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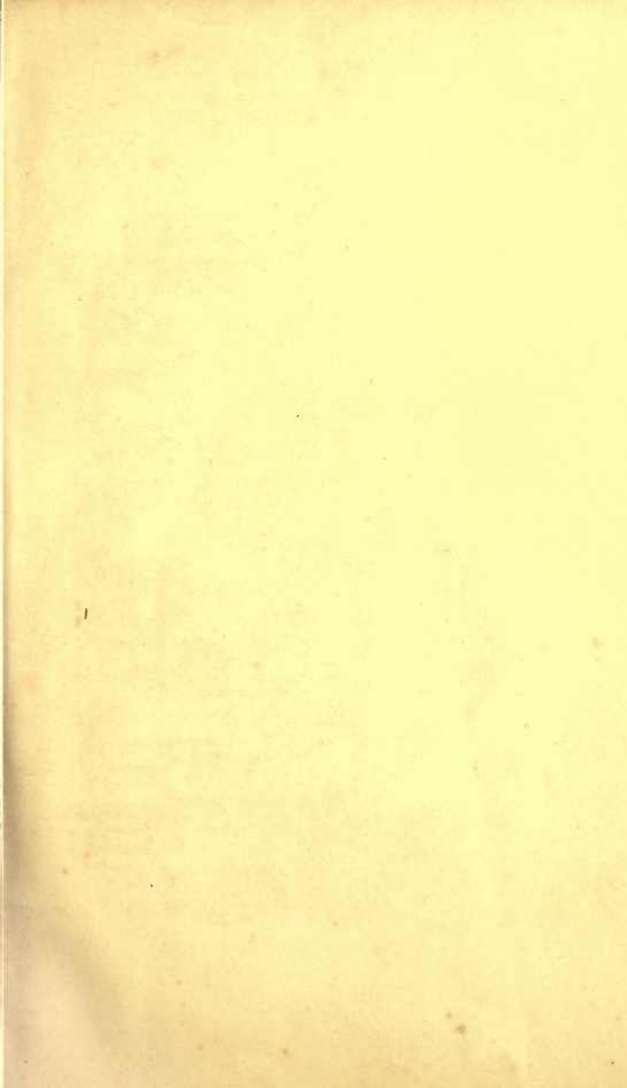
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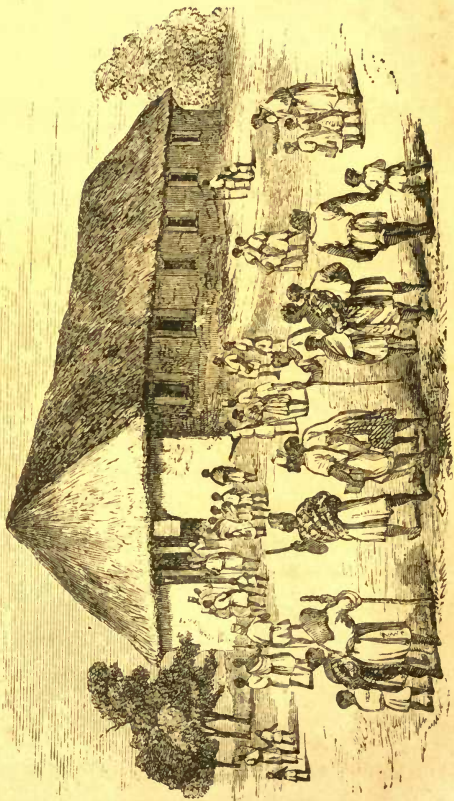
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CHURCH OF AKE

ABBEOKUTA;

OR,

SUNRISE WITHIN THE TROPICS:

AN OUTLINE OF THE

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF

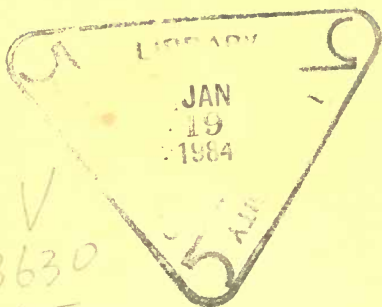
THE YORUBA MISSION.

BY MISS TUCKER,

AUTHOR OF "THE RAINBOW IN THE NORTH."

NEW YORK:
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE RAINBOW IN THE NORTH;

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE

FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN
RUPERT'S LAND

By the Church Missionary Society,

Illustrated. 16mo. 75 cents

The following remarks will assist in the pronunciation of the proper names.

- The sound of *a* is like the *a* in bath, bat.
“ *e* “ vowel in bait, bet.
“ *i* “ “ beat, bit.
“ *o* “ “ boat.
“ *u* “ “ boot, full.
“ *e* is almost like *ai* in bait.
“ *o* is like *a* in law, water.
“ *ai* “ *i* in mile.
“ *oi* “ *oi* in voice.
“ *g* is always hard, as in gate.
s is pronounced *sh*.

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P R E F A C E .

THE writer of this little volume hopes that more will not be expected from it than its title-page professes it to be,—namely, an “outline” of the origin and progress of the Missions in Yoruba. The many interesting details which she has omitted will be found in the periodicals mentioned below.*

There are some pages which it will be painful for others to read, as they have been to herself to transcribe, particularly those relating to the slave-trade. They could not be wholly omitted without altering the character of the book; but the dark deeds have been dwelt on as sparingly as was consistent with the main objects in view—the quickening her own and others’ gratitude to God for what He has already done, and the stirring up of every heart to more earnest,

* “The Church Missionary Intelligencer,” “The Gleaner,” “The Juvenile Instructor,” and “The Children’s Missionary Magazine.”

strenuous, and prayerful efforts, to rescue these nations from the grasp of Satan; to work while it is day, lest the night should again come upon them, (though the writer trusts it never may,) when no man can work.

For the view of Abbeokuta, and the portrait of the public crier, she is indebted to the kindness of Edward Irving, Esq., M.D., of Her Majesty's Navy, who visited Abbeokuta in December last with Capt. Foote, R.N., by the directions of Commodore Admiral Bruce.

WEST HENDRED,

April, 1853.

ABBEOKUTA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—THE SLAVE-TRADE.

"From heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death."—Ps. cii. 19, 20.

ON Friday, the last day of October, 1851, an interview took place, between two individuals, at the Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, which will not soon be forgotten by those who happened to be present. One of the two was an English gentleman, of middle age, whose calm and dignified look and manner well accorded with the fact of his being a Christian sailor, long accustomed to command. The other was a younger man, one of the sable sons of Africa, in whose intelligent countenance, and manly yet gentle bearing, might have been read a tale of wonder and of mercy, at which angels had rejoiced. This last was the Rev. Samuel Crowther, a native of Yoruba, once a slave boy, but now an ordained minister of the Church of England. The other was Sir Henry Leeke, an admiral in the

British navy. The pause of sudden feeling, the eager grasp of the hand, the inquiring look of glad recognition, and the hasty question and reply, "Do you remember me?" "Oh! indeed I do," told of some previous meeting, of no common character, and of no very recent date.

And so it was. In the year 1822, Sir Henry Leeke, then in command of H.M.S. "Myrmidon," was cruising in the Gulf of Guinea, when he fell in with and captured a Portuguese slaver, in which Mr. Crowther, then a lad, had just been embarked to be borne across the Atlantic. He took him, together with some other boys, on board his own ship, and after a two months' further cruise, landed him in freedom at Sierra Leone. Mr. Crowther was, at that time, thirteen years old, and since then they had never met, but twenty-nine years had not effaced from the recollections of the grateful African the lineaments of his deliverer. Often, when musing on the past, had he recalled them to his memory, and when, in 1841, he accompanied the expedition up the Niger, he delighted to trace, or to fancy he could trace, a likeness in one of the officers on board the Soudan, to him to whom he owed so much. And now, when he met him once more, hand to hand, and eye to eye, and recognised the same warm manner and kindly look that had won his heart on board the Myrmidon, the events of the intervening years

crowded fast upon his memory, and a flood of mingled feelings passed across his soul, that well-nigh overwhelmed him.

The interview was necessarily brief, and again they parted—the one to take the command of the Indian navy, the other to return to the work of an evangelist in his native land.

We have placed this little incident thus early in our narrative, that we might at once introduce our readers to the name of Crowther, which will very frequently occur in the following pages, and we will now proceed to a more connected history.

It would be beyond our purpose were we to enter into any history of the slave-trade—of its abandonment on the part of our own country in the year 1807, or of the endeavours made to prevent its continuance by other nations. The names of Clarkson and Wilberforce are still too dear to the memory of Englishmen to need our mention of them; and the details of their persevering zeal, and of the success with which it was crowned, may be read elsewhere. We will only glance at the state of things since that period, in order to make our succeeding pages more intelligible.

Even the youngest of our readers will remember the form of the western coast of Africa; how, when beyond Cape Verde, it follows a south-eastern direc-

tion for four or five degrees, how the encroachments of the Gulf of Guinea then force it into a course due east, for several hundred miles, till, after yielding to two smaller sweeps of the sea, the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra, it turns abruptly to the south, and scarcely varies its direction till it reaches the equator. Along the whole of this coast, an extent of nearly 2,600 miles, the Spaniards and Portuguese, notwithstanding their treaties with Great Britain, continued to pursue the hateful traffic with unremitting activity. Nearly seventy ports were open to their slave-ships, and tens and tens of thousands were annually shipped off to supply the markets of Cuba and Brazil. Oh! could the walls of those dismal factories and barracoons relate the scenes of sorrow and suffering, of cruelty and despair that have taken place within them, we believe we should find that in the annals of the whole world no page more dark with crime and misery has ever been looked upon by God's All-seeing Eye.

Africa had indeed become "one universal den of desolation, misery,* and crime." A fearful waste of

* "When we look on Africa, does not the scene that we behold approve itself to our sympathising hearts as more deeply needing, than any other region under heaven, that message which can light the eye with the beaming smile of joy? Joy, of all blessings, is the least known in Africa. To bid the African go on his way rejoicing is a task too little tried; for ages and for centuries sorrow has been the heritage

human life was incurred in the seizure of the slaves for the market,—in the hurried march through the desert to the coast, under a blazing sun, with a very scanty supply of water,—in the detention at the ports, where hunger, disease, and despair carried off their many victims. Those who survived these accumulated sufferings, pressed down for weeks between the decks of the slave-ship, had to endure torments that cannot be described. Scarcely even can the mind realise the horrors of that voyage—the sea-sickness—the suffocation—the terrible thirst—the living chained to the dead—the agony of despair. Many perished on the voyage, and the remnant were sold as slaves, to endure the frightful cruelties of their Spanish and Portuguese masters.*

and portion of the sons and daughters of Ham.”—Sermon by the Bishop of Sierra Leonè, at Carfax Church, Oxford, Oct. 31, 1852.

* That this is no exaggerated or overcharged picture, we have unhappily abundant evidence; and as late as 1839 Lord John Russell, in his letter to the Lords of the Treasury, proposing the Niger Expedition, says—“I find it impossible to avoid the conclusion that the average number of slaves introduced into America and the West Indies from the western coast of Africa annually exceeds *one hundred thousand*, and this estimate affords but a very imperfect indication of the real extent of the calamities which this traffic inflicts upon its victims. No record exists of the multitudes who perish in the overland journey to the African coast, or in the passage across the Atlantic, or of the still greater number who fall a sacrifice to the warfare, pillage, and cruelties by which

Thus did this hateful trade continue for more than 30 years after its abolition by Great Britain, depopulating the countries, and demoralising both the captors and the enslaved. Sierra Leone indeed was a haven of refuge to those who were re-captured by our cruisers; but the hundreds, or even thousands,* that were thus annually rescued bore a very small proportion to the mass of sufferers. The whole of this part of Africa, with the exception of Liberia, was in apparently hopeless darkness; liberty, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual, was unknown, and the eye of pity sought in vain for any gleam of better things.

But in the year 1839 the faint streaks of a brighter morning appeared; and, since that time, thanks to the unconquerable spirit of a few British and Christian philanthropists;—thanks to the far-sighted benevolence of our rulers in entering into treaties with the more friendly tribes, and to their steady firmness in maintaining the cruising squadron to check the trade where it could not be eradicated;—above all, thanks to Him who not only thus guided

the slave-trade is fed. The whole involves a waste of human life and a state of human misery, proceeding from year to year without respite or intermission, to such an extent, as to render the subject the most painful of any which, in the survey of the condition of mankind, it is possible to contemplate.”

* In the three years preceding 1838, 13,000 recaptured negroes were brought into Sierra Leone and set free.

the minds of his servants, but ordered the events of his Providence to the same end—the slave-trade has gradually diminished. In 1851, the nearly seventy-three ports were reduced to three: Lagos, Porto Novo, and Whydah, all in the Bight of Benin; and now, in 1853, Lagos is taken—Porto Novo and Whydah are no longer able to continue the traffic—Brazil itself has denounced the trade, and the slave-trade is, we hope and believe, extinct.

CHAPTER II.

THE FELLATAHS.

"The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein."—Jer. xlviii. 8, 9.

WHEN we read of tens, and even hundreds, of thousands annually falling victims to the slave-trade, we naturally ask, "How and whence could these multitudes have been procured?" and the answer to this question must be sought for in the very heart of Western Africa. It is true that a small portion of these unhappy people were prisoners taken in the continual warfare carried on among the smaller states along the shore, but the chief supply was from the interior, where the love of gain tempted the more powerful chiefs to make war upon their weaker neighbours, *for the express purpose* of procuring slaves for the markets on the coast. Here they were eagerly purchased by Spanish and Portuguese dealers, who, in return, supplied the native chiefs with rum, gunpowder, fire-arms, and a few other articles of European manufacture.*

* It is, indeed, melancholy to find how all the kindlier feel-

The heathen kings of Dahomey stand out conspicuously in this barbarous warfare; but even they must yield in this disgraceful pre-eminence to the Mohammedan *Fellatahs*.*

This singular people, who have exercised so extraordinary an influence over the destinies of Western Africa, seem to have been originally a nomadic nation, in the fertile tracts along the shores of the Mediterranean; but being driven thence by the Saracens, they retired across the Great Desert, and established themselves to the south and west of it, in a tract of country called Fooladoo.

In this land of refuge they lived for centuries as a pastoral and inoffensive people, moving about with their flocks and herds, as the various spots supplied them with pasturage and water. Their numbers rapidly increased, and spreading eastward, they gradually occupied the greatest part of Soudan, while small parties even made their way across the Niger into the countries of Boossa, Borgoo, and the northern part of Yoruba. They are spoken of as of
ings of even a Mohammedan or a heathen heart could be so deadened, but what shall we say to those, who, bearing the name of *Christians*, were the instigators to such cruel and unholy deeds? How true it is, as the natives themselves express it: "The *root* of the slave-trade is in white man's country, not in black man's—for if white man did not buy, black man would not sell."

