
LETTERS FROM THE FIELD.

AFRICA.

DR. SNYDER.

We have just learned that a boat will leave here in a day or two for Leopoldville, and that we will have an opportunity for sending letters. This was unexpected, but, nevertheless, very welcome news. We had settled down for a long waiting of five months before an opportunity would come for hearing from home, or for sending news. It seems that a small steamer has been up in the rivers tributary to the Kassai, wait-

ing on the Inspector of the State, and, now that he is ready to return, the steamer will take him and our mails. This will give you later news of us than we had hoped for.

We have had

AN OFFICIAL VISIT

from the State, and my first duty is to report this to you. Friday night, June 15, I received a letter from the "*Captain commanding the district of Luebo,*" in which letter he informed me that on the following day the *Inspector* and he would pay us a visit. The

wording of the letter (in French) left no doubt as to the nature of the call. It read like "business." Early the next morning we prepared for their reception. The grounds were swept, and things generally were "tidied up." About half past ten our people called out to us: "Bakalinge kudwa!" *i. e.*, "white men are coming," and we walked down the avenue to meet them. We had met both the Inspector and the Captain before, so were not entire strangers. As my wife was sick in bed with fever, we took them to Mr. Adamson's house. Soon after we were seated, the State "opened the meeting" by asking if we had a license to buy and liberate natives. We told them "no, we did not know that it was necessary to have a license for that." We were then informed that it *was* necessary that we should have the permission from the Governor, and that this license be *vised* by the Captain commanding the district. Therefore we had been breaking one of the laws of the Congo Free State. However, under the circumstances, the State would overlook this breach. We were further informed that the license spoken of was only of use when we wanted to fill up our ranks. Then they brought forward the matter of slaves running away from their "nfuma" and going to the mission station, or to a trader's station for protection. They ruled that neither we nor the trader had a right to hold them, but, on the contrary, must give them up on demand, or take the parties before the State for settlement. At present, to us, that means going to Malenge, a ten days' trip each way, and likely for nothing.

As an illustration of their meaning, a week or two before a woman had run on our station claiming our protection from her nfuma (in this case her husband), who, she said, "wanted to sell her to another tribe." Of course we said she could remain, and when her husband came we told him it "was palaver for the heart of the woman; if her heart said for her to stay, well and good, she might stay." Naturally, the nfuma de-

parted full of wrath and threatenings. When "Buli Matadi" came he told him of his troubles, and the Inspector brought him along to our station, and, after a short preliminary talk, gave a decided assent to my suggestion that the woman be called. When the woman came he asked her, through an interpreter, "why she had run away from her husband." She said, "because he wanted to sell me to another tribe." The Inspector then asked the husband if that was true. He replied: "No, I was away at the time, and knew not of her running away until I returned." Without any more words, the Inspector ordered the woman to go with her husband. Mr. Adamson protested against the proceeding, and I suggested to the Inspector that, as he had power to free slaves and we had not, it would be a good act to free this woman at this time. But he failed to see it in that light. He told us, after the woman had been taken away, that in regard to the woman the matter of slavery did not play any part. The State would not permit any one to harbor any man or woman who had run away from a town, whether free or a slave, and gave as a reason that both men and women often ran away to escape punishment for crimes committed, and therefore all cases of run-aways must be brought before the State's representative for settlement. Unofficially he told me that if the State had missionaries only to deal with it would not matter so much, inferring that the trader would take advantage of a less stringent law. As it stands now, we have no right to liberate slaves. The State reserves that right to itself, and the right to do it in its own way. As for us, we have all the people we can care for, and in the near future we would, by force of circumstances, have had to refuse those who came to us, unless we were prepared to free and care for half of the natives of this district. So, taking all things into consideration, perhaps it is for the best that the State has settled the matter in this way. The following day the State sent us a present of

TEN BOYS AND TWO WOMEN,

and the day following eight girls. These, with those we already had, increased our number of children to forty-four; and when you recall that my wife and I have all these to care for, I am sure you will agree with me in saying it would be good to have more missionaries at this station, especially more ladies. We are wondering how many the next boat will bring us.

We are invited to take breakfast with the State next week.

As to our work here, we are trying to tell more plainly the wonderful story of the Cross. I have been translating part of "Peep of Day" to the people. They seem to be much interested in it. Their minds are very simple. Perhaps we have been feeding them on too solid food. It has been the experience of mission work on the Congo that three stages are met with in the work, viz.: First, indifference; secondly, curiosity; and, thirdly, eagerness to know the way to be saved. The period of indifference lasts longer than the period of curiosity. At present we seem to be waiting in the period of indifference. Our God can change the "heart of stone to a heart of flesh," and so we go on sowing, trusting in "Him who doeth all things well." We are all well at this writing, although each one has had a spell of fever. We will look for news and the boat with unusual interest, for surely Mr. Sheppard and wife, if no others, will come.

LUEBO, June 1, 1894.

LETTER No. 2.

DR. SNYDER.

