probably already at war. We must place our steamer at the disposal of the authorities, and cannot say when it will go next to Cape Lopez."

We needed days to realise that Europe was at war, though it was not that we had failed to take the possibility of it into account ; indeed, following the advice of an experienced merchant, I had brought with me a considerable sum in metal money in case it should come about. But since the beginning of July we had received no news from Europe, and we knew nothing of the entanglements which finally brought on the fatal explosion.

The negroes had, at first, very little understanding of



FIG. 14.—ON THE BANK OF THE OGOWE RIVER.

what was going on. The Catholics among them were more really interested in the papal election than in the war, during the autumn. "Doctor," said Joseph to me during a canoe journey, "how do the Cardinals really elect the Pope; do they take the oldest one, or the most religious, or the cleverest?" "They take one kind of man this time, and another kind the next, according to circumstances," was my reply.

At first the black labourers felt the war as by no means a misfortune, as for several weeks very few were impressed for service. The whites did little but sit together and discuss the news and the rumours from Europe. By now, however (Christmas, 1914), the coloured folk are beginning to learn that the war has consequences which affect them also. There being a shortage of ships, no timber can be exported, and therefore the labourers from a distance who had been engaged for a year are being discharged by the stores, and as, further, there are no vessels plying on the rivers that could take them back to their homes, they collect in groups and try to reach the Loango coast, from which most of them come, on foot.

Again, a sudden rise in the price of tobacco, sugar, rice, kerosene, and rum, brings home to the negro's consciousness the fact that there is a war going on, and this rise is what gives them more concern than anything else for the moment. Not long ago, while we were bandaging patients, Joseph began to complain of the war, as he had several times done before, as the cause of this rise in prices, when I said to him: "Joseph, you mustn't talk like that. Don't you see how troubled the faces of the doctor and his wife are, and the faces of all the missionaries? For us the war means very

much more than an unpleasant rise in prices. We are, all of us, anxious about the lives of so many of our dear fellow-men, and we can hear from far away the groaning of the wounded and the death rattle of the dying." He looked up at me with great astonishment at the time, but since then I have noticed that he now seems to see something that was hidden from him before.

We are, all of us, conscious that many natives are puzzling over the question how it can be possible that the whites, who brought them the Gospel of Love, are now murdering each other, and throwing to the winds the commands of the Lord Jesus. When they put the question to us we are helpless. If I am questioned on the subject by negroes who think, I make no attempt to explain or to extenuate, but say that we are in "front" of something terrible and incomprehensible. How far the ethical and religious authority of the white man among these children of nature is impaired by this war we shall only be able to measure later on. I fear that the damage done will be very considerable.

In my own house I take care that the blacks learn as little as possible of the horrors of war. The illustrated papers we receive—for the post has begun to work again fairly regularly—I must not leave about, lest the boys, who can read, should absorb both text and pictures and retail them to others.

Meanwhile the medical work goes on as usual. Every morning when I go down to the hospital I feel it as an inexpressible mercy that, while so many men find it their duty to inflict suffering and death on others, I can be doing good and helping to save human life. This feeling supports me through all my weariness.

The last ship which left Europe before the declaration

of war brought me several cases of drugs and two of bandages, the last a gift from a lady supporter, so that I am now provided with what is necessary for carrying on the hospital for some months. The goods for Africa which were not sent by this vessel are still lying on the quays of Havre and Bordeaux. Who knows when they will arrive, or whether they will get here at all ?

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I am worried, however, about how to provide food for the sick, for there is something like a famine in the district—thanks to the elephants ! People in Europe usually imagine that where “ civilisation ” comes, the wild animals begin to die out. That may be the case in many districts, but in others the very opposite happens, and that for three reasons. First, if, as is often the case, the native population diminishes, there is less hunting done. Secondly, what hunting is done is less successful, for the natives have forgotten how to trap the animals in the primitive but often extremely ingenious manner of their ancestors, and have got accustomed to hunting them with firearms. But in view of eventual possibilities it has been for years the policy of all Governments in Equatorial Africa to allow the natives only small quantities of gunpowder ; nor may they possess modern sporting guns ; they can only have the old flintlocks. Thirdly, the war on the wild animals is carried on much less energetically because the natives no longer have the time to devote to it. At timber felling and rafting they earn more money than they can by hunting, so that the elephants flourish and increase in numbers almost unhindered, and the results of this we are now beginning to

experience. The banana plantations of the villages north-west from here, which provide us with so much of our food, are continually visited by elephants. Twenty of these creatures are enough to lay waste a whole plantation in a night, and what they do not eat they trample underfoot.

It is not, however, to the plantations only that the elephants are a danger. The telegraph line from N'Djôle to the interior knows something about the damage they do. The long, straight clearing through the forest which marks its course is in itself a tremendous attraction to the animals, but the straight, smooth telegraph poles are irresistible. They seem to have been provided expressly for pachyderms to rub themselves against! They are not all very firm, and a very little rubbing brings one of the weaker ones to the ground, but there is always another like it not very far off. Thus, in a single night one strong elephant can bring down a big stretch of telegraph line, and days may pass before the occupants of the nearest guard station have discovered the damage and repaired it.

Although the elephants that roam the neighbourhood cause me so much anxiety about the feeding of my patients, I have not yet seen one, and very probably never shall. During the day they stay in unapproachable swamps in order to sally out at night and plunder the plantations which they have reconnoitred beforehand. A native who is here for the treatment of his wife, who has heart complaint, is a clever wood-carver, and carved me an elephant. Though I admired this work of primitive art, I ventured to remark that he seemed not to have got the body quite right. The artist, insulted, shrugged his shoulders. "Do you

think you can teach me what an elephant looks like? I once had one on top of me, trying to trample me underfoot." The artist was, in fact, also a famous elephant hunter. Their method now is to go out by day and creep to within ten paces of the elephant, when they discharge their flintlock at him. If the shot is not fatal and they are discovered by the animal, they are then, of course, in a very unpleasant position.