* Called also *Foulahs* and *Fellams*.

quite a distinct race from the Negro, with oval faces, small features, and long hair, and their complexion varying from a dark copper colour to that of our English gipsy. They were Mohammedans, yet nothing seems to have occurred to bring out the peculiar features of that stern and cruel faith, till about a century ago, when a sudden impulse was given to their latent love of war and conquest by one of themselves, the Sheikh Othman, or, as he is oftener called, Danfodio.

This ambitious man began by building a town in his native woods of Ader, and persuading many of his countrymen to settle there. His next step was to establish a regular military system; he ranged the people under different chiefs, to each of whom he delivered a white flag as a token of future victory, desiring them to go forward in the name of "Allah, and of his Prophet," assuring them that God had given them all the lands and riches of the "Infidels," and declaring that all who fell in battle would be sure of Paradise. The army, fired by the exhortations and example of their leader, rushed on to deeds of valour; and the career of conquest was rapid and extensive.

Ere long the whole of Haussa, Cubbî, and Yaouri, were conquered; gradually the country of Nufi was brought into subjection, and even the powerful

kingdom of Bournu, although Mohammedan like themselves, was for a time obliged to yield.

From that time to the present the Fellatahs* have been the unceasing scourge of all that portion of the continent of Africa. Their armies have been continually in motion, overrunning the country, putting the chiefs under tribute, destroying towns and villages, and carrying away the inhabitants to be sold as slaves.

The highest authority among them is vested in the Sultan of Sokatoo, the "Emir el Mumenin," as he is called, or "Commander of the Faithful;" and it is, generally speaking, from him that the inferior

* The Fellatahs must not be confounded with some people whom the Haussas call "Bature,"—white men, or "strangers," who occasionally come from the east as far as the banks of the Niger for purposes of trade, and who are supposed to be either Egyptians or Abyssinians. The probability of their being the latter is greatly strengthened by information given by Bishop Gobat during his late visit to England. He mentioned that when he was in Abyssinia he found there were persons from Darmoot and Gengira, in the south-west part of the country, who traded across the continent, and who reported that after three months' journey they arrived within a fortnight's distance of the salt sea, with large ships. They gave a curious statement as to a country called Sidama, two months from Abyssinia, where they affirmed the people were Christians, and that they had the Gospels and churches, and where the men wore long hair and braided. There were two Sidama boys in Abyssinia, whom the Bishop met with, but they had left their country at too early an age to be able to give much information.

Sultans receive their investiture as governors of the different provinces. The present Emir is Ali ben Bello, son of the Sultan Bello visited by Clapperton, and the direct descendant of the founder of this vast empire, Danfodio. The great boast of the Fellatahs has been, that their power will soon extend to the sea; and, from Dr. Barth's account, we find that their boast has so far been accomplished, as that the Sultan of Tchamba, near the Tchadda, about three years ago, succeeded in a "razzia" on the country between himself and the Bight of Biafra, reached the Iboe country near the mouth of the Niger, plundered the whole neighbourhood, and laid it under a tribute of "slaves, salt, and cowries."* But, notwithstanding this and other partial successes, there is reason to hope and believe that the power of the Fellatahs is on the wane. We learn from Dr. Barth that the whole land is so impoverished, that the Emir can only maintain the expenses of his government by the large tribute he receives from the caravans that pass through his territories; while Lander, as long ago as 1830, speaks of their losing one town after another in the country of Haussa; and later accounts tell us of the Nufi people having in a great degree recovered their independence.

But we must go back to the palmy days of their

* See Mission to Central Africa, in Journal of Royal Geographical Society for 1851.

greatest power, when all the nations on the north and eastern side of the Niger were subjected to them, and only a few on its western banks had been able to resist their inroads. The most important of these was the heathen kingdom of Yoruba, a country lying inland from the Bight of Benin, and stretching from two to three hundred miles in length, and nearly the same in breadth. Its northern and north-eastern boundaries are the kingdom of Borgoo, the Niger, and part of the Nufi country; the territories of Kakanda and Benin skirt it on the east and south-eastern quarters; the fierce Dahomians border on its western limit; while on the south it is only separated from the sea by a strip of land belonging to the Popos. Divided from the Fellatahs by the broad streams of the friendly Niger, and powerful enough to check aggression from any less formidable enemy, Yoruba enjoyed a comparative peace and prosperity unknown to most of the neighbouring states.

The towns were numerous and populous (the larger ones containing sometimes 60,000 or 70,000 inhabitants), and were generally surrounded by triple walls of wood or mud, and an outside ditch. Villages of 3,000 or 4,000 were thickly scattered over the country, and many persons resided on their own separate farms.

The soil was productive, the climate healthy, the

people industrious, honest,* and affectionate, and in their own simple way they lived in external ease and comfort.

The nation was composed of several different tribes, all owing allegiance and paying tribute to the king of Yoruba, whose residence was at Oyo, or Eyeo, near the Niger; and though feuds and jealousies among the tribes occasionally led to affrays† between them, yet nothing had occurred sufficiently serious to affect the integrity of the kingdom.

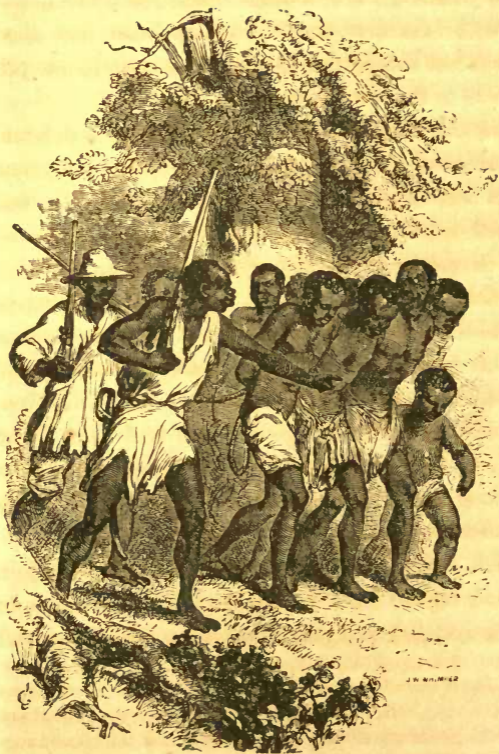
But about forty years ago a disastrous change took place in the social condition of Yoruba, brought about by a combination of circumstances.

In the southern part of the kingdom very serious disputes had broken out, not only among the different tribes, but also between the smaller subdivisions; and a quarrel in the market of the little town of Aponi, as to the value of a trifling quantity of pepper, was the spark to kindle a flame that had nearly depopulated the surrounding country. The

* The unusual honesty of the Yoruba people is particularly noticed by Capt. Clapperton.

† The captives taken on such occasions were condemned to domestic slavery, but it was of the mildest kind. The slave was then, and still is, considered as part of the family, is often called "my son," and a stranger would scarcely discern the difference between the freeman and the bond-slave.

The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including
 the names of the members of the committee and their respective
 offices. The list is followed by a detailed account of the
 proceedings of the meeting, including the reports of the
 various committees and the resolutions adopted. The
 document concludes with a list of the names of the
 members of the committee and their respective offices.



SLAVES ON THEIR WAY TO THE COAST

towns of Ifè, Ikija, Kesi, the Ijebbus, Owus, and many others, were in arms against each other, and now for the first time* did they learn from their barbarous neighbours to send their unfortunate prisoners to the slave-markets on the coast.

In the north the disasters were from a different source, and commenced in the ambition of a young man named Afonja, the chief of Illorin. He had heard the fame of the Fellatah war-towns beyond the Niger, and was filled with a passionate desire to emulate them. Intent only on the accomplishment of his own will, and regardless of the consequences to his country, he invited a Fellatah chief named Alimi from Sokatoo, and another called Ali † from Haussa, to share the government with him. The offer was eagerly accepted; the door which had been so long closed was now opened, and the Fellatah scourge began to be felt in Yoruba.

The two chiefs invited their countrymen to join them; many of the Yorubans were prevailed on to embrace their religion; and open hostilities and

* There were few or no Yorubans brought to Sierra Leone till the year 1822, so that the internal slave-wars could not have begun much earlier. The labours and the blessed successes of Mr. Johnson and the earlier missionaries in the colony were among the less hopeful tribes.

† We may judge somewhat of the character of Ali, when we are told that he had at one time 20,000 slaves working in chains upon his farm.

secret artifices were but too successful'y employed against this unhappy people. It is calculated that there were not less than twenty thousand men in Yoruba whose sole occupation was rapine and slave-hunting.

At first single farms were attacked, then villages were destroyed, till, emboldened by success, large towns fell before them, and massacre, fire, and misery marked their progress. One of these towns was Oshogūn, situated in the western part of the country, beyond the Kong mountains; its wooden walls were nearly four miles in circuit, and it numbered 12,000 as its population.

The people dwelt secure, they were far from the lands that had hitherto suffered from Fellatah avarice and cruelty;* they anticipated no attack, and should an unexpected enemy arrive, their walls were strong, their men were brave, and what cause had they to fear? They were soon fatally undeceived. One morning in the early spring of 1821 the people had

* The progress of the Fellatahs was far less rapid here than it had been on the further shore of the Niger, for as late as 1825, Capt. Clapperton speaks of that part of the country through which he travelled as being well cultivated, peaceful, and prosperous; and Lander, in 1830, only heard of their distant ravages. It appears too that the early settlers in the country (see p. 9) did not join their warlike countrymen; for the same traveller frequently fell in with Fellatah villages where the inhabitants were living peacefully and quietly, and engaged in tending their flocks and herds.

risen as usual in peace and security, the women were busy preparing the morning meal, the men were following their various avocations, when suddenly the cry was heard, "The Mohammedans are coming!" The men rushed to the walls, bidding their wives and children flee into the bush. It was too late! So well had the enemy laid his plans, that the gates were already secured, and escape was impossible. The men fought as those who were fighting for their all, but in vain; they were overpowered by numbers; the troops entered the town, set fire to the houses, chained together all who would bring them profit, and massacred the rest. The same sun that had risen in tropical splendour on the busy flourishing town of Oshogūn, shed its setting rays on a mass of burning ruins, where many a blackened corpse told of desperate and unavailing struggles. But what human tongue shall tell of the cries, the groans, the wailings of suffering and despair that throughout that weary night entered into the ears of the "Lord of Sabaoth" from the multitude of widows and orphans that were led like sheep from Oshogūn!

One of these was a boy of twelve years old, of the name of Adjai, who, with his mother and sisters, was bound in chains and sold into slavery. We shall not enter into the particulars of this boy's suf-

ferings; they are already before the public;* we shall only state that, after having been several times sold and resold, dragged from place to place, and enduring almost intolerable hardships and sorrows, he was, early in 1822, with one hundred and eighty-seven unfortunate companions, shipped on board a Portuguese slaver at Lagos, where the treatment he met with corresponded but too well with the frightful accounts detailed in the Parliamentary Papers. Happily it was but of short duration, for on the very next evening, by God's good Providence, the slaver fell in with two English cruisers, and was captured by them. The poor captives were now in greater despair than before, for the Portuguese had succeeded in making these simple-hearted people believe that the English thus watched for and seized the slave-ships, that they might use the blood of the negroes to dye their scarlet cloth, and their flesh as baits for covies! Adjai and a few other boys were taken on board one of the English ships; but here their terror was wound up to its highest pitch by seeing a number of cannon-balls piled upon the deck, which they took for the heads of some of their companions, while they concluded that some joints of pork hanging up to dry were their limbs. They were soon, however, re-assured; and when we tell

* "Adjai, or Good out of Evil," Nisbet and Co.; "The African Slave Boy," Wertheim; and C. M. Record for 1837.

our readers that the ship on board which our young friend was now taken was the "Myrmidon," and the commander was Captain Leeke, they will have no difficulty in recognising the heathen Adjai under the Christian name of Samuel Crowther.

But our object is history, not biography; we shall not follow Adjai in the events of his next few years, except to say that, on his arrival at Sierra Leone, he was placed under the care of an European catechist and his wife, who showed him every kindness; that he grew in grace as in years, was baptised, and became first a student, and then a teacher in the Fourah Bay Institution for the education of young men as teachers and catechists.

Years rolled on in Yoruba, but brought with them no return of peace or prosperity; the Fellatahs still gained ground; the slave-wars were still carried on, and the king, driven from his capital, was forced to take up his abode in the town of Aggo-Ojá. The whole country was disorganised, and the inferior chiefs, throwing off their allegiance to their sovereign, left him in possession of but a small part of his former dominions.*

Adjai's town was rebuilt, and again destroyed;

* Now called Yoruba Proper.

and not a vestige now remains of what has twice been Oshogūn. Large districts were depopulated,* the land in consequence was left untilled, fields of waving corn were supplanted by the tangled wood and impenetrable jungle; the chatter of the monkey, and the shrill scream of the parrot, took the place of the busy hum of active human life; while the roar of the lion proclaimed that he had reasserted his ancient rights, and was once more the monarch of the forest.

* Judges v. 6, 7.

CHAPTER III.

YORUBA AND ITS PEOPLE.

"Who maketh thee to differ; and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive?"—1 Cor. iv. 7.

THERE WAS mercy in store for Yoruba, though she knew it not; and while she appeared to be sinking lower and lower in darkness and in misery, the God of all grace was, by his Providence, preparing the way by which the day-spring from on high should visit her, and guide the feet of many of her children into the paths of peace. But it will make the succeeding history more intelligible, if we devote a few pages to a description of the land, and of its people.

FOR many miles from the coast, the country, though fertile, is low and swampy; but as you journey on towards the interior, it becomes diversified with hill and plain; and, from the descriptions given of it by the Landers, as well as by our own missionaries, it must be very picturesque and beautiful. Deep and fertile valleys lie among the hills; granite rocks, some lofty, bold, and bare, others clothed with trees or verdure to their summits; and

clear streams, tumbling over their rocky bed, add to the beauty of the scenery.

The appearance of the towns, from a distance, is often imposing; the walls enclose a large extent of land, and fields and trees are interspersed among the thatched roofs of the lowly dwellings. It is strange, that in a tropical climate the natives should take such pains to exclude the air; but the African hut, like that of the Hindoo, is without windows or any opening but the low door, while the roof projects so far beyond the walls, that but little air can find its way even here. The houses of the better classes are built round a quadrangle, into which the separate dwellings open, while a rude piazza runs along the whole interior. The head of the family occupies the largest of these dwellings, and round him are gathered children and grandchildren, and any other members of his family for whom a separate habitation can be found. The court in the centre is often planted, and is the common place of resort for all the inmates, where, shut in among themselves, they can, without fear of interruption, talk over any subject of family interest; and where, on the bright moonlight nights of that southern clime, the whole party are frequently collected. Here they will remain for hours, seated on the ground, and listening with fixed attention, while one and another relates some passing incident, or amuses his hearers with some legend or

fairy tale, of which these people are passionately fond.* It is the hour of calm enjoyment, and the eye of even a Christian Yoruban will glisten at the thought of these moonlight scenes, though now his conversation would be of a higher and holier tone.

