

LETTERS FROM THE FIELD.

AFRICA.

DR. SNYDER'S DIARY.

[Continued from April number.]

Wednesday, September 12.—A quiet day; made two more seats for the chapel, and started getting ready to plant corn. Last night we had a review of the Bible pictures, and we were surprised to learn how deep a hold the lessons taught had taken. They told us the story of Adam and Eve, the story of Cain and Abel, the story of Noah and his ark, as well as any child at home could do. We had told them the stories only once in connection with the pictures, but they had not forgotten them.

Thursday, September 13.—Made two more benches for the chapel; this gives us seating capacity for one hundred and twenty, and our house is full at every service. Went over the river this afternoon to see if I could do anything towards peace-making between the Bakete and the trader; but he says the entire fault is with the Bakete, and lays it to a cause other than the "whipping" palaver. He denies being the cause of the Mukete's death, and says the Bakete are a lazy, good for nothing set. Then I told him as well as I could that I would like to see the palaver settled; he told me it was settled, and that the Bakete would return to work for him to-morrow; so I came away. I have learned since that the palaver is not settled. The trader sent a man to Kasenga with a lot of cowries as a peace offering, but the Bakete sent them back. Where it will end I do not know. Weather still very warm; the prickly heat is making us half sick; we do not get to sleep until

after midnight, and some nights it is later.

Friday, September 14.—This being our day for going to Kasenga, we were very busy, and consequently very tired. We are getting ready to plant corn, and as I have had two large fields cleared, we hope to raise a good crop this year. A missionary in Africa must know a little of almost everything. The time I spent on my grandfather's farm in my youth serves a good turn now.

Saturday, September 15.—Another week gone. Saturday night always finds us tired and glad of a Sabbath's promised rest. What have we done the past week? I do not mean from a human standpoint. I am sure there is not a person living who could cavil at our manual labor; but what as to the other? When the week rolls around (and, Oh, they do roll so quickly!) one feels that so little has been accomplished; so little to encourage one in thinking that a single soul has been brought nearer the kingdom. Still, this week has given more encouragement than any yet, so far. With the other work of the week we must not forget to mention the new hymn God has given us. He put it into my heart to write a hymn in the Bakete tongue, to be sung to the tune of "When He Cometh." The people have learned the new hymn, and can sing it nicely; they are adepts at catching a tune. This makes four hymns God has given me to write, and two more commenced, but not finished. We heard to-day that the trader has settled his palaver with the Bakete, and that they are to go to work to-morrow. I have told all the Bakete who were here at the time we heard the news, that the man over the

river was doing a very bad thing, and God would not smile on it. Two of the Bakete said that they would not go, but would go to hear God's palaver. Our first crop of corn is coming up.

Monday, September 17.—Yesterday we went to the Kasenga chapel. On the road we met a large number of the Bakete on their way over the river. On inquiry, we learned that they were on their way to work for the agent, the trader. We told them that they were doing a great wrong working on God's day, and that God would be very angry with them. They said: "Oh, it is not our palaver; the man over the river is to blame. God will be angry with *him* but not with *us*." I could not convince them to the contrary, and only two went back with us to the chapel. My text for the morning was Peter's answer to the "men of Judea and all that dwell at Jerusalem," when they cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts, ii. 38. I spoke strongly against Sabbath breaking, and told them that they must repent of all wickedness; and if the trader did not repent, he, also, would perish. To-day I wrote him a note and told him how sorry we were that he had done this; that we preached to the Bakete that working on the Sabbath was wicked. He has not answered the note, although I have heard from him on other subjects. A refreshing rain has cooled the atmosphere, and we hope for some ease from the prickly heat, and hope to get some sleep.

One little incident of to-day was this: A large, black cloud hung over our heads, and I asked a native if it would rain. He looked at the cloud for a moment or two, and then said: "*M'vula waidimba, Mukilinge*"—i. e., "The cloud lies, white man," meaning that it was very threatening, but the rain

would not come. These people do not believe in "white lies." Everything tending to deceive in the least is "*waidimba*."