Hitherto I have been able to help out the feeding of my sick with rice, if bananas were short, but I can do so no more. What we still have left we must keep for ourselves, for whether we shall get any more from Europe is more than questionable.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTMAS, 1915

CHRISTMAS again in the forest, but again a war Christmas! The candle ends which we saved from last year have been used up on our this year's Christmas (palm) tree.

It was a year of difficulties, with a great deal of extra work during the early months. Heavy rainstorms had undermined the spot on which the largest hospital ward stood, so that I had to decide to build a wall round it, and also to lay stone gutters throughout the hospital to carry off the water which streamed from the hill just above it. This needed a number of stones, some of them big ones, and these were either fetched by canoe or rolled down from the hill; but I had always to be on the spot, and often to lend a hand. Our next object was the wall, for which we got help from a native who knew something about building, and we fortunately had on the station a cask of half-spoilt cement. In four months the work was finished.

I was hoping now to have a little rest, when I discovered that, in spite of all our precautions, the termites had got into the chests where we kept our store of drugs and bandages. This necessitated the opening and unpacking of the cases, a work which occupied all our spare time for weeks. Fortunately, I had noticed them in good time, or the damage done

would have been much greater; but the peculiar delicate smell, like that of burning, which the termites produce, had attracted my attention. Externally there was no sign of them; the invasion had been made from the floor through a tiny hole, and from the first case they had eaten their way into the others which stood by and upon it. They had apparently been attracted by a bottle of medicinal syrup, the cork of which had got loose.

Oh, the fight that has to be carried on in Africa with creeping insects! What time one loses over the thorough precautions that have to be taken! And with what helpless rage one has to confess again and again that one has been outwitted! My wife learnt how to solder, in order to be able to close up the flour and maize in tins, but it sometimes happens that you find swarms of the terrible little weevils (French *charançons*) even in the soldered tins. The maize for the fowls they soon reduce to dust.

Very much dreaded here, too, are small scorpions and other poisonous insects. One learns to be so careful that one never puts one's hand straight into a drawer or a box as in Europe. The eyes must precede the hand.

Another serious enemy is the traveller ant, which belongs to the genus *Dorylus*, and from it we suffer a great deal. On their great migrations they march five or six abreast in perfect order, and I once watched a column near my house which took thirty-six hours to march past. If their course is over open ground and they have to cross a path, the warriors form up in several rows on either side and with their large jaws form a kind of palisade to protect the procession, in

which the ordinary traveller ants are carrying the young ones with them. In forming the palisade the warriors turn their backs to the procession—like the Cossacks when protecting the Czar—and in that position they remain for hours at a time.

As a rule there are three or four columns marching abreast of each other, but independently, from five to fifty yards apart. All at once they break up the column and disperse, though how the word of command is given we do not yet know. Anyhow, in the twinkling of an eye a huge area is covered with a quivering, black mass, and every living thing upon it is doomed. Even the great spiders in the trees cannot escape, for these terrible ravagers creep after them in crowds up to the very highest twigs ; and if the spiders, in despair, jump from the trees, they fall victims to the ants on the ground. It is a horrible sight. The militarism of the forest will very nearly bear comparison with that of Europe !

Our house lies on one of the main routes of the traveller ants, which swarm mostly during the night. A peculiar scratching and clucking of the fowls gives us warning of the danger, and then there is no time to be lost. I jump out of bed, run to the fowl-house, and open the door, through which the birds rush out. Shut in, they would inevitably be the prey of the ants, which creep into their mouths and nostrils until they are suffocated, and then devour them, so that in a short time nothing is left but their white bones. The chickens usually fall victims to the robbers ; the fowls can defend themselves till help comes.

Meanwhile my wife has taken the bugle from the wall and blown it three times, which is the signal for

N'Kendju and some men from the hospital to bring bucketfuls of water from the river. When they arrive, the water is mixed with lysol, and the ground all round the house and under it is sprinkled. While we are doing this we get very badly treated by the warriors, for they creep over us and bite us vigorously; I once counted nearly fifty on me. They bite themselves so firmly in with their jaws that one cannot pull them off. If one tries to do so the body comes away, but the jaws remain in the flesh and have to be taken out separately afterwards. At last the ants move on, leaving thousands of corpses in the puddles, for they cannot stand the smell of the lysol; and so ends the little drama which we have been playing in the darkness, with no light but that of the lantern which my wife has been holding. Once we were attacked by them three times in one week, and Mr. Coillard, the missionary, records in his memoirs, which I am just now reading, that he, too, suffered severely from them in the Zambesi district.

The most extensive migrations of these ants take place at the beginning and end of the rainy season, and between these two periods there is much less reason to expect an attack. As to size, these ants are not much bigger than our European red ones, but their jaws are much more strongly developed, and they march at a much greater speed, a difference which I have noticed as being common to all species of African ants.

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Joseph has left me. Being cut off from Strasbourg, the source of my funds, and obliged to contract debts, I found myself compelled to reduce his wages from

70 francs to 35 francs, telling him I had decided on this only from extreme necessity. Nevertheless, he gave me notice, adding that "his dignity would not allow him to serve me for so small a sum." He lives with his parents on the opposite bank of the river, and had been keeping a money-box with a view to the purchase of a wife. This had now to be opened, and it contained nearly £8 (200 francs), but in a few weeks it had all been frittered away.

Now I have to depend only on N'Kendju's help. He is quite handy and useful, except on the days when he is out of temper, when nothing can be done with him; but in any case I have to do a good many things that Joseph used to do.