* We cannot refrain from inserting one of these for the amusement of our younger readers—it will remind them of the Arabian Nights; but we must preface it by mentioning that the character of cunning which we attribute to the fox is by the Yorubans ascribed to the land tortoise. The tale runs thus, and is rehearsed in parts, some of it being sung, and the rest in recitative. There was once a town that was harassed by the frequent visits of a monstrous and mischievous bird, with a very large and strong bill, with which he seized on any living being that struck his fancy. When they had reason to expect his approach, the people would shut themselves up in their houses, and not stir out till the danger was over. But they seldom had any warning, and the visits of their winged enemy became so frequent and so fatal, that many consultations were held as to the best mode of averting the evil. No effectual means could be devised till the tortoise came forward and proposed a scheme, which he assured them would be infallible. “Get,” said he, “three large brass mortars, and set them upside down, one upon the other, in the market place; shut yourselves up in your houses, and leave the rest to me, only do not stir out till I call you.” The people adopted the advice of the tortoise, procured the largest mortars the town afforded, placed them according to the directions, and retired to their own dwellings, while the tortoise quietly crept under the lowest mortar of the three. Presently the well-known sound of wings was heard, the bird came, and was surprised at the unusual appearance of the market, in which nothing was to be seen but the three brass mortars. There is some trick in this, thought he, and I doubt not the

The people are industrious, and the soil freely yields them yams, cassada, and the various other grains that are in use among them. Cotton, too, is grown in considerable quantities, and the women spin, and men and women weave it into the cloth which is worn by all. They are generally well clothed in this their native manufacture; the colour is often blue, dyed with indigo, and checked with red cotton procured from Haussa, and which, it is said, is naturally of that colour. There is a great taste for dress among them, and independently of any religious motive, some of the gay young men affect the Moham-

tortoise is at the bottom of it. So he began to sing, "I am the great bird, I am the bird of birds, what have I to do with that ugly tortoise?" As soon as he had ceased, the tortoise began to imitate him, singing the same tune, only in a squeaking voice, and travestyng the words, "I am the great tortoise, I am the tortoise of tortoises, what have I to do with that ugly bird?" The bird, enraged at the audacity of the tortoise, dashed down upon the mortars, and striking the upper one with his beak, shattered it into atoms; then soaring aloft repeated his song, but in a tone of increasing anger. The tortoise answered as before, but in a trembling voice, as if very much alarmed. Again the bird darted down, shattered the second mortar, and again rose high in the air to repeat the strain for the third time. The tortoise again responded, but in a still more trembling voice. The fury of the bird now knew no bounds; darting down with greater vehemence than before, he struck his bill into the remaining mortar with such force that it stuck fast in it, and while endeavouring to extricate himself the tortoise crept out, and calling the people round, they soon demolished their long-dreaded enemy.

medan costume, and wear wide sack-like trowsers, much embroidered, and confined close round the ankle, with a loose upper garment, and turban; or if unable to procure this last appendage, they roll a long piece of cotton round the head. Some of them are beginning to adopt the English dress; but all this is to be regretted, as any change of national costume necessarily involves some degree of change in the national character, and their present dress is very becoming.

Knives, axes, and implements of husbandry are made from the iron ore which is very abundant, and which they have learnt to smelt. Osier baskets and grass mats are also among their native manufactures. The red earthenware in common use is made by women, and burnt by being stacked together, with layers of wood between the rows, as bricks are baked in England. One of their most useful domestic utensils has been provided for them by nature; this is the *calabash*, a kind of pumpkin. When the fruit begins to ripen, a hole is cut in the small end to admit the air, and thus the pulp decays without injuring the rind. Sometimes the incision is made *round* the fruit, at about one-third from the smaller end, and a vessel with a neatly fitting lid is produced without further trouble. These calabashes are of various sizes, some are smaller than a tea-cup, while others will hold three or four gallons.

A good deal of internal traffic is carried on among them; markets are held morning and evening in every town and village, and in the towns there is a larger one every fifth day, which is attended by all the neighbourhood. Their only current money is the white *cowry*,* forty of which are of the value of an English penny. They are strung, and tied up in "heads," as they are called, each head containing 2,000 shells, equal to 4s. 2d.; and at this rate of reckoning, we shall not be surprised at £2 or £3 worth being as much as a man can carry, nor wonder at the expense and difficulty of conveying money from Badagry to Abbeokuta.

One of their domestic habits is, we believe, peculiar to themselves. None of the people take their first morning meal in their own houses, but all, both men and women, about seven o'clock in the morning, pay a visit to a cook's shop, and make their first breakfast on a bowl of gruel of Indian corn. The women then proceed to the market to purchase materials for a more substantial repast, which is taken about ten o'clock. This consists of balls of Indian corn, called "*dengè*," served up in a kind of strong sauce made of beef, mutton, fish, or fowl, with various vegetables, and seasoned with salt procured from

* The *Cypræa moneta* of Linnæus. These shells are not found on the neighbouring coasts, but are brought from India or the Eastern coast of Africa.

the Popos, and with Cayenne pepper, which grows in the country; the whole forming a very nutritious and palatable food. The family do not generally collect together for this meal, but each one takes it when so inclined. In cases, however, where there is only one wife, she and her children usually join the husband and any friends he may have invited. When about to partake of the food, a large earthen bowl is placed on the ground, containing the *dengè* and the sauce; and the party sit down round it. The balls of Indian corn are taken out of the bowl, broken and distributed to the different persons, each of whom dips his portion into the sauce as he eats it. There is a good deal of animal food consumed in this way, but it is never eaten solid. One of their chief articles of food is also the *yam*.

With regard to the mental and moral character of the people, the concurring testimony of those who have had the best means of judging is, that, as a nation, the Yorubans are far above the generality of their neighbours.*

The missionaries at Sierra Leone speak of the greater degree of intelligence and energy apparent in the people there since the year 1822, before which time, as we have already stated there were scarcely

* Lander speaks of the people of Boossa and Kiami, to the north of Yoruba, as in some respects superior to them, but these districts are small and comparatively unimportant.

any Yorubans in the colony, though afterwards they were brought in in such numbers, that at present more than half the population is Yoruban. And on the other side of the Atlantic, Lord Harris, the present governor of Trinidad, has spoken of the superiority of the Yorubans in that island over the other emancipated negroes. Their minds are ingenious and acute, and many of their common proverbs, with which Mr. Crowther has enriched his Vocabulary,* show a quickness of observation, and a knowledge of human nature, which even their friends in this country were not prepared to expect. Their natural disposition is very lively; the children are full of mirth and play, and are particularly fond of riddles. You may often hear their merry laugh as, sitting on a shady bank, they endeavour to puzzle each other with questions such as these: "What is that little steep hill that nobody can climb?" or, "What is it that any one can divide, but no one can see where it has been divided?" † Sometimes these riddles are the current ones of the neighbourhood, but they often seem to be impromptu.

Considering the mental gifts with which the Yorubans are evidently endowed, we cannot account

* Some of these will be found in the Appendix.

† Perhaps our young readers will find out, without our help, that the answer to the first of these is *an egg*, and to the second, *water*.

for the small progress they have made in the arts of civilized life. Many are the accurate and bright opinions and ideas you may often hear from them in conversation, yet they have never invented any written mode of conveying or recording them; and some of the simplest mechanical powers have been till lately entirely unknown in the country.*

There is a spirit of independence and generosity among the Yorubans that, if sanctified by Christian principle, will make them a fine and noble nation. It is a remarkable circumstance, that whereas at Badagry, and generally on the coast, the people continually ask the missionaries to give them money for coming to listen to them, or for sending their children to school, at Abbeokuta the missionaries often find it difficult to resist being *paid for their preaching*. There are very frequent instances of this in their journals. A missionary will have been preaching to an attentive and eager crowd in a market, or under a spreading tree, and at the conclusion one of the party, generally a woman, will

* A few years ago, Mr. Crowther procured a cart from Sierra Leone; the body of it was unfortunately too heavy to be carried through the swamps and forests, and was left at Badagry; but the wheels and shafts were conveyed to Abbeokuta, and excited the utmost astonishment among all classes. Not only children, but grown-up people, crowded into his compound, and were delighted with drawing one another round and round, seated upon planks laid across the shafts.

beg him to wait a few minutes, when she will return with a handful of cowries and some Kola* nuts, and insist on his accepting them. The cowries of course are positively refused, but the missionary generally accepts some of the Kola nuts, and shares them with those who may happen to be standing next him.

Mr. Smith has told us of a striking instance of this that occurred to himself. While spending a few days at Osielle, he visited Malaka, a considerable town eight or ten miles to the north. Mr. Smith here preached the way of salvation through Jesus Christ alone to a large party assembled under the fine Aka tree in the middle of the town, and was listened to with the greatest attention. No European had been there before, and Mr. Smith, to prevent any misconception, took an opportunity of telling them, in the course of his address, that he could not receive any presents. But notwithstanding this warning, no sooner had he ceased, than the people brought him a goat and some Kola nuts, pressing him most earnestly to accept them. When he refused, they said they could not consider him as their friend, if he would not accept their presents, and he

* The Kola nuts are in size and appearance very like our English horse-chesnut; the flavour is a pleasant bitter, and they are slightly tonic. Few, if any, grow in that part of the country, which makes them expensive, and the offering them is considered a special token of respect.

was obliged to compromise the matter by taking the nuts. And it is pleasant to know that these presents are made without any expectation of a return. "It is," said the generous Ogubonna upon one occasion, "the custom of our country."

We will not here omit an instance of noble and generous daring, tinged perhaps with something of wild enthusiasm, that was mentioned by Mr. Hinderer when lately in England. A young man of Ibadan heard that a chief named Pimi, of Ede, a town at some little distance, had imitated the cruelty of the Haussa Ali,* in obliging his farm servants to work in chains. Filled with indignation at this departure from the usual conduct of the Yorubans towards their domestic slaves,† he resolved to rescue them, and calling together some of his companions, so passionately urged their accompanying him, that they readily consented. They set off for Ede; none dared to oppose their bold and determined bearing; and the mind of the cruel and cowardly chief was filled with terror at their approach. Proceeding to the farm, they knocked off with their own hands the chains from the astonished and grateful slaves, and bade them return in peace to their own homes. This story has a melancholy sequel, for not long after this exploit, this young

• Page 15.

† Page 14, Note.

man's undisguised hatred of tyranny drew down upon him the suspicion of some of the chiefs, and he was secretly put to death.

And now we must turn to a darker side of the picture of Yoruba and its people; one in which no ray of hope could be discovered to lessen the dismal gloom—we mean its state as to spiritual things; and as if to give another proof that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, we find that notwithstanding their superiority in lower things to those around them, they were as far from the true knowledge of God as any of their neighbours.

They have, indeed, an idea of one Supreme Being, whom they call Olorūn, and who, as they believe, is the Creator of all things; and will often express their good wishes by "God bless you," or "I praise God for your health," &c.; but they virtually deny him, by believing that he takes little or no cognizance of things on earth. They offer him, therefore no sacrifices, and pay him no homage; all their worship is reserved for those divinities of their own invention, to whom they imagine he has delegated his power, and to whom alone they look for help.*

* These gods are not emanations from or personifications of the attributes of the one God, as Apollo, Minerva, &c., among the ancients, but distinct beings acting as mediators. When the Yorubans are reprov'd for idolatry, they will maintain that they worship God (Olorūn), but that they worship

One of the principal of these is Ifa, the god of palm-nuts, to whom they ascribe the power of healing, and to whose priests they apply in times of sickness. On these occasions the friends of the sufferer procure a sheep or a goat for sacrifice, and send for the babbalawo or priest, who begins the ceremony by tracing a number of uncouth devices with chalk upon the wall. Then taking a calabash, he puts into it some cowries or some palm-nuts, and placing it in front of the figures he has made, performs his incantations, which are supposed to prevail on the god to enter the palm-nuts or the cowries. The sacrifice is then brought in, its throat is cut, and the priest sprinkles some of the blood on the calabash and on the wall. He then smears it across the sick man's forehead—thus, as they imagine, conveying the life of the creature into the patient. The priest and family afterwards feast on the flesh of the sacrifice, only reserving a portion to be exposed on the outside of the house for the buzzards;

him *through* Orisha, who will pray to God for them, and obtain the blessings they desire. Well may Mr. Townsend compare their religion with that of the Roman Catholics, and add, "These sin only against the light of nature—Rome against that revelation which tells of the one only Mediator. One evil spirit rules over the darkness of the whole world. Who can be surprised that the white slave-dealers at Lagos (Roman Catholics), consult Ifa before sending their ships to sea? It is all the same god!"

and if this is quickly devoured by them, the omen is considered favourable.

Should the sacrifice prove unavailing, and no signs of recovery appear, it is repeated again and again, according to the means of the family, or their affection for the sufferer; and not unfrequently, among the poorer classes, heavy debts are incurred in the purchase of animals for the purpose. If all prove to be in vain, the patient is left to himself; he is not actually neglected, for food is given him in the morning and evening, but during the day the family pursue their usual avocations, and he is left to pass through the last sorrowful days of his earthly existence, without one kind hand to minister to his necessities, with no tender parent or affectionate child to sympathise in his bodily sufferings, far less to speak words of comfort to his soul.

They worship, also, the god of thunder and lightning; and it is affecting to see how men, women, and children will, in their mistaken zeal, brave the fury of the elements, and in the most tremendous storm, by day or by night, will rush out of their dwellings, regardless of the pealing thunder, the vivid lightning, or the pelting rain. Shango is offended, sacrifices must be offered, and woe to the individual who should dare to be absent! They, also, like most other heathen nations, adore the manes of their ancestors, whom they call "Egun-

gun," and once in the year offer sacrifices, and hold a feast in their honour; but it is remarkable that no trace of serpent-worship has been found among them; and this is the more curious, as two or three species of large snakes receive the peculiar adoration of their neighbours, the Popos.

They have a singular idea relating to the souls of their children, believing them to be inhabited and influenced by the spirit of some one of their ancestors. When a child is born, a priest is sent for, and inquiry is made of the favourite deity of the family, as to which of the deceased forefathers intends to dwell in the present infant, and a name is given to it accordingly. This does not seem to be at all the metempsychosis of Eastern nations, for the spirit of the departed may at the same time dwell in many of his descendants, and is evidently considered as *accompanying, not superseding* the individual soul.