Tuesday, September 18.—A quiet, uneventful day. We noticed the Bakete still going and coming across our station, to and from the trader's, and so conclude that a treaty of peace has been entered into. My old trouble, that came to me over a year ago, has returned. It attacks the toes. They swell up, become very painful, itch intolerably, and then break open into a running sore. There are plenty of crosses in Africa.

Wednesday, September 19.—One certainly has cause for being discouraged, humanly speaking, when those to whom you had looked for good do badly. Two of our best people disappointed us to-day, and one of them was "Congo Polly," and, when I asked one of the Bakete why was it that they did not "take hold of God's palaver?" he said: "Some of them do, but others say the palaver is not good; *there is nothing in it!*" and this, as if it had been deliberated on, and such a conclusion had been reached as a final one. Planting corn is the order of the day.

Thursday September 20.—Apropos of the trouble over the river, we heard that a big palaver was on at Kasenga. On inquiry, we learned that "the man over the river" had paid the Bakete part of what was their due. But, alas, some one of the Bakete had stolen a large part! Who did it? That was the question. They commenced with the man who had the cowries in keeping, and they made him drink the poisoned water, and, as he did not vomit it, they claimed to have found the thief "first shot;" neither did he deny it *after* taking the "bwanga," although, before taking it, he denied it strongly. Poor fellow! He evidently knew the

folly of denying the power of the "bwanga." We tried, as we have done before, to talk them out of their silly and sinful custom, but with no effect so far.

Friday, September 21.—Went to Kasenga to-day. The indifference was more marked than usual, whether because of my not being up to the usual standard, on account of ill health, or whether some other thing was the cause; we know that they would not listen or give any attention to the talk, which was mainly to the children, from the words: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." On our return, we heard loud talking, and some of our people told us that the women were fighting. I hurried to where the women were at work, and found the fight over. Casualties: The outer rim of one ear bitten off, and one finger bitten through. Such things make mission work hard work, and to think that a dozen men and women look on, and do not stop the fight!

Saturday, September 22.—As usual, to-day was a very busy one. Our Polly is in disgrace again, and our hearts are all but broken. The strain, and added responsibility of being alone out here, makes it very hard, and when one of our best ones, like Polly, fails us, it hurts *away down* in the heart, and humbles us very much. This wrongdoing of Polly and the indifference of the people has led me to deep, earnest prayer to God, to know if the fault lay in my heart, and he has opened my heart to me in a way it has never been opened before, and showed me that in being careless in days gone by I was led into a sin that was never made right—a wrong to a brother which had never been righted. After a hard fight with the devil, God has given me the victory, but left me sad and humbled.

It is terrible to have to fight the devil away from Christian friends, but it would have been infinitely harder without the help of the dear wife.

Monday, September 24.—Yesterday we went to Kasenga. Our text was: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up," etc. In the afternoon two of our people came for further light on the subject, and gladly did we give it. To my knowledge, this is the first time any of the natives have come seeking knowledge.

Tuesday, September 25.—Went to Kasenga to-day and came home with very heavy hearts. They were more than indifferent.

Wednesday, September 26.—Bought a canoe to-day, a large one, for eight cents. Went across the river to see if the trader knew anything about the boat; he did not. Last year at this time we were reading home mail, and bidding Mr. and Mrs. Rowbotham God speed.

Thursday, September 27.—Kept busy all morning taking inventory; in the afternoon had to overlook Mr. A. boxes, as the white ants had made an attack on them.

Friday, September 28.—Went to small village of the Baluba to-day, and told them of God and his Son. They were, seemingly, much interested. I had never been to their village before. I was asking Kweto, the chief of Kasenga, how many Bakete villages there were near here, and was surprised to learn of twenty odd, besides Kasenga. Kweto told me that each town had about as many inhabitants as Kasenga. Kasenga has in the neighborhood 1,000, so here is a field of over 20,000 natives within a week's walk! Will you volunteer?

[To be continued in June number.]