In the treatment of ulcers and suppurating wounds I have found pure methylen-violet most useful. This is a drug which is known to the trade as Merk's Pyoktanin. The credit of having made the decisive experiments regarding the disinfecting power of concentrated dyestuffs belongs to Professor Stilling, of Strasbourg, a specialist in diseases of the eye. He placed at my disposal a quantity of Pyoktanin which had been prepared under his superintendence—so that I might test it here—and it reached me not long before the outbreak of war. I began its use with some prejudice against it, but the results are such that I gladly put up with the unpleasant colour. Methylen-violet has the peculiarity of killing the bacteria without affecting or injuring the tissues or being in the least degree poisonous; in this respect it is much superior to corrosive sublimate, carbolic acid, or tincture of iodine. For the doctor in the forest it is indispensable. Besides this, Pyoktanin does, so far as my observation

goes, promote in a striking way the growth of new skin when ulcers are healing.

Before the war I had begun to make a small charge for the medicine to those patients who seemed not to be absolutely poor, and this brought in something like 200 francs (£8) a month. Even though it was only a fraction of the real value of the medicines dispensed, it was something. Now there is no money in the country, and I have to treat the natives almost entirely for nothing.

Of the whites, many who have been prevented by the war from going home, have now been four or five years under the equator and are thoroughly exhausted, so that they have to resort to the doctor "for repairs," as we say on the Ogowe. Such patients are sometimes with us for weeks, coming often two and three together. Then I let them use my bedroom and sleep myself in a part of the verandah which has been protected from mosquitoes by wire-netting. That is, however, no great self-denial, for there is more air there than inside. The recovery of the patients is often due much less to my medicines than to the excellent invalid diet provided by the doctor's wife—fortunately we still have a good supply of tins of condensed milk for our patients—and I have for some time had to take care that sick people do not come up here from Cape Lopez for the sake of the diet instead of letting themselves be treated by the doctor there—when there is one. With many of my patients I have become quite intimate, and from conversation with those who stay here a long time I am always learning something fresh about the country and the problem of its colonisation.

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Our own health is not first-class, though it is not really bad ; tropical anæmia has, indeed, already set in. It shows itself in the way the slightest exertion tires one ; I am quite exhausted, for example, after coming up the hill to my house, a matter of four minutes' walk. We also perceive in ourselves a symptom that accompanies it, an excessive nervousness, and besides these two things we find that our teeth are in a bad condition. My wife and I put temporary fillings into each other's teeth, and in this way I give her some relief, but no one can do for me what is really necessary, for that means the removal of two carious teeth which are too far gone to be saved. What stories could be told of toothache in the forest ! One white man whom I know was in such pain, a few years ago, that he could hold out no longer. " Wife," he cried, " get me the small pincers from the tool-chest." Then he lay down, his wife knelt on his chest and got hold of the tooth as well as she could. The man put his hands on hers and together they got out the tooth, which was kind enough to let this treatment be successful.

My mental freshness I have, strange to say, preserved almost completely in spite of anæmia and fatigue. If the day has not been too exhausting I can give a couple of hours after supper to my studies in ethics and civilisation as part of the history of human thought, any books I need for it and have not with me being sent me by Professor Strohl, of Zürich University. Strange, indeed, are the surroundings amid which I study ; my table stands inside the lattice-door which leads on to the verandah, so that I may snatch as much as possible of the light evening breeze. The palms rustle an *obbligato* to the loud music of the crickets and



FIG. 15.—A MISSIONARY'S BUNGALOW AT LAMBARENE.

the toads, and from the forest come harsh and terrifying cries of all sorts. Caramba, my faithful dog, growls gently on the verandah, to let me know that he is there, and at my feet, under the table, lies a small dwarf antelope. In this solitude I try to set in order thoughts which have been stirring in me since 1900, in the hope of giving some little help to the restoration of civilisation. Solitude of the primeval forest, how can I ever thank you enough for what you have been to me ? . . .

The hour between lunch and the resumption of work in the hospital is given to music, as is also Sunday afternoon, and here, too, I feel the blessing of working "far from the madding crowd," for there are many of J. S. Bach's organ pieces into the meaning of which I can now enter with greater ease and deeper appreciation than ever before.

Mental work one must have, if one is to keep one's self in moral health in Africa ; hence the man of culture, though it may seem a strange thing to say, can stand life in the forest better than the uneducated man, because he has a means of recreation of which the other knows nothing. When one reads a good book on a serious subject one is no longer the creature that has been exhausting itself the whole day in the contest with the unreliability of the natives and the tiresome worry of the insects ; one becomes once more a man ! Woe to him who does not in some such way pull himself together and gather new strength ; the terrible prose of African life will bring him to ruin ! Not long ago I had a visit from a white timber merchant, and when I accompanied him to the canoe on his departure I asked him whether I could not provide him with something to read on the two days' journey in front of him. " Many

thanks," he replied, " but I am already supplied," and he showed me, lying on the thwart of the boat, a book, which was Jacob Boehme's " Aurora." The work of the great German shoemaker and mystic, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, accompanies him on all his journeys. We know how nearly all great African travellers have taken with them solid matter for reading.

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Newspapers one can hardly bear to look at. The printed string of words, written with a view to the single, quickly-passing day, seems here, where time is, so to say, standing still, positively grotesque. Whether we will or no, all of us here live under the influence of the daily repeated experience that nature is everything and man is nothing. This brings into our general view of life—and this even in the case of the less educated—something which makes us conscious of the feverishness and vanity of the life of Europe ; it seems almost something abnormal that over a portion of the earth's surface nature should be nothing and man everything !

News of the war comes here fairly regularly. Either from N'Djôle, through which passes the main telegraph line from Libreville to the interior, or from Cape Lopez, telegraphic news comes to us every fortnight, a selection from the various daily items. It is sent by the District Commandant to the stores and the two mission stations by means of a native soldier, who waits till we have read it and give it back to him. Then for another fortnight we think of the war only in the most

general way. What the frame of mind must be of those who have to go through the excitement of reading war news every day we can hardly imagine. Certainly we do not envy them !

About this time it became known that of the whites who had gone home to fulfil their military duties ten had already been killed, and it made a great impression on the natives. " Ten men killed already in this war ! " said an old Pahouin. " Why, then, don't the tribes meet for a palaver ? How can they pay for all these dead men ? " For, with the natives, it is a rule that all who fall in a war, whether on the victorious or on the defeated side, must be paid for by the other side.