The Yorubans are not wholly free from the additional guilt of human sacrifices. They are far less frequent in Yoruba than at Badagry; but even here they are occasionally offered in cases of emergency. In a time, for instance, of continual drought some poor slave will be seized, adorned as for a festival, and thrown into the river, to propitiate the goddess of the waters, and to serve as food to her attendants, the alligators and crocodiles. And our missionaries

record more than one instance in Abbeokuta itself, where the unhappy, unconscious victim, after being paraded through the streets, has been strangled in the fatal Orisha grove.

They have many other objects of worship in addition to those we have enumerated; indeed, anything that can either assist or injure them receives some kind of adoration. Large trees, red-sandstone, iron, cowries, the hills of the bug-bugs, or African ant, (in which they imagine some superior being to reside), all receive their share, and sometimes they will worship parts of their own body, their forehead,*

* Mr. Hinderer mentioned, that when he was at Ibadan, he was visited by a man who had just returned from Abbeokuta, whither he had been sent on business by his master. He had, it seems, been to our schools there, had seen boys and girls learning their "book," and came to tell Mr. Hinderer that if he would "sit down" at Ibadan and establish a school, he would be the first to attend it. It was Saturday, and Mr. Hinderer invited him to come to him on the following day and join a few Sunday scholars he had collected round him. The man excused himself, as he should be busy. "What have you so much to do to-morrow?" inquired our missionary. "I must worship my forehead." "How do you mean?" "As I came out of Abbeokuta," replied the man, "the soldiers at the custom-house ill-treated me, broke a calabash of rum belonging to my master, and would have killed me had it not been for my forehead, so now I must worship it." "How can this be?" inquired Mr. Hinderer, "I thought you before said that God always preserved you." "Do you white men," was the indignant reply, "think us so foolish as to suppose our forehead itself can save us? No, but God made my forehead,

or their foot, especially before they set out upon a journey.

Every fifth day is reserved by the priests and devotees for a special worship of their several deities, but the mass of the people do not seem to take any part in it. One of the ceremonies that is gone through upon these sacred days, is the fetching water for the gods from some neighbouring holy fountain; and on these occasions long lines of priests and priestesses, and their immediate followers, are seen walking in procession with their calabashes on their heads, and often preserving the most profound silence.* Some of the water is poured out as a libation to the idol, and the remainder reserved for use.

Their idols are of clay, or wood, or metal, and several are generally placed in one particular room in the house, where they receive some kind of adoration morning and evening. It can, of course,

and he saved me through my forehead, and so I worship it." We find from Mr. Smith that this worship of the forehead consisted in slaying some animal, a goat, or a sheep, the blood of which is sprinkled on the idols in the house, and streaked across the forehead of the offerer. The sacrifice is cut into pieces, and distributed among the friends, a sufficient portion being reserved for a feast for the family themselves.

* These days are called *Osse* days, from a word signifying silence, and in Sierra Leone the Yorubans have very naturally transferred the term to the Christian Sabbath, which they call *Osse*.

be no spiritual worship that is offered to their imaginary deities; no confession of sin, no prayer for pardon, no supplication for the Holy Spirit, and no thanksgiving for redemption can come from their hearts or lips, for of these things they have never heard. "Make me rich," "Make me healthy," "Give me children," "Avenge me of my enemies," are the only petitions that a poor Yoruban ever offers to his god.

Lord, what is man when left to himself, that thou shouldst ever be mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst ever visit him! And may we not add, "Who maketh thee, O believer, to differ?"

CHAPTER IV.

FOUNDATION OF ABBEOKUTA—SIERRA LEONE EMIGRANTS.

“O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.”—*Jer. xlviii. 23.*

WHEN we look back on our own personal history, or on that of the church of Christ, how continually do we find that our heavenly Father, in his providential dealings with us, has brought about some important result by indirect, and, perhaps, unlikely means. It has been so in the case of Yoruba; the circumstances that have worked together for her good appeared at the time to have no connection with each other, though now we see they were all linked together by the golden chain of God's sovereign will and determinate counsel.

Part of this determinate counsel of God was to bring together people of rival tribes and jarring interests into close connection and mutual dependence; and as none but Infinite Wisdom could have accomplished this, so it is profitable for us to trace out the mode of its accomplishment.

In the south-western part of the kingdom of

Yoruba, amidst rocks and hills of primitive formation, there stands near the eastern margin of the river Ogūn, a huge porphyritic rock called *Olumo*, or the hiding-place, from the concealment it used to afford to a band of robbers. The summit is composed of large rounded masses of stone; and at one spot the intervening space forms a kind of deep, but low cavern, capable of giving shelter to a considerable number of persons. It was deserted by these robbers some short time before the year 1825; and in that year became the refuge of a few poor people, who had fled from the merciless hands of the slave-hunters, and knew not where else they could be so secure.

The party who first took possession of the cavern was soon joined by others, who, like themselves, had been driven from their homes and friends; and here they dwelt secure, though exposed to many hardships; often in want of food, and still oftener obliged to subsist on the leaves of the pepper plant, wild roots, or any animals that came within their reach. At length a few, more courageous than the rest, ventured to cross the river that lay beneath them, to purchase a little seed-corn at the nearest village, and cultivation now began among the rocky hills. Meanwhile the desolation we spoke of in a preceding chapter* was rapidly spreading in all the surrounding country; town after town was destroyed, and

* Page 20.

the inhabitants captured; while the comparatively few that escaped wandered about the country in search of a resting-place.

The attention of some of these was attracted, after a time, to Olumo, and by degrees many a small and feeble band established themselves among the hills, and the forest gave way to human habitations. The different parties settled themselves down in small, but separate, communities; each under its own laws; each with its own chief and judge, and war-captain, and with its own council-house; and each fondly giving to this new-found home the name of the town or village from which it had been driven.* To the whole they gave the name of *Abbeokuta*, or Understone, partly in memory of the original cavern, and referring also to the rocks on which most of it was built. Fresh parties continued to join them, till the remnant of *one hundred and thirty towns* had found refuge in Abbeokuta; and the spot in which, thirty years ago, a robber's cave was the only human habitation, now, in 1853, numbers *eighty thousand* † as its population.

* These townships are still entirely distinct from each other; but there is no visible separation or boundary, either natural or artificial. The whole is surrounded by a common wall, the circuit of which is not less than fifteen miles.

† This is the lowest computation. Several English gentlemen, who have visited it, speak of 100,000 as nearer the real amount.

All belonged to the *Egba* tribe of Yorubans; and for a time the joy of a common deliverance, and the sense of a common danger, were sufficient to keep down any heart-burnings and disputes between the different townships. It is more than probable, however, that as a feeling of security returned, the old jealousies would have revived and led to disastrous consequences, had they not in 1829 been joined by a chief named *Shodeke*, of the town of *Aké*, who by his judicious conduct succeeded in consolidating the hitherto heterogeneous mass.

Shodeke was a man of a superior mind; wise in council, and brave in war, he gradually gained an ascendancy over all the other chiefs, which, instead of using for his own aggrandisement, he employed for the advantage of the whole community. Each township still retained its own local government; but all matters of general interest were discussed and settled in a public council, composed of the civil governors of each town, called *Ogbonis*, and the war-chiefs, or *Baloguns*. This general council was always held in *Shodeke's* township of *Aké*; and it proves the respect with which his memory is even now cherished, that there it is still holden, though *Sagbua*, who is the senior chief, belongs to another town.

Thus have discordant interests been knit together; and the people of *Owu*, and of *Kesi*, and of *Ikija*, and of many other towns, have learnt to forget

their former animosities, and to live side by side in peace and friendship.

Their union has been their strength; they have more than once been attacked, first by Ijebbus, then by Yorubans, and lately by the king of Dahomey; but they have proved themselves strong enough to repulse them all; or rather, He who had designs of mercy for Abbeokuta, has thrown around her the shield of his Almighty strength.

How little did the Egbas know or think by whom it was that their steps had been thus directed, and their hearts turned to each other! The cave of Olumo had not revealed to them that better "hiding-place" from a still greater danger to which they were unconsciously exposed. The granite hills conveyed to them no thought of the "Rock of Ages;" nor did the river Ogūn, as its bright streams danced over their rocky bed, bring them tidings of that "River of Life," of which they would hereafter be invited to partake. God "hides his bright designs" in the unfathomable depths of Infinite Wisdom and Love; and leads the blind in a way that they know not.

And now, leaving Abbeokuta in peace and security, let us pass on to another of those means which God was pleased to employ for its lasting benefit, and turn to Sierra Leone.

We would that some able pen would trace the

entire history of this remarkable colony, in which the records of bare realities are more romantic than the day-dreams "that float in soft visions round the poet's head," but it would be beside our purpose were we even to attempt it, and we shall therefore only briefly allude to it in its relation to our present subject.

The devoted missionaries had laboured long and anxiously in Sierra Leone, many of them even unto death, among the thousands rescued from the slave-ships; and abundantly had God blessed their labours. Education and civilisation had changed numbers of the enslaved and degraded negroes into men of enterprise and intelligence; the preaching of the Gospel had turned them from idols to serve the living God,* and, by His grace, the missionaries could thankfully rejoice over many of these as fellow-heirs with themselves of the kingdom of their Lord.

This progress was the most rapid among the natives of Yoruba, many of whom by degrees acquired a little independent property; and in the year 1839 we find a few of them actually embarking their small capital in the establishment of a trade with those very shores from which they had been sold as slaves. They purchased from the Government

* Some still remained enslaved to former habits of indolence, recklessness, and heathenism, but those were comparatively a small proportion.

a small captured slave vessel; freighted her with European and Sierra Leone productions; selected for the crew African freedmen like themselves;* and, encouraged by the presence of British cruisers in the Bights, (for they had become British subjects,) set sail for *Badagry*. What a picture for us to contemplate with feelings of adoring gratitude! A vessel, whose only cargo had hitherto been human beings led forth to perpetual misery, now laden with articles of lawful commerce, and manned by some of those very people whose souls and bodies had once been its only freight! Praised be God who put it into the hearts of his servants to establish the colony of Sierra Leone!

These spirited adventurers succeeded admirably; they were well received at *Badagry*, easily disposed of their goods, and returned with palm-oil and other native produce. Others of their countrymen were encouraged to follow their example; two more condemned slave-ships were purchased, manned, and freighted like the first; and it was not long before a small but brisk trade commenced between Sierra Leone and *Badagry*.

And now the thought arose among the colonists, whether it would be possible to return abidingly to their native lands, and be again united to friends

* The only white man on board was the master, who was needed to navigate the ship.

from whom they had been, as they had believed, separated for ever. There were serious obstacles to their attempting this; the difficulties of the journey inland, and the great danger of being again enslaved, might have deterred less sanguine spirits; but the heathen at Sierra Leone longed to escape from the presence of true religion; and many unestablished Christians could not resist the temptation of returning to their fatherland, for they thought not of the danger to which they would be exposed by venturing among their heathen relations without any outward means of grace.*

Various parties thus *emigrated* back into their own lands; and between the years 1839 and 1842 no less than five hundred had left the colony for this purpose. We may imagine the excitement and interest which these departures would occasion, and the eager preparations made by the people themselves. They were for the most part Yorubans, and bound for Abbeokuta, of which some vague uncertain rumours had reached them through the traders. They could know but little of what they should find there, but they were well assured that European manufactures could seldom reach that distant market. They must

* The more established Christians felt this to be an insuperable impediment; and no love of kindred or of country could induce them to quit the colony, unless accompanied by one of their present ministers.

therefore take with them clothing for themselves and their children, for they had adopted the European dress; they must carry the implements of their various trades, for these would probably be unknown there; and to these they added various little articles as presents and curiosities for their friends in the interior. All this, added to the passage-money, which was something considerable, made the undertaking an expensive one, and prevented many from joining them who would otherwise have rejoiced to go.

Some of these parties landed at *Lagos*, at the mouth of the river *Ogūn*, as being the easiest and most direct route to *Abbeokuta*, but they soon had reason sorely to repent of the course they had taken.

Lagos was in great measure inhabited by *Popos*, whose naturally ferocious dispositions had been rendered still more cruel by constant intercourse with slave-dealers. One would have supposed that the sight of these people, rescued as they all had been by a far-distant and independent nation, and now returning home after years of exile, would have softened even their obdurate hearts. But cherished sin, of whatever kind, gradually chokes every kinder feeling, and leaves the heart wrapped up in its own selfishness.

The various articles of property the emigrants had brought with them roused the cupidity of the chiefs and people; and as each different party reached

Lagos, they seized and robbed them of all they had, save the clothes they wore, and sent them away a four days' journey into the interior, without money or provisions, tauntingly bidding them rejoice that they had not again been seized and sold.

It fared far better with those who had taken the safer, though more difficult route, by Badagry. Though a slave-port, like Lagos, and chiefly belonging to the Popos, part of the town is occupied by Yorubans, and they, as well as the chief of this quarter, Wawu (who, though a Popo, is good-natured and friendly) welcomed this return of their countrymen, prevailed on some few to settle among them, and helped the others forward on their journey.

Before the end of 1842, nearly 300 of these liberated negroes, from Sierra Leone, had thus arrived at Badagry, most of whom proceeded on to Abbeokuta; and it may be well to follow, in imagination, some of these people, as they landed from the trading vessels, in parties of fifty or sixty, and took their course to the interior. There would be young, and old, and middle-aged in the company—some Christians, some still heathen, but all with hearts beating high with hope and expectation. All probably were strangers to the actual road by which they travelled, for the slaves were generally brought down to the coast by very circuitous routes, but the general aspect of the country, the birds, the flowers, the very

air they breathed, would be to them instinct with life of other days, and would bring back, with increasing force, the associations of their childhood. For many miles, they would travel through a flat, alluvial country, where no stone of any size is to be seen, but the ground is sometimes swampy, and at others covered with almost impenetrable jungle. On leaving this level land, they would enter on an undulating and picturesque country, where the plains shone bright with *buddhleas* and *hibiscus* of various colours, while beautiful groves of palm and other trees invited the weary traveller to rest beneath their shade, and here and there a sparkling stream supplied them with delicious water.

But the hand of the spoiler had been here, and had marred the pleasant prospect; the untilled ground, and the ruined villages, told of depopulating slave-wars;* and the beautiful cocoa-nut, banana, and other trees, laden with fruit, that lingered among the ruins, stood in mournful contrast with the scene around.

As our travellers advanced into the more hilly country, and came within eight or ten miles of Abbeokuta, the aspect of things greatly improved; the land was well cultivated; fields of Guinea and

* Mr. King, at a later period, mentions, that in the course of *one day's* journey, between Badagry and Abbeokuta, he passed not less than *twenty* ruined towns and villages.

Indian corn were interspersed with pastures in which cattle, sheep, and goats were feeding; farm-villages were scattered here and there, where pigeons and poultry were seen round almost every dwelling, the people were busy at their various occupations, and all wore the appearance of cheerful industry.

