

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

LANGUAGE STUDY ON THE CONGO.

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The study of languages cannot fail of being interesting at any time. Old and familiar thoughts take on another meaning when clothed in a foreign language; often a new thought comes to light as the brain delves into the depths of another people's mode of expression. Much more so is this the case when one undertakes the study of a language hitherto not reduced to writing. In endeavoring to reduce the spoken language of Bakete, I have been deeply interested in the formation of the words, and the modes of expression, and, although I have gone but a little way into the mine, I have already found more than one nugget, and the promise of many a "pocket" filled with rich ore. In this work, as indeed in all work, it is the *deep* digging that discovers the rich veins of precious metal. When one first begins the study of the Bakete language, he is led into the error of thinking it easy to acquire, because of its seeming poverty of words, but let him not think he has found all when he picks up the gold dust lying on the top. I am at present preparing a dictionary of this language, and hope also to write out a grammar within the next year or two, if God so wills. Meanwhile, a short account, giving a few of the words and expressions, may prove interesting. One characteristic of the nouns cannot fail in attracting attention. In common with all nouns in the Bantu tongue, they originally possessed a prefix, and are classified according to this prefix. At present we are able to group all the nouns in the Bakete language into ten classes. The plurals are formed by change in the prefixes, and not by adding to the word, as in the English language. I give the list of classes with examples in the singular and plural.

CL.	SING.	PLUR.	EXAMPLES.	SING.	PLUR.
1	Mu.	Ba.	Used only as relating to living beings.	Woman, Mukaxa.	Women, Bakaxa.
2	Mu.	Mi.		Stick, Muci.	Sticks, Mici.
3	N.	N.		Pig, Ngulibi.	Pigs, Ngulibi.
4	Cha.	Cha.		Chief, Xaxanga.	Chiefs, Xaxanga.
5	Ki.	Bi.		Thing, Kintu.	Things, Bintu.
6	Di.	Ma.		Foot, Dikassa.	Feet, Makassa.
7	Bu.	Ma.		Mouth piece, Bulengo.	Mouth pieces, Malengo.
8	Ka.	Tu.	(Always diminutive.)	Small stick, Kaci.	Small sticks, Tuci.
9	Lu.	Tu.		Hundred, Lukama.	Tukama, Hundreds.
10	Kn.	Ma.		All infinitives of verbs.	

The Bakete, evidently for euphony, follow a system of "alliterative concord." In a sentence the noun which is always regarded as chief, lays down the law for the rest of the family of pronouns, adjectives, and verbs; and every pronoun, adjective, and verb in the sentence must wear the same cap as that worn by the head of the family, and so, like orphan children belonging to an institution, we know them *by the dress*. For example:
 (the) person black (of) Kasenga is bad.
 Muutu mufiki mu Kasenga mudi mubi.

Verbs, pronouns, adjectives, conjunctions, etc., I must leave for another letter or letters. At this time I can only give a short list of words and a few sentences. As nearly all grammars use the verb "to

love" in conjugation, it will not be amiss if I give the Bakete word for love, which is WAINANGA. When a Bakete says "I love you," it is MEME WAINANGA WEWE. In the Bakete the "W" and "M" are interchangeable, as far as the euphonic law goes, and this explains the seeming incongruity in the above sentence. The word hate is WAIBELI. Neither the word to "love" nor the word to "hate," however, carry with them the same meanings as at home, and would be better expressed by the words "like" and "dislike."

The word for heart is TUTI. We have been singing,

AMBINYI UKASULULU MUCIMA WAME.
What will wash heart of mine?

The other day we were having a pig killed, and I took special pains to get the name for each part of its anatomy, and was surprised when I was told that the name for LIVER was *mucima*, and awoke to the fact that we were singing "What will wash my *liver* white," instead of *heart*! With us at home a "white-livered" person is considered in any other than a good light. So I said, "this won't do;" but then I recalled the fact that Talmage had said that most people need a new liver more than a new heart, and that it was easy to be a good Christian if the liver was clean. Even this, however, did not make it satisfactory, and not until I discovered by thorough investigation that the Bakete speak in every way of the liver as we do of the heart, was I reconciled. As the Dutchman's heart is his stomach, so the Bakete's heart is his *liver*. When he feels sad he says:

MUCIMA MASAMA MABUNGI.
Liver sick a great deal.

The word for spirit is MUXANGI, but the Bakete do not know anything about the soul. They believe that when a person dies, his spirit goes to the *mputa* country (where that is, they have no distinct idea, but think *we* came from the same

place), and there remains or not as it will; if it wills to return, it comes back to some one of the women and is born again. *Every* child born of a Bakete woman is thought to be a returned spirit of some one who died before. This

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is expressed by one word, WAISANGUKA. This and the one god they worship, BWANGA (medicine), are the two hard things we have to fight against, and in *no way* can we encourage it if we hope to gain this people for Christ. They have no fear of death because of this belief; for they have the power to go to another town if the town in which they lived was not to their taste.

And now a few words: YAFUMA FUMA, morning; DIBE DIWI, evening; DIBE DIKETICI, (sun center of head), MUTCU, DOON; WAIBELE, how do you do? WAIXALA LALA, good bye; WAILELA BEBE, rest yourself; WAI DIMBA, you lie (an expression freely used!); BWOLA BWOLA, truth; MVULA, rain. If you ask a Bakete, "Is it going to rain?" he invariably says, Palaver for the rain.

BWALA BI MVULA. Some of our weather-wise prophets might learn a lesson therefrom. One day one of the men on the station did not hear the bell calling him to work. When asked why he did not come, he said, ^{Stomach of the house took hold} MUNDA MUNSOBA WANKWATA MEME MABUNGI. ^{(of) me strongly.} It was learned that he had been asleep and that was his quaint way of expressing it.

Mr. Rowbotham's native name is LONGOSO, (quickly), because of his "push;" Mr. Adamson's name is DIBI, (sun), because he begins work at sunrise; and my own native name is N'GANGA BUKA KABUNGI, (stopped growing too soon.)

The native, as a rule, talks so fast as to render it almost impossible to catch the little words—the conjunctions, adverbs, pronouns, etc., and I am sure a phonograph would be most helpful.