Directly the post has come in, Aloys, my cook, stops me to ask : " Doctor, is it still war ? " " Yes, Aloys, still war." Then he shakes his head sadly and says to himself several times : " Oh, lala ! Oh, lala ! " He is one of the negroes whose soul is really saddened by the thought of the war.

Now we have to be very economical with our European foodstuffs, and potatoes have become a delicacy. A short time ago a white neighbour sent me by his boy a present of several dozen, from which I inferred that he was not well and would soon be needing my services, and so it turned out ! Since the war we have trained ourselves to eat monkey flesh. One of the missionaries on the station keeps a black huntsman, and sends us regularly some of his booty ; it is monkeys that he shoots most frequently, since they are the game he finds easiest to bring down. Their flesh tastes something like goat's flesh, but has a kind of sweetish taste that the latter has not. People may think what they like about Darwinism and the descent of man, but the

prejudice against monkey flesh is not so easily got rid of. "Doctor," said a white man to me a few days ago, "eating monkeys is the first step in cannibalism"!

At the end of the summer (1916) we were able to join our missionary neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Morel, of Samkita, in a visit of some weeks to Cape Lopez, where a trading company, several of whose employees had benefited by our treatment and hospitality during illness, placed three rooms in one of their stores at our disposal. The sea air worked wonders for our health.

CHAPTER X

THE MISSION

July, 1916.

It is the dry season. Every evening we go for a walk on the big sandbanks in the river bed and enjoy the breeze which is blowing upstream. The hospital is not so busy as usual at this season, for the villagers are occupied with their great fishing expeditions, and will not bring me any patients till they are over. So I will make use of these vacant hours to note down the impressions I have formed about the mission. What do I really think about mission work after three years on a mission station?

What does the forest dweller understand of Christianity, and how does he understand—or misunderstand—it? In Europe I met the objection again and again that Christianity is something too high for primitive man, and it used to disturb me; now, as a result of my experience, I can boldly declare, "No; it is not."

First, let me say that the child of nature thinks a great deal more than is generally supposed. Even though he can neither read nor write, he has ideas on many more subjects than we imagine. Conversations I have had in the hospital with old natives about the ultimate things of life have deeply impressed me. The distinction between white and coloured, educated and

uneducated, disappears when one gets talking with the forest dweller about our relations to each other, to mankind, to the universe, and to the infinite. "The negroes are deeper than we are," a white man once said to me, "because they don't read newspapers," and the paradox has some truth in it.

They have, then, a great natural capacity for taking in the elements of religion, though the historical element in Christianity lies, naturally, outside their ken. The negro lives with a general view of things which is innocent of history, and he has no means of measuring and appreciating the time-interval between Jesus and ourselves. Similarly, the doctrinal statements which explain how the divine plan of redemption was prepared and effected, are not easily made intelligible to him, even though he has an elementary consciousness of what redemption is. Christianity is for him the light that shines amid the darkness of his fears; it assures him that he is not in the power of nature-spirits, ancestral spirits, or fetishes, and that no human being has any sinister power over another, since the will of God really controls everything that goes on in the world.

"I lay in cruel bondage,
Thou cam'st and mad'st me free!"

These words from Paul Gerhardt's Advent hymn express better than any others what Christianity means for primitive man. That is again and again the thought that fills my mind when I take part in a service on a mission station.

It is well known that hopes and fears about a world beyond play no part in the religion of primitive man; the child of nature does not fear death, but regards it merely as something natural. The more mediæval

form of Christianity which keeps anxiety about a judgment to come in the foreground, has fewer points of contact with his mentality than the more ethical form. To him Christianity is the moral view of life and the world, which was revealed by Jesus; it is a body of teaching about the kingdom of God and the grace of God.

Moreover, there slumbers within him an ethical rationalist. He has a natural responsiveness to the notion of goodness and all that is connected with it in religion. Certainly, Rousseau and the illuminati of that age idealised the child of nature, but there was nevertheless truth in their views about him—in their belief, that is, in his possession of high moral and rational capacities. No one must think that he has described the thought-world of the negro when he has made a full list of all the superstitious ideas which he has taken over, and the traditional legal rules of his tribe. They do not form his whole universe, although he is controlled by them. There lives within him a dim suspicion that a correct view of what is truly good must be attainable as the result of reflection. In proportion as he becomes familiar with the higher moral ideas of the religion of Jesus, he finds utterance for something in himself that has hitherto been dumb, and something that has been tightly bound up finds release. The longer I live among the Ogowe negroes, the clearer this becomes to me.

Thus redemption through Jesus is experienced by him as a two-fold liberation; his view of the world is purged of the previously dominant element of fear, and it becomes ethical instead of unethical. Never have I felt so strongly the victorious power of what is simplest in the teaching of Jesus as when, in the big schoolroom

at Lambarene, which serves as a church as well, I have been explaining the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of the Master, and the sayings of St. Paul about the new life in which we live.

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But now, how far does the negro, as a Christian, really become another man? At his baptism he has renounced all superstition, but superstition is so woven into the texture of his own life and that of the society in which he lives, that it cannot be got rid of in twenty-four hours; he falls again and again in big things as in small. I think, however, that we can take too seriously the customs and practices from which he cannot set himself entirely free; the important thing is to make him understand that nothing—no evil spirit—really exists behind his heathenism.

If a child enters the world in our hospital its mother and itself are both painted white all over face and body so as to make them look terrifying, a custom which is found in practice among almost all primitive peoples. The object is to either frighten or to deceive the evil spirits which on such an occasion have a special opportunity of being dangerous. I do not worry myself about this usage; I even say sometimes, as soon as the child is born: "Take care you don't forget the painting!" There are times when a little friendly irony is more dangerous to the spirits and the fetishes than zeal expended on a direct attack upon them. I venture to remind my readers that we Europeans, ourselves, have many customs which, although we never think about it, had their origin in heathen ideas.