As they still proceeded, the narrow path widened into somewhat of a road; the number of passers to and fro told of their approach to Abbeokuta; already they discerned the picturesque rocks that surmount its eastern quarter, and could trace the river Ogun by the luxuriant foliage that marks its course; and how must every heart have throbbed and every eye been strained to catch the first glimpse of the longed-for spot!

At last it burst upon them in all its beauty of situation, and with all the bold romantic scenery that has called forth such admiration from even the passing visitor.*

The town of Abbeokuta, more than three miles in length, and nearly as much in breadth, stands, as we have said, amidst a group of granite rocks on the eastern bank of the river Ogun, and its native dwellings have a singularly picturesque effect as they are seen rising one above another on the rocky heights, or clustering in the intervening hollows, and every-

* See Journal of Rev. T. B. Freeman, in "Missionary Register" for 1843. Later English travellers speak of it in the same terms.

where interspersed with trees of various forms and hues. Here the lowly roofs are half concealed by the orange, the lime, the plantain, and the banana, with their pleasant fruits; there the broad umbrella-tree spreads its grateful shade; and there are seen the tall and handsome cotton-trees overtopping all the rest. Huge blocks of uncovered granite are towering higher still, and in the midst of all, the eye rests with peculiar interest on that broad flat rock that covers the cave of Olumo.

Our minds involuntarily turn to Tasso's description of the army's approach to Jerusalem, and their first sight of the desired city, where he says:—

“Ali ha ciascuno al core, ed ali al piede,
 Ni del suo ratto andar però s'accorge;
 Ma quando il sol gli aridi campi fiede
 Con raggi assai ferventi, ed in alto sorge,
 Ecco apparir Gerusalem si vide,
 Ecco additar Gerusalem si scorge,
 Ecco da mille voci unitamente,
 Gerusalemme salutar si sente.”*

Far different thoughts, however, from those of the heroic but mistaken Crusaders, occupied the minds

* “One would have thought each heart and foot had wings,
 For now, unconscious how the gushing springs
 Of nearer hope unwonted strength supply,
 Swift and more swift o'er hill and plain they fly.
 When lo! Jerusalem before them stands,—
 Jerusalem! they pause—a thousand hands
 Are raised on high,—a thousand tongues proclaim
 Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thy hallowed name!”

of our pilgrims. No dreams of earthly conquest were theirs, but every heart swelled with the hope of again embracing the beloved ones who had so long been lost to them, and with the joy of being once more the denizens of their own cherished land. Doubtless, thoughts of future victory arose in some of those hearts, but it was a victory not over Saracens and earthly enemies, but over idolatry and sin; they cared not to regain the long-forsaken tomb of Him they loved, but to lead others to know and love Him as the Resurrection and the Life.

Many a heart-stirring recognition, and many a joyful re-union awaited their arrival in the town; and the people heard with wonder the tale they had to tell. Hitherto all that the tribes in the interior had known of Europeans was from the Portuguese, who had spared no pains in endeavouring to persuade them that God created the black man to be slave to the white; and so entirely had these simple-minded people believed the assertion of their betrayers, that they actually invented a fable to account for it. But now, when their friends and countrymen related their strange adventures, and they listened to the history of their sufferings at the barracoon, and in the slave ship; of their rescue by the English; of their settlement at Sierra Leone as free men; and of all the kindness shown them there, the truth broke in upon them, and their astonishment and admiration

of the English nation were unbounded. And when their Christian brethren told them, not only of the love of English Christians, but of the source from which it flowed, the conviction forced itself on some of their hearts that the English religion must be the right one.

The emigrants, on their part, must have been agreeably surprised at the prosperity and comparative civilisation of Abbeokuta. The houses, though of clay and thatched, were better built and more commodious than is usual in Africa. The people were well clad, industrious, cheerful, and contented, the markets were numerous and well supplied. Indian and Guinea corn, beans of various kinds, sugar-canes, yams cooked and uncooked, fresh meat, beef, pork, and mutton; fish, fowls, pigeons, and dried rats (of which the people are very fond), were all to be purchased there. Pepper, ginger, pine-apples, oranges, plantains, and bananas, apples, papaws, limes, ground-nuts, ready-made soup, palm-wine, beer made from Guinea corn or from maize, and palm-oil, were in abundance; while various articles of domestic use—such as cotton, raw or in reels, cloths, some of rich texture and woven with the red cotton from Haussa, Moorish caps, sandals, leather bags and embroidered leather cushions, saddles, stirrups and bits of native manufacture, bill-hooks, and hoes, knives and cutlasses, earthen bowls and dishes, cala-

bashes, ropes and lines, are all enumerated as among the articles for sale. All, or most of these were of home manufacture, and one sighs to observe, that the only articles that Europe furnished were tobacco and gunpowder.

But many of those Christian emigrants, who, while enjoying the means of grace at Sierra Leone, had thought they could do without them here, soon discovered their mistake, and how important it was to them to have a regular ministry, and stated times for public worship. Their former indifference was changed into anxiety, and they seized on every opportunity of intercourse with Sierra Leone, to send the most urgent intreaties to their friends and former ministers to use all the means in their power, that missionaries might be sent to Abbeokuta. The child-like confidence of these simple-hearted people in the love of English Christians, is very touching, for they felt so sure of an answer to their appeal, that they did not hesitate to assure Shodeke, the king, that "White man would soon come."

We shall only speak of one more of the many means that God made use of for the deliverance of Yoruba; and this, though less direct in its effects, has not been less important in its bearing on the destinies, not only of Yoruba, but of nations far beyond it; we mean the Niger Expedition, which we shall reserve for the following chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGER EXPEDITION.

* Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."—Phil. ii. 4.

THE Niger! How strange the mystery that hung for centuries over this celebrated river! Its source, its termination, and even the direction in which it flowed, were all unknown! Herodotus mentioned it between two and three thousand years ago, and he, as well as succeeding geographers of the ancient world, spoke of it as flowing from *west to east*; though, while some considered it as a tributary of the Nile, others supposed that it lost itself in a lake or deep morass in the centre of the continent.

The Arab writers of the middle ages, and the European geographers down to the middle of the last century (with scarcely an exception*) maintained that it rose near the *sources of the Nile*, and, after flowing across the continent in a *westerly* direction, emptied itself into the Atlantic; asserting that there was *no river that ran towards the east*.

It was not to be wondered at that amidst all these

* We believe only D'Anville and Rennell.

conflicting opinions the very existence of the river of Herodotus began to be considered as a fable, but towards the end of the century a spirit of inquiry was again aroused, and in 1788 the African Association was formed, one of the first attempts of which was to trace the Niger from its source to its termination, and its ultimate object was to introduce Christianity and civilisation into the heart of Africa. We shall pass over its earlier proceedings and disappointments, and only refer to the discoveries made by Mungo Park. How, as we write his name, do the recollections from early years come vividly before us! the eagerness with which we read his journal; our sympathy with all his hardships and sufferings;* our admiration of his unflinching courage, his gentleness, and patience; how we rejoiced with him when he attained the object of his search, and found himself standing on the brink of that river which had for so many ages eluded the researches and perplexed the

* Especially were we moved by the touching incident of the piece of moss near Kooma, and Park's own description of it. "I saw myself," he says, "in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from any European settlement. My spirits began to fail me, and I thought I had no alternative but to lie down and perish. The influence of religion, however, supported me, for I was still under the protecting eye of God. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification caught

minds of all the learned—"the long-sought majestic Niger, glittering in the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and flowing slowly to the *eastward*. I hastened," he goes on to say, "to the brink, and having drunk of the water, lifted up my fervent thanks to the Great Ruler of all things, for having thus far crowned my endeavours with success." Sickness, suffering, and want soon compelled the traveller to retrace his steps, but one great point had been gained, and the *direction* of the river was placed beyond a doubt.

Then came his second journey, his attempt to follow the river throughout its course till it should reach the sea, and the melancholy event of his death at Boossa. Conflicting opinions again arose as to its termination, some reviving the old opinion of its being lost in the interior; others, among whom was Mr. Park himself, supposing that it joined the Congo; while a very few adopted the idea that perhaps it might flow into the Gulf of Guinea. Among the

my eye. The whole plant was not larger than the tip of one of my fingers, but I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsule without admiration. Can He, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern on the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Surely not. I could no longer despair. I started up, and disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forwards, assured that relief was at hand, and I was not disappointed."

last was the lamented Captain Clapperton, who had, however, no means of confirming his belief. But we shall not stop to cross the river with him in 1825, or to accompany the intrepid Landers, in 1830, in their adventurous passage down its stream from Yaorie to the sea; we shall only remind our readers that the discoveries of the latter set the question at rest for ever, as they found that it did really flow into the Gulf of Guinea; but that, long ere it reached the sea, it was, like its Northern sister, divided into a number of smaller streams, forming what is now called the Delta of the Niger.*

Thus far had the objects of science been attained; and it remained to apply the discovery to a higher end, and to make it subservient to the cause of religion and humanity. We need not recall to our readers the origin of the Niger Expedition; how the conviction by degrees forced itself on the minds of the friends of Africa, and especially on that of Sir Fowell Buxton, that, important and even necessary as our cruisers were to check the slave-trade on the coast, yet the remedy, to be effectual, must be applied to the source of the evil; and that Christianity and civilisation, carried into the heart of Africa, would

* The existence of this Delta removed the chief difficulty in the supposition of the river taking this course, for there was no single stream along this well-known coast that could at all correspond in size with the upper portion of the Niger, where it is occasionally five or six miles across.

alone avail for its deliverance.* Nor need we tell them of these convictions resulting in the plan of sending an exploring expedition up this mighty river to obtain accurate information of its hitherto almost unknown shores, and to make any arrangements that might be practicable.

The scheme was taken up by persons of all ranks and parties; the Prince Consort strongly favoured it; and the Government, with Lord John Russell at its head, consented to make it a national undertaking. Bold and hazardous as was the enterprise, from the known unhealthiness of the climate, and the very doubtful disposition of the natives, it commended itself to many British and Christian hearts; and there was no want of either officers or men to enter on this service.

Captains Trotter, William Allen, and Bird Allen, were placed in command of the three new steam vessels, the *Albert*, the *Wilberforce*, and the *Soudan*; and, in conjunction with Captain Cook,† were appointed Her Majesty's Commissioners for the management of the whole undertaking. The commissioners, and most, if not all, the officers, were men of decided Christian piety; many of the crew partook of their views and feelings; a valuable chaplain ac-

* See Sir T. F. Buxton's *Memoirs*.

† Well known as commanding the *Cambria*, when, in 1825, she so gallantly and generously rescued the passengers and crew of the *Kent*.

accompanied the vessels, and a general union for prayer was entered into for a blessing on the enterprise.

The vessels sailed in April, 1841, and never surely did any expedition leave the shores of Britain with a more single-minded aim, or with brighter prospects. Its object was not one of public or of private aggrandizement; no love of lucre was mingled in this generous effort to rescue Africa from degradation, misery, and bloodshed, and to introduce Christianity, civilisation, and peace; while the character of those to whom it was entrusted gave an earnest of the manner in which all would be conducted. The language of many a heart was:—

“ Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfurled
 To rescue and to renovate a world;
 Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
 Impel the fleet whose errand is to save.
 Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
 Charged with a freight, transcending in its worth
 The gems of India, nature’s rarest birth;
 That flies like Gabriel at his Lord’s commands,
 A herald of God’s love to pagan lands!”*

On June 24, the vessels entered the harbour of Sierra Leone, where, as might be expected, their arrival awakened the liveliest interest. “The whole colony,” we are told, “was in a state of excitement; nothing else was talked of among either Europeans or natives; the latter of whom began eagerly to speculate on the facilities it might open to them of

* Cowper’s Poems.

returning to their own land, if only they could be accompanied by an European missionary.

Twelve young Christian natives were taken as interpreters to the various tribes with whom the party might come into contact—such as the Brass, the Iboe, the Egarra, Kakanda, Yoruba, Haussa, Fellatah, Nufi, and Bournou people. Mr. Thomas King, a Yoruban, went as schoolmaster and catechist. The Rev. J. F. Schön, one of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, was received on board the *Albert*, and Mr. Samuel Crowther, who at this time was a teacher in the Fourah Bay Institution, sailed in the *Soudan*.

During the week of their stay at Free Town, much prayer for the safety and success of the expedition was offered up by Christians of various denominations; and on one occasion, at the invitation of the chaplain of the colony, the Rev. D. F. Morgan, no less than 1,500 Negroes assembled for Divine service in the Free Town church.

On the 2nd of July, the ships again set forward, and the prayers and blessings that had risen from so many British hearts on their departure from England, were now repeated again and again from the mingled tribes of Africans at Sierra Leone—God speed the vessels, and their noble-minded crews!

We shall pass over the incidents of the voyage to Cape Palmas, and along the coast of the Gulf of

Guinea; we will not even dwell upon the landing at Cape Coast of the two converted Ashantee princes, who had been brought to England by a Wesleyan missionary, and were now returning with the hope of benefiting their native land.

But we shall take the opportunity of giving our readers a more definite idea of the principal objects aimed at in this expedition, and which the Commissioners were to further as far as possible. The most simple of these was to obtain a knowledge of the climate, soil, and inhabitants of the countries bordering the Niger, and to inspire the people with confidence in our friendly intentions towards them. The more important object was to prevail on the native chiefs to enter into a treaty with Great Britain to suppress the slave-trade in their own dominions, and discourage it in others; to abolish human sacrifices; to enter into commercial relations with us, and to allow missionaries and merchants to reside among them. And there would be the less difficulty, it was hoped, in forming these treaties, as it would only be necessary to conclude them with the three principal chiefs—the kings of Iboe, on the western bank, of Egarra on the east, and of Rabba, 500 miles from the sea, which it was intended should be their final point of destination. The two first of these were heathen, but the last was a Fella-tah; and if our readers remember what we said of

the Fellatahs in our second chapter, they will be aware that more difficulty in making these arrangements was to be expected from him than from the others. And, if it should be found practicable, land was to be purchased on some convenient spot for the establishment of a model farm.

The ships were safely brought to the mouth of the river Nun, and on August the 13th, they crossed the dangerous Bar. Steaming rapidly up the river, they soon left behind them the swamps and mangroves of the Delta; and on entering the main stream found themselves in a better peopled and better cultivated country.

The period of the annual rising of the river had been chosen as likely to be less unfavourable to the constitutions of the Europeans, but it added much to the difficulty of intercourse with the people, as many of the villages were inundated, and the inhabitants had removed for a time to higher ground. The communication among themselves was not, however, at all suspended; boats were continually passing and re-passing; and it was curious to see the surprise awakened by the sight of the steamers.

