

LETTERS FROM THE FIELD.

AFRICA.

DR. SNYDER'S RETURN TO LUEBO.

Surely the heart of Columbus was not moved to deeper feelings when he drew near to the realization of his hopes than mine was when I realized that I was drawing near to Luebo; nor was he more thankful.

Behind him lay all the dangers of the trip across the Atlantic; forgotten by him were all the trials and vexations; the joy of seeing the looked for land wiped out in a moment the wrinkles from his troubled mind. So also with me.

Truly since leaving America I had been in perils oft, perils by sea and perils by land.

The trip from Stanley Pool on a small, slow-going steamer had been a wearisome one.

I was the only passenger, and so was accorded many privileges not permitted when the ship is filled with people. The captain and I became quite chummy, and he often consulted me regarding the chart as to which reading of it was the correct one.

He had never been up the Kassai before, and as there are numerous rocks, snags, and sand banks, we often had to go slow.

The tearing of a hole in the bottom of our steamer at one time, and the detention for four hours on a sand bank at another time, coupled with the knowledge afforded me, by study of the chart, of many dangerous places still to be passed, did not enhance the pleasure of that three weeks trip.

But there came a day when things took on a familiar aspect. The fronds on the graceful palms lining the banks waved a welcome such as moved my

heart as other palm trees further down the river had failed to do. As when in a crowded city one sees many waving hands and many smiles to which he pays but little attention till the waving hand is moved by a friend of long standing, and the smile is the illumination of a dear face, then his heart swells with feeling at the mutual recognition. But this was merely the beginning of a crescendo of painfully pleasurable music in my heart, which found its climax when I reached the mission.

I had sought and obtained permission from the captain to blow the whistle when we neared the landing.

Just below this landing there is a sharp bend in the river, and as we rounded this point I grasped the cord communicating with the whistle and drew therefrom many long and short sounds, awaking many echoes from the surrounding hills, frightening the monkeys, who scampered away with beating hearts from the banks, startling the birds till they dropped the worms and insects on which they were feeding, and with fluttering hearts flew to darker recesses in the thick woods, echoing and re-echoing, filling the valleys with sound, entering the ears of Sheppard, who said: "Surely it is the whistling of Ngengebuke, for he whistleth furiously."

Then as the steamer drew up to the bank opposite our mission, I saw Sheppard entering a canoe, and soon our hands clasped and our eyes told of the mutual pleasure. Then came other canoes, and Mr. Morrison, Mr. Verner, and Mr. Hawkins were greeted. Soon I entered one of the canoes, and by willing hands was swiftly propelled across.

As the canoe neared the shore I saw a great crowd of natives lining the bank,

and my eyes filled with tears, and when the canoe was within a few feet of the bank my own children, those who had been house children to my wife and me, actually rushed into the water in their eagerness to greet me. We had to tell them to go back, so that the canoe might land. Then when I put foot on the land there arose a shout that was deafening. From hundreds of throats there came a welcome. I could not help but contrast it with my return to America. When I reached New York there was not a soul to meet me, but here were hundreds! I felt like saying with the poet:

"The wandering mariner, whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so bountiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air."

So glad was I to be once more with my people.

After the handshaking (not an easy task by any means) I was put in a hammock, and two strong men from Dombi soon carried me up the hill to our station, where I met Mrs. Sheppard, Miss Thomas, and Miss Fearing. And last but not least, the small children.

That night after a good supper at Mrs. Sheppard's table, and after I had duly inspected the dear little one month old baby, I said: "Now after a short talk I must write some letters home." So Sheppard and I sat down to talk, and in what seemed to me a very short time Mrs. Sheppard came in and said: "Do you know what time it is? Well it is three o'clock!" No letters that night, and the boat leaving early in the morning! I hope my many friends at home who were looking for letters will forgive me. I have at least fifty unanswered letters, but where the time is coming from to answer them all is beyond my ken.