The ethical conversion, also, is often incomplete with



FIG. 16.—THE BOYS' SCHOOL AT LAMBARENE.

a negro, but in order to be just to such a convert one must distinguish between the real morality which springs from the heart, and the respectable morality of society ; it is wonderful how faithful he often is to the former. One must live among them to know how much it means when a man, because he is a Christian, will not wreak the vengeance which he is expected to take, or even the blood revenge which is thought to be an obligation on him. On the whole I feel that the primitive man is much more good natured than we Europeans are ; with Christianity added to his good qualities wonderfully noble characters can result. I expect I am not the only white man who feels himself put to shame by the natives.

But to give up the common habit of lying and the readiness to steal, and to become a more or less reliable man in our sense, is something different from practising the religion of love. If I may venture on a paradox, I would say that the converted native is a moral man more often than he is an honourable one. Still, little can be effected by condemnatory expressions. We must see to it that we put as few temptations as possible in the way of the coloured Christian.

But there are native Christians who are in every respect thoroughly moral personalities ; I meet one such every day. It is Ojembo, the teacher in our boys' school, whose name means " the song " ; I look upon him as one of the finest men that I know anywhere.

How is it that traders and officials so often speak so unfavourably of native Christians ? On my very first journey up the river I learnt from two fellow travellers that they never, on principle, engage any Christian " boys." The fact is that Christianity is considered

responsible for the unfavourable phenomena of intellectual emancipation. The young Christians have mostly been in our mission schools, and get into the difficult position which for the native is so often bound up with a school education. They think themselves too good for many kinds of work, and will no longer be treated as ordinary negroes. I have experienced this with some of my own boys. One of them, Atombogunjo by name, who was in the first class at N'Gômô, worked for me once during the school holidays. On the very first day, while he was washing up on the verandah, he stuck up a school book, open, before him. "What a fine boy! What keenness for learning!" said my wife. Ultimately, however, we found that the open school book meant something beyond a desire for knowledge; it was also a symbol of independence intended to show us that the fifteen-year-old youth was too good for ordinary service, and was no longer willing to be treated as a mere "boy," like other "boys." Finally, I could stand his conceit no longer, and put him unceremoniously outside the door.

Now in the colonies almost all schools are mission schools—the Governments establish hardly any, but leave the work to the missions—so that all the unhealthy phenomena which accompany intellectual emancipation show themselves among the scholars and are therefore put down as the fault of Christianity. The whites, however, often forget what they owe to the missions. Once, when, on board the steamer, the manager of a large company began to abuse the missions in my presence, I asked him: "Where, then, did the black clerks and the black store employees who work for you, get their education? To whom do you owe it that you

can find natives here on the Ogowe who can read, write, and handle figures, and who are to a certain extent reliable ? " He had no reply to make to that.

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But how is a mission carried on ? With what must it be provided, and how does it work ? In Europe many people picture it as a sort of village parsonage set down in the virgin forest, but it is something much more comprehensive than that, and more complicated too ; it may be said to be the seat of a bishop, an educational centre, a farming establishment, and a market !

In an ordinary mission station there must be one missionary as head, another for the mission work in the district, a man to teach in the boys' school, and a woman for the girls' school, with one or two practical workers, and, if possible, a doctor. Only a mission station of that size can accomplish anything worth mentioning ; an incomplete one only uses up men and money with no permanent result.

As an illustration of this take Talagonga, where at the beginning of my time here there was a splendid evangelist working, Mr. Ford, an American, but the station had no practical workers. There came a time when it was absolutely necessary to repair the floor of the house, built upon piles, in which Mr. and Mrs. Ford and their children lived, because mosquitoes found their way in through the holes in it, and, as fever carriers, endangered the lives of the inmates. So Mr. Ford set to work at the job and finished it in about two months, during which time the neighbourhood was left without any spiritual direction. A practical worker would have

done it all in three weeks and made a permanent job of it, not mere temporary patchwork. This is one example out of hundreds of the useless, unprofitable condition of insufficiently manned mission stations.

In the tropics a man can do at most half of what he can manage in a temperate climate. If he is dragged about from one task to another he gets used up so quickly that, though he is still on the spot, the working capacity he represents is *nil*. Hence a strict division of labour is absolutely necessary, though on the other hand, each member must be able, when circumstances demand it, to turn his hand to anything. A missionary who does not understand something of practical work, of garden work, of treatment of the sick, is a misfortune to a mission station.

The missionary who is there for the evangelistic work must as a rule have nothing to do with the carrying on of the daily work of the station; he must be free to undertake every day his longer or shorter journeys for the purpose of visiting the villages, nor must he be obliged to be back at the mission on a particular day. He may be invited while out on one of his journeys to go to this or that village which was not included in his plan, because the people there want to hear the Gospel. He must never answer that he has no time, but must be able to give them two or three days or even a whole week. When he gets back he must rest, for an unbroken fortnight on the river or on forest paths will certainly have exhausted him.

Too few missionary journeys, and those too hastily carried through, that is the miserable mistake of almost all missions, and the cause of it always is that in consequence of an insufficient number of workers or of

unwise division of work, the evangelist takes part in the superintendence of the station, and the Head of the station goes travelling.

On the Head of the station falls the work of the services in the station and in the nearest villages, together with the superintendence of the schools and of the cultivated land. He ought really never to leave the station for a day ; he must have his eyes everywhere, and any one ought to be able to speak to him at any time. His most prosaic business is conducting the market. The foodstuffs which we need for the school children, the labourers, and the boatmen of the station, we do not have to buy with money. Only when the natives know that they can get satisfactory goods of all sorts from us, do they bring us regular supplies of manioc, bananas, and dried fish ; so the mission must have a shop. Two or three times a week the natives come with the product of their plots and with fish, and barter what they have brought for salt, nails, kerosene, fishing materials, tobacco, saws, knives, axes, and cloth. We do not supply rum or spirits. This takes up the Head's whole morning, and then what a time it takes him in addition to send off his European orders correctly and at the right time, to keep the accounts accurately, to pay the boatmen and the labourers their wages, and to look after all the cultivated ground ! What losses are entailed, too, if he fails to have necessary material in hand when it is wanted ! A roof has to be put on, and there are no raffia leaves ready, dried and sewn into sheets ; there is some building to be done, and there are no beams and no boards ; or the best time for brickmaking has been allowed to pass unused ; or he has postponed too long the re-smoking of the

store of dried fish for the school children, and discovers one morning that it is all a mass of worms and good for nothing! It all depends on the Head whether the mission station does its work cheaply and successfully, or expensively and unsuccessfully.