They had evidently, in this part of the river, been accustomed to the sight of white men, though their constant inquiry for "rum" showed too plainly what had been the character of their intercourse.* But

* Capt. Cook, in a kind communication lately made by him,

a steamer they had never seen ; and they stared with astonishment as the apparently self-moving monster floated on against the stream, and in some cases they expressed their delight by dancing to the movement of the paddles. One of the chiefs, higher up the river, gravely inquired whether the English always lived on the water, or whether they had lands and houses like other people.

Yams, and the few other vegetables this part of the country produced, were readily brought to the ships to barter for trifles of European manufacture ; and a little incident occurred on one of these occasions which we will not pass over. It was soon after they entered the river, and a number of canoes had crowded round the "Albert," when the Brass interpreter was struck with the countenance of a man in one of them, whose features he thought he recognised. Many years had passed since the interpreter had been an exile from his native country ; all recollections of the scenery around had been effaced from his memory, and the man he thus singled out had passed from middle life to declining

says, "We found the character of the natives improve as we advanced into the interior ; they were more straightforward, simple and honest in their dealings, and careless about rum or tobacco, for which the natives near the coast were incessantly asking,—an evident proof how much the moral character of the people near the sea-coast had been deteriorated by their intercourse with Europeans."

age; yet his heart beat truly when it suggested to him that he knew him.

The village on the bank was *Anya*, where the interpreter had passed the first years of his captivity; and this man had been his faithful nurse and doctor through a long and suffering illness. We may imagine the astonishment of the man at being thus recognised; he knew that his young friend had been taken to the coast and sold to the white men, by whom he believed he had been killed and eaten, and now to see him standing before him in European dress, and with much of European manner and intelligence, and to hear his narrative of all that had befallen him, was almost too much for the old man to bear. "If God himself,"* said he, "had told me this, I could not have believed it, but now I see it with my own eyes."†

The first place of any importance that they came to was *Aboh*, the capital of the *Iboe* country, on the western bank; and a deputation was sent to the king, *Obi*, explaining to him the objects of the expedition, and inviting him to come on board the steamer the following day.

Simon Jonas was the *Iboe* interpreter, and when

* See page 32.

† Several incidents of this kind occurred during the passage up the river, and must have left a favourable impression on the minds of the natives.

he explained to him that one of the articles of the treaty would be the suppression of the slave-trade, Obi hesitated, saying, "That is a hard thing to do." With great readiness, Jonas acknowledged that it was a hard thing to give it up, but asserted that it was harder still to continue it. He drew a vivid picture of the misery it was even then causing in the Iboe country itself—the desolating wars, the separation of parents and children, the ruined villages, the uncultivated fields, the want of confidence between man and man; then referring to his own experience, he described the sufferings of himself and two hundred other boys on their way from the interior to the coast; told of many that had died from hunger and fatigue, of others that had been offered up as sacrifices by the king of Bonny, and of some among these poor lads who had committed suicide. He spoke of the slave-ship in which he had been embarked, of the bad provisions, the want of water, the crowded hold, the deaths of many, and the throwing overboard of some still alive, who were considered past recovery; and wound up his frightful narrative with the thrilling question, "Is it not harder to continue it than to give it up?"

During all this time Obi listened with the deepest attention, and when the interpreter went on to speak of his liberation, of Sierra Leone, of the English, and of the love of Christians towards the Africans,

he appeared much moved; he rose up and shook hands with all the Europeans present, as if to tell them how much he felt their kindness to his people. He readily agreed to go on board the *Albert* on the following morning, when the Commissioners entered fully into the objects of the expedition, and the terms of the proposed treaty. When it was about to be signed, Obi was told that it was the custom of Christians to ask the blessing of God before they proceeded to any important undertaking; and the whole party present knelt down, while the chaplain offered up a suitable prayer. They were quite unprepared, however, for the effect this had on the Chief; he had knelt down with the rest, but hearing a prayer in a strange tongue offered up with earnestness and devotion, he became dreadfully alarmed, imagining that they were using some incantations against himself or his people. When they rose from their knees, they found him trembling like an aspen leaf, and with the perspiration rolling down his cheeks from agony of mind;* he called out loudly for his "arrisi," or charm; and his head-man, who was on deck, hearing his cry, hastened down to his succour, and was about to commence the performance of some counteracting heathen rites in the cabin. He was

* Mr. Schön, in relating this, mentions it as not an unfrequent occurrence at Sierra Leone, when a newly arrived African enters a place of worship for the first time.

however stopped, and the interpreter with some difficulty succeeded in quieting his mind.

By degrees Obi quite recovered his serenity, entered into friendly conversation with the party present, and finally signed the treaty with evident sincerity. Captain Trotter, whose views rose far above even the most important temporal advantages, lost no fitting opportunity of bringing forward the subject of Christianity. Obi, with great simplicity, confessed his utter ignorance of God, and expressed a strong desire that teachers should be sent to himself and his people. No promise could be made to him that any white men could be sent, but a hope was held out that he might perhaps be visited by some black people from Sierra Leone, who had learnt to know and love God.

Mr. Schön then desired Jonas to read a few verses from the English Bible, and translate them into Iboe. The portion selected was the beginning of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and Mr. Schön adds: "Obi was uncommonly taken with this. That a white man should read and write was a matter of course, but that a black man, an Iboe man, one who had been a slave in times past, should know these wonderful things, was more than he could have anticipated. He seized Jonas's hand, squeezed it most heartily, saying, 'You must stop with me; you must teach me and my people; the

white people can go up the river without you, they must leave you here till they come back, or till other people come.' ”

Jonas could not be left behind just then, but a few days afterwards, when his services as interpreter were no longer needed, he went back to Abob, and remained there till the expedition returned down the river.

This request of Obi's was doubly satisfactory, as it not only proved the sincerity with which he had promised to proclaim the abolition of the slave-trade throughout all his dominions, but as it showed that Negroes are not unwilling to receive instruction from their own people, as has sometimes been supposed.

The next important place they arrived at was *Iddah* on the eastern bank, the capital of *Egarra*, (or *Igalla*,) and the residence of the *Attah*, (or king,) whose dominions extend northward to the confluence of the *Tchadda* and *Niger*, and who claims also the country of *Kakanda*, on the opposite side of the river.

The *Attah* of *Egarra* showed the same friendly disposition as *Obi* had done, the same willingness to enter into the treaty, and the same desire for religious teachers to be sent to him. He had, however, a much higher sense of his own importance; for when the deputation waited upon him as they had

done upon Obi, and invited him on board the steamer to receive a message from the Queen of England, he peremptorily refused, as being beneath his dignity. "I am a king," he exclaimed, "and the king never puts his foot into a canoe. If the captain of the canoe wishes to see me, he must come on shore, or not see me at all; the king follows nobody. God made the king to be like himself, and it was never known that the king went into a canoe." He complained of the presents not being good enough, for as "he was like God, the present ought to be worthy of him and of God!" &c. And this from a man who could neither read nor write, who appeared in state with bells round his legs, a quantity of glass beads round his neck, and "a pair of carpet slippers large enough for an elephant," and whose only really good article of clothing was a red velvet robe that had been given him by some previous traveller! But pride is never at a loss for materials on which to build a temple to itself!

Captain Trotter and his friends did not think it worth their while to contend this matter with the great man; they went on shore, and this homage being paid to his dignity, he signed the treaty as readily as Obi had done.

The Attah also very readily agreed to the purchase of land on which to form an English settlement, and to commence a model farm; and a tract of

twenty miles along the banks was formally taken possession of for these purposes in the name of the Queen. A few Europeans and several Africans, with Mr. T. King from Sierra Leone, were landed as quickly as possible with provisions and implements of various kinds, and it was very encouraging to see with what joy the inhabitants of the newly-purchased land welcomed the prospect of having white men for their neighbours and protectors.*

* They had suffered much from the inroads of the Fellatahs, and within the limits of the newly-purchased land there still remained the ruins of what had evidently not long before been a large and populous town—*Addu Kuddu*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGER EXPEDITION.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”—Psalm cxvi. 15.

SEPTEMBER had now arrived, and as its earlier days passed on, they left our party near the confluence of the rivers, full of hope, and thankfully encouraged by the success that had hitherto attended them. Satisfactory treaties had been concluded with the only two native chiefs with whom they had yet communicated; wherever they had landed, the chiefs and people had expressed a wish for English to settle among them; and the attah had permitted them to purchase the land they desired for the proposed model farm near Addu Kuddu.

The unhealthy portions of the river had now been passed, and no sickness had appeared among them; and they were entering a country with hills and fantastic rocks that reminded Mr. Schön of the ruined castles on the Rhine, and where there was every prospect of an increase of health and vigour. There was no reason to doubt their reaching Rabbah before the river began to fall; and if they could

prevail upon its king also to sign the treaty, the principal objects of the expedition would be effected.

But God, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, had willed it otherwise; dark clouds gathered round, and overcast their bright prospects; and there are few narratives more touchingly painful than the subsequent history of this expedition, especially when we consider its object and its aims. We must only glance at it.

A malignant fever broke out in one of the ships, baffling the skill of the medical officers to arrest its progress, till, on Sept. 17, we read of fifty-five on the sick-list, some of whom were officers, and almost all were Europeans. Six of these died in the course of the next two days, and were buried in the ground just purchased for a model farm; and thus a cemetery was formed where it had been hoped to lay the foundation of a living temple.*

The sickness increased; Captain W. Allen and Captain Cook were both taken ill; and as there appeared no hope of amendment while they remained in that part of the river, it was decided that the Wilberforce † and Soudan should take the invalids

* See Dr. Krapff's letter in Church Missionary Intelligence for February, 1852, page 29.

† Speaking of the Wilberforce at this time, Mr. Schön says, "It is more like an hospital than a man-of-war. Quarter-deck, fore-castle, and cabins full of patients. The sight is enough to melt a heart of stone."

on board and return immediately to the sea; while Captain Trotter and Captain B. Allen should still prosecute the original design, and, if possible, get up to Rabbah in the *Albert*. The ships parted company on the 21st of September; and as the *Albert* ascended the river, the spirits of all revived, the air felt fresh and clear, and they hoped they had left all malaria behind them. This was a delusive hope. Before night Captain B. Allen was laid low; and as they proceeded, another and another was added to the melancholy list. Nor was the aspect of the country through which they were passing calculated to raise their spirits. It was inhabited by the *Nufi* people, whose capital had formerly been *Rabbah*, but the *Fellatahs* had taken *Rabbah* and overrun the country, and *Sumo Sariki*, the present *Fellatah* king, was frequently sending his soldiers to the towns and villages to exact money or to seize the people.

There were some *Nufi* people from *Sierra Leone* on board the *Albert*, and their hearts ached at the sad condition of their countrymen; they spoke to them of the English, of *Sierra Leone*, and of Christianity; and the oppressed people anxiously intreated to be taken under British protection. In a few days the party reached the *Nufi* town of *Egga*, containing 7000 inhabitants. It was the best built and largest place they had yet seen, and as it had hitherto been

comparatively free from Fellatah exactions, the people were industrious and thriving.

Rogang, the chief, was an intelligent and well-disposed man, and professed himself willing to join in the treaty, were it not that he feared the displeasure of his master at Rabbah, who claimed from him allegiance and tribute. He had not himself embraced the religion of his oppressors, but many of his people had done so, and its baneful influence was very visible among them. The Albert was now 320 miles from the coast, the river was beginning to fall, the sickness continued, and Captain Trotter had begun to doubt whether it would not be necessary to give up Rabbah, and return at once to the sea. But at this juncture all doubt was removed, for he was himself seized with the fever, and only one officer remained who was able to take any duty.

But though he felt it impossible to proceed, yet neither illness of body nor prostration of mental power could divert Capt. Trotter from the great objects he had in view; and before he would give the order to return, he arranged a communication with the king of Rabbah through the friendly chief of Egga. *Rogang* readily undertook to convey to his master a friendly message from the Commissioners, stating the objects of the expedition, and their hope of reaching his capital in the course of the following year. The message was accompanied

by the present of a rich velvet robe and a handsomely bound Arabic Bible.

We wish we could tell our readers what had become of this Bible. We know that it reached the king, and was, with the other present, graciously received by him. We know too that, a few years later, the Nufi tribes combined against their oppressor, made war on Rabbah, and destroyed it; and drove Sumo Seriki to take refuge in Sokatu. Beyond this we know nothing; but we can scarcely think that this solitary copy of God's Holy Word was suffered to perish in the flames that consumed the capital.

Perhaps the conqueror seized it, and now in the new capital of Ladi, on the opposite bank of the Niger, the ear of *Dasaba*, the present Nufi king, may sometimes catch a word of truth from its sacred pages. Or perhaps it was carried away by the vanquished; and is it not possible that it may have fallen into the hands of some poor pilgrim bound for Mecca, and may even now, as he journeys through the burning desert, be refreshing his soul with its life-giving streams, and gradually leading his heart from Mahomet to Christ?

One thing we do know—that Jehovah himself has said, "My Word shall not return unto me void," and we trust he may have granted that this blessed volume, sent by a Christian heart from the couch of

sickness, sorrow, and anxiety, shall have prospered "in the thing whereunto it was sent," and have led some perishing sinner to Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost.

It was on the 4th of October that the unwelcome order passed along the ship: "Draw up the anchor, and return quickly to the sea." The anchor was duly heaved, and the ship's head turned round, but the latter part of the order was not so easily complied with. The engineers had fallen sick; for two anxious days and nights no steam could be got up; and the only progress the vessel made was slowly drifting with the stream. What would have become of them we cannot think, had not Dr. Stanger, who had accompanied the expedition for scientific purposes, made a determined effort, and by means of a treatise on engineering, and with the feeble help of one of the engineers who was beginning to recover, succeeded at last in getting the engines to work.

It was still, however, a time of intense anxiety, for the navigation became every day more difficult as the waters fell, and discovered shoals and sand-banks over which they had passed safely on their upward course. The greatest watchfulness was needed to prevent the vessel from running aground; for had she done so, there was not strength left among the whole crew to get her off again.

Death continued to thin their numbers; the two

commanders were still dangerously ill, and now Mr. Willie, who had for some days been the only efficient officer on board, was seized with what proved to be his last illness. We cannot wonder to find Mr. Schön at this time, October the 8th, writing thus: "I have endured personal sufferings, family afflictions sore and grievous, and have witnessed and shared in the calamities of others during my eight years' residence at Sierra Leone; but nothing that I have hitherto seen or felt can be compared with our present condition. Pain of body, distress of mind, weakness, sorrow, sobbing and crying, surround us on all sides. The healthy, if so they can be called, are more like walking shadows than men of enterprise. All human skill is baffled, all human means fall short. Forgive us, O God, if on them we have too much depended, and been forgetful of thee; and let the light of thy countenance again shine upon us that we may be healed."

But these "walking shadows" had hearts of British strength and Christian energy; and it was owing, under God, to their unflinching exertions, that the 'Albert' and any of those on board were saved.

