

LETTERS FROM THE FIELD.

AFRICA.

AGAIN ON THE CONGO.

DR. D. W. SNYDER.

I have arrived safely so far. After an arduous walk of eight days I arrived here last Saturday. On the way I was exposed to the unmerciful rays of a tropical sun on one side and the drenching showers of the equatorial region on the other, in consequence of which I went to bed for a few days with an African fever.

Sick in the same room and same bed in which my wife died eighteen months ago was a disheartening introduction to my second term of service in Africa.

Christmas! At home you are celebrating it with firing of guns, shooting of crackers, ringing of bells, gorging with food, drinking of intoxicants, picnics, fights, and murders; here all is quiet, and one would not dream that it is Christmas day. You have known of the Christ for years, here only the dawn of the day of knowledge is breaking over the hills of ignorance and of superstition, and yet looking on the way you celebrate the day, where is the greatest heathenism, there or here? I wonder what our Christian people here would think of his American brother's way of rejoicing on the birthday of Jesus? He truly would exclaim: "Why do you send missionaries away from home?" But our duty is to spread the gospel, and leave results with Him.

Dr. Sims welcomed me in his usual earnest, open-handed, hospitable way.

He leaves the Congo soon, and I fear for good; no one more than I will miss his wise counsel and guidance.

STANLEY POOL, AFRICA, December 25. 1897.

OPENING NEW FIELDS.

REV. PHILLIPS VERNER.

I am here on the falls of this tremendous stream *en route* from Luebo, via Dombi, to Bena Makima, again to attend to mail and cargo. By the time I have gone and returned I will have travelled since March 17th, by land and canoe, over six hundred miles, and all on routine mission business, together with the founding of Dombi station, which, however, consumed only 120 of the 600. You see what life here means. It is a wonder I am not worn out, but I have had only one fever in all that time. This route I am trying to Luebo from Bena Makima is an entirely new one. Bena Makima is the town at the junction of the Kassai and Lulua rivers, and is the geographical key to this country, though there are not many people there. It is the "all the year round" head of navigation of these two rivers, and as I found, greatly to my surprise and disappointment on my arrival last year, there must often be land transport, at considerable cost and very great trouble, to Luebo, perhaps seventy miles distant. This transport has been on the north bank of the Lulua hitherto, but the Dombi part will come up the Kassai to within a few hours of Dombi, and so it may be practicable to do the Luebo transport this dry season also by the new route. I shall investigate it. . . . For accessibility, Dombi is magnificently situated, as it is only a few hours from both the Kassai and the Lulua, and yet far enough away to be out of the sickly winds and fogs of their valleys. . . . This place, Belinge, where I am now stopping, is a Bakuba