On one of our stations, for example, there had been for several years a succession of Heads who knew but little about land cultivation, and had not pruned the coffee bushes properly. They had let them grow so tall that they no longer produced what they ought to have done, and ladders had to be used to gather the crop. Then it was necessary to cut them off just above the ground, and it will be years before they have produced new shoots which bear a normal crop.

Another of the Head's duties is to investigate the not infrequent cases of theft, in which matter he has more opportunity than he likes for developing whatever detective talent he may possess. He has also to straighten out all the disputes between the coloured inhabitants of the settlement, and in this he must never show any impatience. For hours together he must listen attentively to their barren argumentations, since otherwise he is not the upright judge according to their notions. If canoes come from another station he must entertain and feed the rowers. If the steamer's siren sounds, he must be off with canoes to the landing place to take charge of the mail and the cases of goods.

Again, it may happen that there has been too small a supply of foodstuffs brought in on a market day; this means that canoes must be sent off to the more distant villages to secure what is needed. The expedition may take two or three days; what work is to be left undone because of it? And then the canoes may

come back empty, so that a similar expedition has to be made in another direction !

What a terribly unromantic business life for one who came out to preach the religion of Jesus ! If he had not to conduct the morning and evening services in the schoolroom and to preach on Sundays, the Head could almost forget that he was a missionary at all ! But it is just by means of the Christian sympathy and gentleness that he shows in all this everyday business that he exercises his greatest influence ; whatever level of spirituality the community reaches is due to nothing so much as to the success of its Head in this matter of—Preaching without Words.

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A word now about the schools. A school to which children come for instruction while they live at home is impossible here because of the distances ; there are villages, for example, attached to the Lambarene Station, which are sixty or seventy miles away from it. The children must therefore live on the station, and the parents bring them in October and take them away in July when the big fishing expeditions begin. In return for the cost of their living the children, both boys and girls, do some sort of work, and their day is arranged very much as follows : From 7 to 9 in the morning they are at work cutting down grass and bush, for the defence of the station against invasion by the forest is in the main their task. When they have done all the clearing that is necessary at one end of the settlement they can always go to some other part where the undergrowth will have shot up again as it was before. From 9 to 10 is a rest hour, during which they breakfast ; from

10 to 12 there is school. The recreation time between 12 and 1 is usually spent in bathing and fishing. From 2 to 4 there is school again, and after that, work again for about an hour and a half. Some help in the cocoa plantation ; the boys often go to the practical worker to help him, and they prepare bricks, carry building material where it is wanted, or finish digging or other work on the soil. Then the food for the following day is given out ; at 6 comes the evening service, and after that they get supper ready. There is a big shed under which the children cook their bananas in native fashion, and they divide into groups of five or six, each of which has a pot and a fire hole to itself. At 9 they go to bed, that is, they retire to their plank bedsteads under the mosquito netting. On Sunday afternoons they make canoe expeditions, the mistress going out with a crew of girls. In the dry season they play on the sandbanks.

The work of the boys' school suffers, unfortunately, in this way, that when the evangelist goes out on his preaching rounds, or when a canoe expedition is needed for any purpose, a crew of boys has to be taken for it, and they may be absent for as much as a week. When shall we reach such a stage of efficiency that every mission station has its motor boat ?

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Should a missionary have a thorough education ? Yes. The better a man's mental life and his intellectual interests are developed, the better he will be able to hold out in Africa. Without this safeguard he is soon in danger of becoming a nigger, as it is called here. This shows itself in the way he loses every higher point of view ; then his capacity for intellectual work

diminishes, and he begins, just like a negro, to attach importance to, and to argue at any length about, the smallest matters. In the matter of theology, too, the more thorough the training the better.

That under certain circumstances a man may be a good missionary without having studied theology is proved by the example of Mr. Felix Faure, who at the present time is the Head of our station. He is by training an agricultural engineer (*ingénieur agronome*) and came to the Ogowe first of all to manage the station's agricultural land. At the same time he proved to be such an excellent preacher and evangelist that he became in time more missionary than planter.

I am not quite in agreement with the manner in which baptism is practised here. The rule is that only adults are baptised, it being felt that only those should be received into the Christian community whose way of life has stood some amount of testing.* But do we thereby build up a church on a broad and safe basis? Is it essential that the communities shall be composed only of members of comparatively blameless life? I think we must further consider the question of how they are to make sure of a normal stream of new members. If we baptise the children of Christian parents, we have growing up among us a number of natives who have been in the Church and under its influence from their childhood upwards. Certainly there will be some among them who show themselves unworthy of the Christian name given them in their childhood, but there

* Most Protestant missions practise infant baptism. There are some, however, who object to it. On the Ogowe, infant baptism is not customary, because the American missionaries, who founded the Protestant missions here, did not introduce it.—A. S.

will be many others who, just because they belong to the Church and find within it support in the dangers that surround them, become and remain loyal members of it. Thus the question of infant baptism, which so disturbed the Church in the early centuries, comes up again to-day in the mission field as a live issue. But if we wished to decide for infant baptism in the Ogoewe district we should have in opposition to us nearly all the native evangelists and elders.

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The most difficult problem in the mission field arises from the fact that evangelistic work has to be done under two banners, the Catholic and the Protestant. How much grander would be the work undertaken in the name of Jesus if this distinction did not exist, and there were never two churches working in competition. On the Ogoewe, indeed, the missionaries of both bodies live in quite correct, sometimes in even friendly, relations with one another, but that does not remove the rivalry which confuses the native and hinders the spread of the Gospel.