Mr. Willie's illness left no one to navigate the ship along its dangerous course; but this important office was undertaken by Dr. MacWilliam, in addition to the constant attention required by his now

twenty-six patients; while Dr. Stanger, whose days were still devoted to working the engines, gave up part of every night to the assisting Dr. MacWilliam in his medical duties. Mr. Schön and Mr. Crowther watched by the beds of the sick and dying, and found ample employment in ministering to their bodily and spiritual necessities.

And yet how brightly in those dark days shone out the lustre of Divine grace! Some who had thought but little on salvation, were now led to cry in earnest, "What must I do to be saved?" while in those who had already given their hearts to God, this fiery trial served but to purify "the fine gold." Captain Trotter, in the prospect of a speedy dissolution, was calm and collected; his mind indeed set on heavenly things, but alive to all that was going on around him; and, as far as strength would allow, aiding by his valuable counsel and advice. Mr. Schön had to rejoice, though with weeping, over the dying beds of several; of Captain Bird Allen in particular, he says: "All the Christian graces shine out in him. He feels with the Apostle, 'To me to live is Christ, to die is gain;' and if there be a prevailing desire in his mind, it is to be absent from the body and present with the Lord."

It is consoling, too, to find Mr. Schön afterwards adding: "There has not been one whom I have attended in their sickness and at their death, who did

not know perfectly well that the climate was dangerous in the extreme, and had *counted the cost*, before engaging in the hazardous undertaking. And, to their honour be it spoken, no expressions of disappointment or regret did I ever hear; on the contrary, they appeared in general to derive no small consolation from the conscious purity of their motives, and the goodness of the cause in which they had voluntarily embarked."

In a few days they again reached the model farm, but to their grief, found that all the Europeans who had been left there were ill also, and that it was necessary to take them on board. The prospects of the farm itself were most encouraging, but as it was found necessary to relinquish the undertaking altogether in the course of the next year, we shall not enter into any particulars.

As they pursued their melancholy voyage down the river, they felt it was a token for good to them, that on their anchoring again off the town of Aboh they received, notwithstanding their altered circumstances, the same ready kindness from Obi and his people as they had experienced before. They did all in their power to help them, bringing wood, goats, fowls, yams and plantains. "Obi's prompt assistance," says Dr. MacWilliam, "was of the highest importance. He is a fine character, and assuredly did not discredit the high opinion we had formed of

him. He was melted into pity when he saw the two captains sick in their cabins.*”

At this time only one white sailor remained to assist Dr. MacWilliam in the navigation of the ship; Dr. Stanger's hard work and constant exposure had considerably affected his health; they were still 100 miles from the mouth of the river, and when they should reach it there would be the bar to be passed, which in their disabled state seemed scarcely possible; and we may imagine what gloomy forebodings must have filled the minds of all, when suddenly the unexpected and joyful cry was heard — “A steamer in sight!” It proved to be the *Ethiope*, commanded by Mr. Beecroft, ever active and ever ready to give assistance wherever assistance is needed. He came on board with his own engineer, and now the *Albert* passed so swiftly down the stream,

* At Aboh they took again on board Simon Jonas, who had, it will be remembered, been sent back at the desire of the chief (page 69). He gave a very encouraging account of all that had passed during the three weeks he had sojourned there. The treaty had been faithfully adhered to in Aboh itself, and had been proclaimed in all the distant towns. Jonas had been most kindly treated by Obi; had spoken of Christianity to willing listeners among old and young, and had begun to teach English to the children, who flocked to him every day in great numbers. He was quite delighted with all that occurred, and would willingly have remained there. Obi again and again repeated his wish for teachers, and for a regular trade with England. Alas! his wishes are not yet complied with.

that on the evening of October the 14th, she reached the sea, and was safely carried across the dreaded bar. "On Mr. Beecroft," says Mr. Schön, "and on his exertions, our safety and the safety of the *Albert*, under God, depended." The *Albert* remained at Fernando Po some little time, and many of the invalids regained their health and strength, but Captain Bird Allen, and several other officers and men died soon after their arrival: out of the 190 Europeans who embarked in this service, 41 fell victims to the fever.*

Thus ended the Niger Expedition. By some it was spoken of as a failure; and to those who look only on the surface of things, it might possibly at the time have appeared so; but those who love to trace the developments of God's purposes of mercy will look on it as the germ of spiritual and temporal blessings to Central Africa.†

In the Yoruba mission, the Christian sees with thankfulness one plant of vigorous growth that promises to spread its branches far and wide over the lands on the western border of the river; and

* There were, besides the Europeans, 108 Africans on board, and not one of these suffered severely.

† The immediate advantages of the expedition were also very important; it brought us into friendly intercourse with the people of three hundred miles of country, inspired them with confidence in the English, and showed them practically the fruits of Christianity.

surely we may believe that it will not be long before, on its eastern side, another slip shall be planted of that "Tree of Life," whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, beneath whose shadow not only the kings of Iboe and Egarra* may find a "sure resting place," but whose boughs may stretch over those populous nations of whose existence we are only beginning to be acquainted.†

The banks of the Niger have, as it were, already been taken possession of for Christ by the bodies of his faithful people who sleep beneath them; while the record of all who lost their lives in this noble enterprise is with Him in whose sight the death and sufferings of His saints are "precious." And we would praise His name that He is permitting the survivors to see, even in this life, His acceptance and blessing of their labour of disinterested love for His name's sake.

* Pages 68, 69.

† Through Drs. Barth, Overweg, &c.

CHAPTER VII.

REV. H. TOWNSEND'S VISIT TO ABBEOKUTA.

"Get you up, and see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein—and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."—Num. xiii. 17—20.

"Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."—Ibid. xiii. 30.

THE return of Mr. Schön, Mr. Crowther, and their companions from their expedition up the Niger, was hailed with delight at Sierra Leone; and the report they brought of the friendly disposition of the people they had met with, and their anxiety for intercourse with the English, quickened the intense desire already felt by the Christian Negroes of various tribes that missionaries should be sent to their own different countries.

This, however, was impossible, and the Church Missionary Society was obliged to refuse even the pressing intreaties of the *Nusi* people, who, though few in number in the colony, had been so distressed at the account their brethren gave of the misery and degradation of their country,* that they held meetings among themselves, subscribed to the amount of

£10, and sent the money with an urgent appeal to the Society that they would not delay to send a missionary to Rabbah, which, though then in the hands of the Fellatahs,* they still considered the capital of their own land. /

But the more the Committee heard of the *Yoruba* country, the more encouraged they were as to the practicability and desirableness of establishing a mission within its limits; and as the circumstances we have mentioned seemed to point out Abbeokuta as the most eligible spot, it was decided that Mr. Townsend, one of the Society's catechists at Sierra Leone, should immediately proceed thither to obtain the necessary information. We may conceive the joy with which the Christian Yorubans heard of this decision. It seemed to them now beyond a doubt that a mission would be formed; they knew the delight it would give to their brethren already returned thither, and they anticipated the time when all spiritual hindrances being removed, they might themselves return to their fatherland without risk to their own souls.

It had been arranged that Andrew Wilhelm and John M'Cormack, † both of them of the Egba tribe

* Page 74.

† An interesting circumstance is related of M'Cormack. When taken captive he had been torn from a wife and two children, and of course never expected to see either of them again. He had been many years in Sierra Leone, when, walk-

of Yorubans, and both valuable members of Mr. Graf's congregation at Hastings, should accompany Mr. Townsend, and many hearts and hands were at work to provide some little article of use or comfort for the travellers.

A free passage to Badagry was given by three native young men who had lately purchased a small slaver, and were about to make their first trading voyage, and who thus, as it were, consecrated the first fruits of their labour to the good of their country. Often, as Mr. Townsend passed along the streets, he saw the people pointing him out as—"There is the white man going to our country;" and when he and his party embarked on November 14, 1842, it was amidst many a hearty "God bless you, Massa, and go with you!"

They landed at Badagry on December 19, and found that they had already been preceded by other messengers of peace. The earliest emigrants from Sierra Leone to Badagry, in 1839-40, had been so
ing one day with a friend from Hastings to Waterloo, they met a young woman of whom the friend happened to remark, "She is from your country." M'Cormack doubted it, and merely to satisfy his friend, went after her, and began to ask her some questions, when to his inexpressible delight and astonishment, he found she was one of his own daughters, who had, like himself, been captured and recaptured and brought to Sierra Leone some years later than her father. She had embraced Christianity and had married, and was actually living close to her father without their having recognised each other.

kindly received by Wawu, chief of part of the town called the English Town, that some of them determined to remain there instead of going on into the interior.* A few of these were Christians belonging to the Wesleyan congregation at Sierra Leone, and their intreaties for spiritual help had led to a visit from the Rev. T. B. Freeman, so well known as the active Wesleyan missionary among the Ashantees.

When Mr. Townsend arrived at Badagry, Mr. Freeman had just returned from a visit to Abbeokuta, and the account he gave of his reception was of the most encouraging description. Wonderfully, indeed, had God disposed the hearts of Shodeke† and his people towards the English, and as Mr. Freeman drew near to Abbeokuta, he received a very unexpected proof of respect by the appearance of a party of horsemen sent to escort him into the town. Some of these were Sierra Leone Christians, and "I shall never," writes Mr. Freeman, "forget the joy that beamed in their countenances as they seized me by the hand and bade me welcome. 'Ah!' said they, 'we told our king that the English people loved us, and that missionaries would be sure to follow us to Abbeokuta; but he would hardly believe that any one would come so very far to do us good. Now what we told our king is really come to pass! O Massa, you are welcome, welcome, welcome!'"

His entrance into the town was as gratifying as his welcome from these Christians had been. This was the first time an European had ever been seen there; the narrow streets were lined with crowds of natives, shouting out "Aku, Aku!"* as he passed along, recognising in him the representative of a nation and of a religion, to which they owed so many of their long-lost relatives.

Shodeke's reception of him was as cordial as that of his people; he seemed overjoyed at his arrival, showed him every attention; and on one occasion, as they were walking together, clasped him in his arms in a transport of delight.

Mr. Townsend visited Abbeokuta very soon after Mr. Freeman's return to Badagry, and his welcome was as hearty and as warm as that of his predecessor had been. The same friendly escort came to meet him, there were the same eager salutations from the crowded streets, only that some among the mass had taught their tongues to give him an English greeting, and shouted aloud as he passed along, "How do you do, white man? how do you do, you that are coming?"

Mr. Townsend found Shodeke a man of an evidently superior mind, and able to appreciate in no ordinary degree the benefits of civilisation and Christianity. He warmly expressed his sense of gratitude to the British Government for all it had

* A native salutation, meaning, "How do you do? How do you do?"

done for his people, declared his determination to suppress slave-dealing in his own dominions, and to use his influence with surrounding tribes, and spoke of the earnest desire he had for English missionaries and merchants to settle at Abbeokuta. He even offered to give Mr. Townsend any site that he thought most eligible for future mission-premises, but this offer Mr. Townsend did not feel himself at that time at liberty to accept.

Several touching instances of the re-union of relations occurred during Mr. Townsend's short stay here. Andrew Wilhelm discovered several members of his own family, although it was twenty years since he had been enslaved. John M'Cormack one day went into the market to make some purchases, and fancying he could recognise the features of the woman who was serving him, ventured to address her by the name of a sister from whom he had been so long separated. She replied to it, wondering to hear the sound from the lips of a stranger, when an explanation took place, and she proved to be indeed the beloved one from whom he had been torn. She introduced him to many others of his family; he talked to them of CHRIST and of his Gospel, and they promised to attend the instruction of the missionary should one be sent to them.*

* Another of Mr. Townsend's companions came to him one day in great delight, bringing with him a woman who he introduced with the exclamation, "I done find my wife!"

One visitor gave Mr. Townsend great pain, it was an aged woman, who had heard a rumour of her son being among the rescued ones at Sierra Leone, and who came to inquire about him. But she knew only his country heathen name, and neither Mr. Townsend nor any one with him could trace him out by that. Day after day did she thus come, with what she hoped might prove some fresh clue, and every day was she obliged to return unsatisfied.

The report of Mr. Townsend, after his return to Sierra Leone, was so favourable, that the Parent Committee of the Church Missionary Society determined to establish a mission at Abbeokuta with as little delay as possible. Mr. Townsend was invited home to be presented for ordination, and it was arranged that he should afterwards proceed to his destination in company with the Rev. C. A. Gollmer, and Mr. Crowther, who had already been to England for the same purpose, and had been, what the people called, "crowned a minister," in June of this same year, 1843.

During Mr. Townsend's absence, the tide of emigration continued to flow towards Abbeokuta, and, in the prospect of a mission being soon established there, Mr. Graf was again induced to part with Andrew Wilhelm, that he might act as catechist till a regular ministry could be established.

The letters of the Sierra Leone missionaries, about

this time, contain some very pleasing instances of the gratitude felt by some of these emigrants towards the Church Missionary Society; but the only one we shall mention, was the following, as related by one of them:—"This morning, one of my school-boys, an interesting little fellow, called to see me. On my asking him what he wanted, he replied, that he only came to take leave of me, as he was going with his father to the Yoruba country. I asked him if he was glad to go. He answered, 'I should have been more glad if you were going too, for there are plenty of people who would be too much glad to see you there.' I said, 'the people do not know me, and how is it that they would be glad to see me?' To which he answered, 'Sir, you know the plenty of people who have left for that country, and they all prayed much before they went, that white missionary may come and teach them God's Book.' I told him that I believed God would very soon send black and white ministers, who would teach them the way of salvation. The little fellow was very pleased to hear this, and when I asked him what he intended to do till they should arrive there, answered, 'I will teach the children to read and to sew, and will do all I can to make them good.' I desired him never to forget the lessons he had himself learnt in the school and in church, which he promised not to do, and on taking leave he said, 'Sir, will you please to take this for

the Church Missionary Society? it is all I have got,' holding out to me a penny, while the large tears were rolling down his jet black cheeks."

While waiting for Mr. Townsend's return from England, Mr. Crowther was engaged in ministering to his own countrymen in Free Town; it is interesting to see what were his feelings of joy and thankfulness, and deep self-abasement, when in January 1844, he stood forth the first ordained native minister of Western Africa, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, in *their own tongue*, to the hundreds around him, rescued like himself from slavery of body and soul, and invited them to enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Yorubans, Iboes and Calabars, were among his congregation; often had they listened to the glad tidings in the language of their deliverers, and the English tongue was dear to them from many associations; but hitherto the Gospel had never been declared to them in the beloved accents of their own Yoruba,* and we do not wonder at the emotions of which Mr. Crowther speaks. "Although," he says, "the language was my own native one, with which I am well acquainted, yet on this occasion, it appeared as if I were a babe just learning to utter my mother-tongue. The work in which I was engaged, the

* The neighbouring countries generally can speak Yoruba, though it is not their native language.

place where I stood, and the congregation before me, were altogether so new and strange, the whole seemed to me like a dream. But the Lord helped me."