The second day after my arrival was the Sabbath, and you perhaps can imagine my feelings as I entered the building, twice the size of the one I left, and found it crowded, and numbers of people on the outside looking through the windows.

Soon after we were seated the choir, yes *choir*, and a choir of natives at that, led on the organ by Miss Thomas, chanted the Lord's Prayer. Then the opening prayer; then followed in perfect order the regular services. The sermon was by Mr. Hawkins. It was a happy day for me; and yet, oh, such a sad one!

"A hunger filled my heart; I thought
Of those glad years which once had
been,
A presence seemed to linger o'er the
place,
A presence felt, but by my eyes un-
seen."

After the sermon Mr. Verner baptized into the church some five or six of his Dombi people, and as I looked on the growing church I felt that I might almost as well have remained at home, so gloriously had the work progressed in my absence.

But when in the afternoon I attended Sabbath school, and when the classes were divided, and I saw two classes without teachers, my mind changed, and I saw plenty of work to be done.

There are too many Christians at Luebo! Too many native Christians I mean. Our harvest is greater than we can house! There is a crying need for workers here to instruct the young Christians, and if they grow cold before they can be taken care of, I shall lay the responsibility on the Church at home!

With God's help I tried faithfully to present this to the people in the home land, and I started out feeling sure that at least ten souls would respond to the

call; and no more bitterly disappointed man returned to his field of labor than I when I came back with only one missionary. But the Church has been told, and now the responsibility rests with her.

And more, since I left here more than a thousand natives have moved here and settled close to us, building houses and villages, making permanent homes. Surely God has sent them here for one reason only. It is a call on us, on the Church at home, and if we fail to meet this responsibility—what then?

We don't need a boat. Though we are fishers, we are fishers of men. Send us men and women; don't waste money on a boat.

Mr. Sheppard has not been idle the past twenty months, as is evidenced by the state of the church and the station. "By their works ye shall know them." Of course Sheppard is under great obligations to his wife, Mr. Hawkins, Miss Thomas, and Miss Fearing, who have stood by him through it all. Mr. Hawkins is a host in himself, and a great favorite with the people.

I am sorry that so far I have been unable to visit Dombi and see Mr. Verner's station; but he gives me glowing accounts of work being done there by himself and Mr. Phipps. I hope to visit Dombi this summer.

At a meeting held soon after my arrival, at my request, it was voted that I visit Ibenj. At the same meeting Mr. Verner, at his earnest request, was asked to go to Bene Makima, to see after some goods left there by the Dutch steamer.

My visit to Ibenj was exceedingly interesting. It is the new station among the Bakuba.

Mr. Morrison (who by the way impresses one as deeply spiritual) has been sowing good seed at Ibenj, and while I was there, after a sermon preached from

the text, "To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts," two of the natives came out on the Lord's side. Evidence of seed sowing.

The walk back, of forty miles in a day and a half, was a stiff one, but as walking up here is a picnic in comparison with the lower Congo, one does not mind it, and a sore heel and tired body are matters soon healed.

I cannot close this article without referring to our neighbors, the traders. They have been very kind to the mission. Especially is this true of the Dutch house, and so we were glad of an opportunity to repay their kindness in their own coin, and when they came to borrow our tent for a few days it was gladly loaned.

I am sending a few photographs. One you will notice is of the church in process of being enlarged. Sheppard has almost completed the thirty feet of length which the growing congregation made necessary.

We are all fairly well at this writing. Mrs. Sheppard will soon be on her way home for a much needed rest. She has worked well and nobly, and has passed through great sorrow and trial in the loss by death of two of her babies. We are earnestly praying that this one may be spared to her, but we greatly doubt of she can raise it here. And so we are glad she can take it to a more congenial clime.

Pray for us, and send us at least ten missionaries.

LUEBO, AFRICA, February 24, 1898.

BRAZIL.

NOTES FROM SOUTHERN BRAZIL.

MR. GAMMON.

Your correspondent has been silent for a longer time than usual. Several months have passed since tidings were