I often visit the Catholic mission stations in my capacity of doctor and so have been able to gather a fairly clear idea of the way in which they conduct their evangelistic work and their education. As to organisation, their missions seem to me to be better managed than ours in several ways. If I had to distinguish between the aims which the two keep before them, I should say the Protestant mission puts in the first place the building up of Christian personalities, while the Catholic has in mind before all else the establishment on solid foundations of a church. The former object

is the higher one, but it does not take sufficient account of realities. To make the work of training permanently successful, a firmly established church, which grows in a natural way with the increase in the number of Christian families, is necessary. The church history of every period teaches this. Is it not the weakness as well as the greatness of Protestantism that it means personal religion too much and church too little?

For the work which the American missionaries began here and the French have continued, I feel a hearty admiration. It has produced among the natives human and Christian characters which would convince the most decided opponents of missions as to what the teaching of Jesus can do for primitive man. But now we ought to have the men and the means to found more stations further inland, and so exert an educational influence on the natives before they are reached by the white man's trade and the dangers and problems which it brings with it for the child of nature.

Will this be possible within a measurable time? What will be the lot of mission work after the war? How will the ruined peoples of Europe be able to contribute any longer the necessary means for the various spiritual undertakings in the world? There is, also, this further difficulty—that mission work can only flourish when it is to some extent international; but the war has made anything international impossible for a long time. And, lastly, missions throughout the world will soon feel that, owing to the war, the white race has lost a great deal of its spiritual authority over the coloured ones.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

FOR four years and a half we worked in Lambarene, but in the last of them we were able to spend the hot, rainy months between autumn and spring at the seaside. A white man who pitied my almost utterly exhausted wife put at our disposal, at the mouth of the Ogowe, two hours from Cape Lopez, a house which before the war had been the home of the man who watched his timber floats when they lay at anchor, but which had been empty since the trade came to a standstill. We shall never forget his kindness. Our principal food was herrings, which I caught in the sea. Of the abundance of fish in Cape Lopez Bay it is difficult for any one to form an adequate idea.

Around the house stood the huts in which the white man's labourers had lived when the trade was in full swing. Now, half ruined, they served as sleeping places for negroes who passed through. On the second day after our arrival I went to see whether there was any one in them, but no one answered my calls. Then I opened the doors one by one, and in the last hut saw a man lying on the ground with his head almost buried in the sand and ants running all over him. It was a victim of sleeping sickness whom his companions had left there, probably some days before, because they could not take him any further. He was past all help,

though he still breathed. While I was busied with him I could see through the door of the hut the bright blue waters of the bay in their frame of green woods, a scene of almost magic beauty, looking still more enchanting in the flood of golden light poured over it by the setting sun. To be shown in a single glance such a paradise and such helpless, hopeless misery, was overwhelming . . . but it was a symbol of the condition of Africa.

On my return to Lambarene I found plenty to do, but this did not frighten me. I was fresh and vigorous again. Much of the work was caused just then by men who were ill with dysentery. Carriers for the military colony of the Cameroons had been impressed in our district, and many of them had caught the infection, but subcutaneous injections of emetin proved very effective even in the oldest cases.

When this levy of carriers was made, one of my patients who had a bad ulcer on his foot wanted to join as a volunteer, so that his brother, who had been taken, might not have to go alone. I represented to him that in three or four days he would fall out and be left on the roadside, where he would assuredly die. However, he would not let himself be convinced, and I almost had to use violence to keep him back.

I happened to be present when a body of impressed carriers who were to be taken to the Cameroons by water were embarked on the river steamer at N'Gômô. Then the natives began to know by experience what war really is. The vessel had started amid the wailing of the women; its trail of smoke had disappeared in the distance, and the crowd had dispersed, but on a stone on the river bank an old woman whose son had

been taken sat weeping silently. I took hold of her hand and wanted to comfort her, but she went on crying as if she did not hear me. Suddenly I felt that I was crying with her, silently, towards the setting sun, as she was.

About that time I read a magazine article which maintained that there would always be wars, because a noble thirst for glory is an ineradicable element in the heart of man. These champions of militarism think of war only as idealised by ignorant enthusiasm or the necessity of self-defence. They would probably reconsider their opinions if they spent a day in one of the African theatres of war, walking along the paths in the virgin forest between lines of corpses of carriers who had sunk under their load and found a solitary death by the roadside, and if, with these innocent and unwilling victims before them, they were to meditate in the gloomy stillness of the forest on war as it really is.

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How shall I sum up the resulting experience of these four and a half years? On the whole it has confirmed my view of the considerations which drew me from the world of learning and art to the primeval forest. "The natives who live in the bosom of Nature are never so ill as we are, and do not feel pain so much." That is what my friends used to say to me, to try to keep me at home, but I have come to see that such statements are not true. Out here there prevail most of the diseases which we know in Europe, and several of them—those hideous ones, I mean, which we brought here—produce, if possible, more misery than they do amongst us. And the child of nature feels them as we

do, for to be human means to be subject to the power of that terrible lord whose name is Pain.

Physical misery is great everywhere out here. Are we justified in shutting our eyes and ignoring it because our European newspapers tell us nothing about it? We civilised people have been spoilt. If any one of us is ill the doctor comes at once. Is an operation necessary, the door of some hospital or other opens to us immediately. But let every one reflect on the meaning of the fact that out here millions and millions live without help or hope of it. Every day thousands and thousands endure the most terrible sufferings, though medical science could avert them. Every day there prevails in many and many a far-off hut a despair which we could banish. Will each of my readers think what the last ten years of his family history would have been if they had been passed without medical or surgical help of any sort? It is time that we should wake from slumber and face our responsibilities!