On Monday of this week we all went over the river to dine with "Buli Matadi" ("The State"). On the Saturday preceding I received a letter inviting me to "sit as associate judge in a *council of war*, council to meet at fifteen minutes of nine Monday morning." So I went over ahead of

my wife and Mr. Adamson. The "council" was for the trial of a native chief, whose father had died a month or so ago, and who was now accused of murdering two women, in accordance with the custom in vogue in Africa of killing a certain number of men or women, or both, when a chief dies. The trial was exceedingly sad, and yet interesting, if so sad a matter can be interesting. He admitted killing the two women, but said that they had "worked a *fetich* against his father, and that his mother had compelled him to murder the women on that account." The mother, on examination, said: "A long time ago, before any thought was had as to the death, or sickness even, of my husband, one night, as I was sleeping quietly by his side, I awoke from a dream in which I saw two women come in and work a *fetich* against my husband. I plainly saw them, and I awoke my husband, who quickly arose, and grasped a fire-brand from the fire and his gun from the wall and went out, but, seeing no one, fired off the gun and returned." So, when her husband was sick, she remembered this circumstance; and, when returning into the house from a visit, she was told by her husband that the two women had been in, and had given him a cooked chicken, and he had partaken of it, and that he was sure that it had contained a *fetich*, she was more than ever convinced that they (the two women) were working a *fetich* against him. Moreover, when she went away, or just before going, she had placed a *fetich*, consisting of an earthen dish filled with stones, bones, and the horn of a goat, over the door of her house as a protection against any other *fetich*. This, on her return, she found cast down and broken. So, when her husband died, she knew it was because of the *fetich* of the two women, and she ordered them killed. It was proven that she had no authority in the town, it having passed from her husband to the son. It was also proven that the son had been warned not to kill the women, but to wait until

"BULI MATADI"

came to settle the matter. This he admitted; but, refusing to wait, he killed them, so strong is this "bwanga" (superstition) ground into their minds. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at Boma, the *superstition* being the extenuating circumstance that saved his neck from the rope. The State is bent on breaking up this horrible practice.

I must tell you of the "breakfast" at noon. During the trial, my wife and Mr. Adamson came over. At half-past twelve or a little later we were invited out to a specially constructed bower, made of palm leaves and the necessary sticks, a beautifully cool and restful place. Captain P. LeMarinal,* Inspector of the State, and Captain J. N. Pelzer, Commissaire of the District, represented the State, Mr. Boulenge and Mr. Lombardy the traders, and your missionaries the mission. One other guest, a Portuguese gentleman, completed the party. Mr. LeMarinal was born in America (in Iowa), in 1858. His parents (Belgians) moved back to their native country while he was still a lad. Mr. LeMarinal has lived in Africa nine years, and has done much and good work for the State, having explored the greater part of this portion of Africa, either alone or in company with Mr. Wissman. He was the means of bringing the Nsap a-saps (Zap-o-zaps) into this part of the country; and so, it came about that a vexed question with me was settled. You know, all the natives belonging to the great Bantu tribe are known by the prefix "Ba," as, for example, Ba-kuba, Ba-luba, Ba-kete, Ba-konga, etc. But here, in the midst of all these "Bas," were the Nsap-a-saps. Who were they? They denied being Ba-Nsap-a-saps. Mr. LeMarinal straightened it out for me by telling me that they belonged to the Ba-songa, a tribe far to the east from here. He had met them when on one of his tours, and, as this part of the tribe had had a quar-

rel with others of the tribe, he invited them to go to Luluaburg. This they did, taking the name of their leader. This puts them with the Bantu.

Well, we had a very pleasant time, and learned much of interest as regards the future working of our mission station in reference to the vexed question of slaves. I am quite convinced that the State means to do the right thing, but they want to be their own interpreters of their own laws at present. Nothing of this kind can progress quickly.

At Lukenga's royal seat there is being enacted a horrible tragedy. The brother of the king is lying dead, under a shed, wrapped in cloth; and, what is more, he has laid there for two months. And why? Because they have not caught and killed enough people to satisfy the demands of their diabolical superstition. They have killed one hundred, and are now trying to catch one hundred more. Two hundred souls sent to eternity to satisfy a superstitious king! This is being enacted within six days' walk from a Christian mission station, and we powerless to stop it. We are told that the poor Ba-kuba people are starving in their houses, afraid to go out, lest the minions of Lukenga should catch them and kill them. It seems that, as long as they remain in their houses, they are safe; but a prisoner in one's own house is not a desirable thing. Pray God that the gospel light may soon come to this darkened land!

Before closing, I must say that there is a growing interest among our children. I have translated, or, more properly speaking, made a catechism for them. I give you a sample question or two:

Q. Nzambi wodi ambinyi (What is God)?

A. Nzambi wodi Muxengi, wai-tembe kwe (God is a Spirit, above all).

Q. Nzambi wodi nganyi (Who is God)?

A. Nzambi wodi Tata ku bambi boso, bi bow wainenga yendi (God is the Father of all people, if they love him).

We need your prayers.

LUEBO, CONGO INDEPENDENT STATE, July 4, 1894.

*Captain LeMarinal is spoken of as next Governor.