Believing it, as I do, to be my life's task to fight on behalf of the sick under far-off stars, I appeal to the sympathy which Jesus and religion generally call for, but at the same time I call to my help also our most fundamental ideas and reasonings. We ought to see the work that needs doing for the coloured folk in their misery, not as a mere "good work," but as a duty that must not be shirked.

Ever since the world's far-off lands were discovered, what has been the conduct of the white peoples to the coloured ones? What is the meaning of the simple fact that this and that people has died out, that others are dying out, and that the condition of others is getting worse and worse as a result of their discovery by men

who professed to be followers of Jesus? Who can describe the injustice and the cruelties that in the course of centuries they have suffered at the hands of Europeans? Who can measure the misery produced among them by the fiery drinks and the hideous diseases that we have taken to them? If a record could be compiled of all that has happened between the white and the coloured races, it would make a book containing numbers of pages, referring to recent as well as to early times, which the reader would have to turn over unread, because their contents would be too horrible.

We and our civilisation are burdened, really, with a great debt. We are not free to confer benefits on these men, or not, as we please; it is our duty. Anything we give them is not benevolence but atonement. For every one who scattered injury some one ought to go out to take help, and when we have done all that is in our power, we shall not have atoned for the thousandth part of our guilt. That is the foundation from which all deliberations about "works of mercy" out there must begin.

It goes without saying that Governments must help with the atonement, but they cannot do so till there already exists in society a conviction on the subject. The Government alone can never discharge the duties of humanitarianism; from the nature of the case that rests with society and individuals.

The Government can send out as many colonial doctors as it has at its disposal, and as the colonial budgets are able to pay for. It is well known that there are great colonising powers which cannot find even enough doctors to fill the places of those already working in their colonies, though these are far from sufficient to

cope with the need. So again, we see, the real burden of the humanitarian work must fall upon society and its individual members. We must have doctors who go among the coloured people of their own accord and are ready to put up with all that is meant by absence from home and civilisation. I can say from experience that they will find a rich reward for all that they renounce in the good that they can do.

Among the poor people out here they will not as a rule be able to collect the cost of their own living and work ; men must come forward at home who will provide what is necessary, and that is something that is due from all of us. But whom shall we get to make a beginning, without waiting till the duty is universally recognised and acted on ?

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The Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain. Who are the members of this Fellowship ? Those who have learnt by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean, belong together all the world over ; they are united by a secret bond. One and all they know the horrors of suffering to which man can be exposed, and one and all they know the longing to be free from pain. He who has been delivered from pain must not think he is now free again, and at liberty to take life up just as it was before, entirely forgetful of the past. He is now a " man whose eyes are open " with regard to pain and anguish, and he must help to overcome those two enemies (so far as human power can control them) and to bring to others the deliverance which he has himself enjoyed. The man who, with a doctor's help, has been pulled through a severe illness, must aid in

providing a helper such as he had himself, for those who otherwise could not have one. He who has been saved by an operation from death or torturing pain, must do his part to make it possible for the kindly anæsthetic and the helpful knife to begin their work, where death and torturing pain still rule unhindered. The mother who owes it to medical aid that her child still belongs to her, and not to the cold earth, must help, so that the poor mother who has never seen a doctor may be spared what she has been spared. Where a man's death agony might have been terrible, but could fortunately be made tolerable by a doctor's skill, those who stood around his death bed must help, that others, too, may enjoy that same consolation when they lose their dear ones.

Such is the Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain, and on them lies the humanitarian task of providing medical help in the colonies. Their gratitude should be the source of the gifts needed. Commissioned by them, doctors should go forth to carry out among the miserable in far-off lands all that ought to be done in the name of civilisation, human and humane.

Sooner or later the idea which I here put forward will conquer the world, for with inexorable logic it carries with it the intellect as well as the heart.

But is just now the right time to send it out into the world? Europe is ruined and full of wretchedness. With all the misery that we have to alleviate even under our very eyes, how can we think of far-off lands?

Truth has no special time of its own. Its hour is now—always, and indeed then most truly when it seems most unsuitable to actual circumstances. Care for distress at home and care for distress elsewhere do but help each other if, working together, they wake men in

sufficient numbers from their thoughtlessness, and call into life a new spirit of humanity.

But let no one say: "Suppose 'the Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain' does by way of beginning send one doctor here, another there, what is that to cope with the misery of the world?" From my own experience and from that of all colonial doctors, I answer, that a single doctor out here with the most modest equipment means very much for very many. The good which he can accomplish surpasses a hundred-fold what he gives of his own life and the cost of the material support which he must have. Just with quinine and arsenic for malaria, with novarsenobenzol for the various diseases which spread through ulcerating sores, with emetin for dysentery, and with sufficient skill and apparatus for the most necessary operations, he can in a single year free from the power of suffering and death hundreds of men who must otherwise have succumbed to their fate in despair. It is just exactly the advance of tropical medicine during the last fifteen years which gives us a power over the sufferings of the men of far-off lands that borders on the miraculous. Is not this really a call to us?

For myself, now that my health, which since 1918 had been very uncertain, has been restored as the result of two operations, and that I have succeeded, by means of lectures and organ concerts, in discharging the debts which I had to incur during the war for the sake of my work, I venture to resolve to continue my activity among the suffering folk of whom I have written. The work, indeed, as I began it, has been ruined by the war. The friends from two nations who joined in supporting us, have been, alas! deeply divided by what has

happened in the world, and of those who might have helped us farther, many have been reduced to poverty by the war. It will be very difficult to collect the necessary funds, which again must be far larger than before, for the expenses will be three times as heavy, however modestly I replan our undertaking.

Nevertheless, I have not lost courage. The misery I have seen gives me strength, and faith in my fellow-men supports my confidence in the future. I do hope that I shall find a sufficient number of people who, because they themselves have been saved from physical suffering, will respond to requests on behalf of those who are in similar need. . . . I do hope that among the doctors of the world there will soon be several besides myself who will be sent out, here or there in the world, by "the Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain."

ST. NICHOLAS' CLERGY HOUSE,
STRASBOURG.

August, 1920.

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