Some of the prayers were not yet translated, and those he read in English; the rest of the service, and the sermon, which was from Luke i. 35, were in Yoruba, and after the blessing, the whole church rang with "Ke oh sheh, Ke oh sheh!" So let it be, so let it be!

Mr. Townsend arrived at Sierra Leone in December 1844, and now the day arrived, so long looked for and prayed for by the Christian Yorubans, when missionaries should be sent to their beloved country. On the 18th of the same month the party sailed, consisting of Mr. Gollmer, Mr. Townsend, and Mr. Crowther, with their wives and children; William Marsh and Edward Philips, native catechists; Mark Willoughby, interpreter; and several carpenters and labourers. Crowds were assembled on the beach to take leave of them, and the farewells on both sides were very affecting. The emigrants scarcely, when the moment came, knew how to tear themselves from their long-tried friends and their adopted country, and they were at last hurried into the boats amidst the benedictions and the prayers of thousands.

CHAPTER VIII.

BADAGRY.

“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

ALONG the northern coast of the Gulf of Guinea there runs a kind of “backwater,” called by Europeans the Lagoon, and by the natives the river Gssa. It begins near Cape St. Paul on the west, and after receiving a few tributary streams from the north, falls into the river Ogūn at Lagos. It varies very much in breadth, now spreading out into a lake, and now contracted to half a mile across, but always so gentle, smooth, and clear, and so adorned on either side with trees of luxuriant foliage, that “the beautiful Ossa” has become its frequent epithet, even among the European residents.

The space between the Lagoon and the sea is of various breadths, and in some parts thickly studded with towns and villages, and adorned with trees. Opposite Badagry it is a strip of sandy soil, with grass and bushes, about a mile across, against which the sea dashes with such impetuous fury that the landing is generally dangerous, and at some seasons of the year scarcely practicable.

Like the surf on the Coromandel coast of India, it rolls towards the shore in three successive ridges, separated from each other by deep troughs. Flat-bottomed canoes take the place of the massouli boat of Madras, and as the little vessel shoots up the watery ascent, its prow may sometimes be seen several feet beyond and above the summit of the wave before it dashes down into the channel below, again and again to rise and fall with the same impetuosity. Should it unhappily not have reached the crest of the wave before it begins to arch, its doom is certain; it is instantly filled with water or upset, and if the cargo is saved at all, it generally is severely injured.* But not so the canoe-men themselves; they care little for the accident; flinging their paddles from them, they may be seen floating, like some inhabitant of the ocean, amid the foam of the broken surf, till they can reach the boat, and, clinging tightly to it, are carried by succeeding waves safe to shore. Here our missionary party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Gollmer, Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, Mr. and Mrs. Crowther, and their companions, landed in safety in January 1845, and were kindly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Annear, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

* The readers of the Children's Missionary Magazine will doubtless remember that it was here that the Abbeokuta bell, sent out by Miss Barber's youthful contributors, was lost.

They were full of hope and energy; and their first business was to send off a messenger to Abbeokuta to inform Shodeke of their arrival, and their intention of proceeding thither in a few days. But God's ways are not our ways; and in a moment their plans were disconcerted and their spirits damped by the news of the death of Shodeke. The authority which this chief held over the others, the superiority of his mind, the steadfast desire he had always manifested to have a mission established among his people, and Mr. Townsend's previous acquaintance with him,* had all combined to give them a confidence in him which they could not feel towards the other chiefs till they should have the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with them, and they feared that this event would prove a severe blow to the proposed mission. They found too that the roads from Badagry to Abbeokuta were very unsafe in consequence of disputes with the people of *Adu*, a town nearly in the direct route, and who were continually lying in wait for travellers either to plunder or to kidnap them; and this helped to perplex their plans. When their messenger returned from Abbeokuta, he brought very friendly messages from the chiefs, with assurances that their desire for them to reside among them continued as steadfast as in the life-time of Shodeke, but urging them strongly

* Page 88.

to delay coming for the present, till they should hear from them that it was advisable. The fresh accounts their messenger brought of the danger of the roads, and of the unsettled state of things in Abbeokuta itself, confirmed the message of the chiefs, and plainly showed the missionaries that they had no alternative but to remain for the present where they were.

Badagry is a good-sized town, standing on the northern shore of the Lagoon, and numbering about 11,000 inhabitants. These are almost all Popos,* and are in a fearfully demoralized state; but there are a few Yorubans, and among them some Sierra emigrants, who, as we have said, have settled in the eastern quarter of the town,† and are much less degraded than the rest of the population. The English factory is in this part, and also the Wesleyan mission-premises; and here our missionaries determined likewise to take up their abode.

There were several circumstances that concurred to make Badagry appear a desirable place for a permanent mission-station—not only on account of its own population, but as being the resort of strangers from all quarters, and as affording, by means of the Lagoon, ready access to the numerous and well-peopled towns and villages in its neighbourhood. It would also facilitate the transmission of

* The same tribe as the Dahomians.

† Page 87

stores to the interior. It was finally settled, therefore, that Mr. Gollmer should take up his abode there, and that Mr. Townsend and Mr. Crowther should proceed to Abbeokuta as soon as the way should be again open.

Badagry was anything but a pleasant or a promising station. The slave-trade, and the unlimited indulgence in rum supplied to them by the European slave-ships, had led the people far deeper into brutality and vice, than those of the surrounding smaller towns. They seemed swallowed up in sensual enjoyments, and their selfish avarice rendered it very difficult for the missionary to obtain an intelligent listener.

The idolatry of the Popos is of the most debasing character. They have Ifa and Sango, and the other deities of the Yorubans, but have added others to them; their national deity is a black, venomous snake, to whom they pay great respect, and they avowedly worship the evil spirit himself.

Human sacrifices are not unfrequent, and the bones scattered round the fetish-houses, tell of many such deeds of darkness. These sacrifices are generally carefully concealed from the eyes of Europeans; but on one occasion Mr. Smith* suddenly came upon one that had been lately offered up. It was in a beautiful grove at Ajido, on the banks of the Ossa,

* The Rev. Isaac Smith, who joined the mission in 1848.

and the contrast of the loveliness of the scene, as God had made it, with the deep depravity of man, that was now defiling it, increased the painfulness of the sight.

The people of Badagry are slaves to superstitious fear, and not even their sordid love of money hinders them from lavishing it on swarms of priests and priestesses, who have little difficulty in turning the fears and credulity of their neighbours to their own advantage.

Like many other barbarous people, the Badagrians have a great dread of witchcraft, and many a poor, helpless, aged woman fell a victim to this fear while our missionaries were residing there. No sooner is a suspicion imagined against any one, than she is seized and dragged by the feet through the streets, amidst the cries and invectives of an excited mob, till death terminates her sufferings, and the body is then thrown into the fetish-grove.

The feeling of personal insecurity added much to the trials of the missionaries. Soon after their arrival at Badagry, Akitoye, the chief (or, as he is called, king) of Lagos, was conspired against by his nephew Kosoko, and obliged to flee, first taking refuge at Abbeokuta, and then at Badagry. Kosoko was a determined slave-dealer, of fierce ungoverned passions, and little scrupulous as to the means he took to gratify them. The burning down of great part

of Lagos, and the wholesale massacres, by his order, at the time of his uncle's expulsion, showed the cruelty of his disposition; and no sooner had he obtained the authority at Lagos, than he endeavoured to gain dominion over the whole of the Ossa, that the slave-trade might be carried on with less hindrance from the cruisers. To accomplish this, he formed alliances with the king of Dahomey, the Porto Novians, and some of the Badagry chiefs, against the Abbeokutans and Akitoye, and the town was kept in continued alarm. But neither the sense of personal danger, nor the unpromising nature of the soil on which they were working, could lead Mr. Gollmer or his fellow-labourers to quit the spot as long as it seemed the will of God that they should remain there.

It was only three months after their arrival that the small band sustained a heavy loss in the death of Mrs. Gollmer, who fell asleep in Jesus in April 1845; and this blow made the detention of Mr. Townsend and Mr. Crowther additionally welcome to the heart of her bereaved husband.

Their detention was not without its use in other respects. It afforded Mr. Townsend the opportunity of becoming in some degree acquainted with the Yoruban language, with its accents and intonations, which are so difficult for a foreigner to acquire, and yet are of so much importance; and it gave Mr.

Crowther time to continue his translations, and to commence a vocabulary, which would, it was hoped, assist in reducing the language to a more systematic order.

The work of the mission, too, was carried on far more efficiently than it could otherwise have been. A church and dwelling-house were built; a day and boarding-school for boys and a Sunday school for adults were established, and the streets, the markets, the palm-wine sheds, all heard the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. Visits too were paid to the chiefs at their own houses, and no means were left untried to awaken the people from their sleep of death. One of the most constant resorts of the missionaries was a large umbrella tree in the town, where a number of listeners often collected; but here, as indeed was generally the case, the cry, "We are hungry, we are hungry!" at the close of some searching appeal to their consciences, or of some touching declaration of the love of Christ, would painfully discourage the messenger of glad tidings, and show how the seed had only fallen on the way-side.*

Mr. Gollmer was also set at liberty to visit some of the neighbouring towns. One of these was Poka, nine miles from Badagry, with a population of 4,000.

* They frequently asked to be paid for coming to church, and sometimes for sending their children to school.

Here Mr. Gollmer and Mr. Crowther were courteously received; the chief, wrapped in a red cotton cloth, covered with beads of all colours, and with a crown and sceptre, came out of his house, and seated himself in the piazza to receive them. Having heard the purport of their visit, he exclaimed, "I praise you," and his words of welcome were echoed in a kind of chorus by a number of his wives and all the people present. The missionaries had a very interesting interview with the twelve elders of the town. They had more than once been deceived by white men, and were therefore at first very shy of entering into conversation; but when they found that the object of the missionaries was to declare to them the way of salvation, they replied that God himself must have sent them that message, and how could they do otherwise than attend to it. They did not care for presents, but begged for another visit, and hoped the travellers would proceed to the towns beyond them.

Another of the towns visited by Mr. Gollmer was *Ajido*, on the Ossa, towards Lagos. The chief here also was very friendly, and promised to send one of his sons to a boarding-school, which Mr. Gollmer had lately established in the mission-premises. Mr. Gollmer was accompanied in this visit by a Sierra Leone Christian, who with unspeakable thankfulness pointed out to him the barracoon in which he

had eighteen years before been confined for three months, and from which he had been shipped by his Portuguese purchasers.

But these recognitions of places and of persons, deeply affecting as each case was, individually considered, were of such frequent occurrence that we shall not attempt to record them, except in any special instance that may throw light on the general subject.

We do not intend to enter with any degree of fulness into the details of the missionary work at Badagry: the Popos have neglected their opportunities, and the station is now removed. We shall only return to it in a future chapter, to lay before our readers some few particulars which will enable them to have a clearer view of the whole.

CHAPTER IX.

ARRIVAL AT ABBEOKUTA.—COMMENCEMENT OF WORK THERE.—MR. CROWTHER'S REUNION WITH HIS MOTHER AND SISTERS.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."—Psalm xxxvii. 5.

SEVENTEEN months had now passed since our missionaries landed at Badagry, in the full persuasion that in not more than as many days they should be on their road to Abbeokuta. But days, and weeks, and months, had come and gone, and still they could not move. They had from time to time received very friendly messages from the chiefs there, expressing their unchanged desire to see them, but still assuring them that it was not yet safe to venture; and "hope deferred" was beginning to sadden the hearts of our friends, when it pleased God to open a way for them through a very unlikely channel, and to make the slave-trade itself the means of introducing the Gospel to the interior.

Domingo, the great slave-dealer at Porto Novo, found that the continued warfare between the Abbeokutans and the people of Adu injured his trade, by making the conveyance of slaves to the coast

more difficult and insecure than formerly, and he set about to effect a reconciliation. By means of some of his agents at Badagry, he succeeded in accomplishing this; peace was once more restored between Abbeokuta, Adu, and Badagry, and the road was again open.

The missionaries had taken advantage of the final embassy from Badagry to send with it one of their own people, charged with a message to the Abbeokutan chiefs, stating their unabated wish to settle among them, and their readiness to set out without delay.

Domingo, well aware that the introduction of Christianity and civilisation would interfere with his traffic, would gladly have prevented this message from being sent, but not being able to do this, he instructed his Badagrian friends to give so evil a report of the missionaries, as would, he hoped, effectually prevent their being invited to Abbeokuta.

But his scheme turned to his own discomfiture; the chiefs had too much discernment to be so easily deceived, and their reply must have grated harshly on the ears of the Badagrian messengers. "We can ourselves," said they, "tell who are our best friends—those who rescue our children from captivity and send them freely to us again, or those who bring goods to purchase them for perpetual slavery and misery. The English are our friends; and you, people of Badagry, take care; for if any wrong is

done to them in your town, you must answer to us for it." After this spirited reply, they summoned the missionaries' messenger, told him what had passed, and sent by him a cordial invitation that the missionaries themselves would come as soon as they could.

It was the middle of the rainy season, when travelling is scarcely possible in that African wilderness; yet they feared to delay, lest some fresh intrigue of Domingo or Kosoko should again impede their progress, and they started late in the day on July 27th, 1846. That night they passed at Mo,* a small town eight miles from Badagry, where they received a kind and hearty welcome from the chief Mewu, their unvarying friend, and whence they set out the next morning in good earnest upon their journey: Mr. and Mrs. Townsend and Mr. Crowther on ponies, Mrs. Crowther in a kind of litter borne by men, and the children on the backs of some of the attendants.

At first their spirits flagged; the rain fell fast, the road was a pool of water up to the horses' knees, so

* Some of the principal towns in this part of Africa have established a sort of out-stations on the most frequented roads, to serve as rendezvous for the departing, and halting-places for the approaching caravans; and every traveller is expected to wait here till he has sent notice of his arrival. They are generally eight or ten miles from the town itself. Mo is in this way an out-station to Badagry. Abbeokuta has Awoyade on the Badagry road, and Atade on that to Ibadan for the same purpose.

slippery that both men and horses could hardly keep their footing, and so narrow as to be scarcely passable on horseback. First one foot and then the other was entangled in a briar; then the bough of a tree caught the head or sometimes the neck of the rider; their clothes were torn, and themselves were bruised. We may suppose how glad they were to reach the halting-place for the night, to pitch their tent, though on the cold wet ground, and light a fire and dry their dripping clothes; for the path had been too narrow for an umbrella to be carried, and they were wet to the skin. Mrs. Townsend had with difficulty kept her seat, as her horse stumbled over roots and trunks of trees, or sunk deep into a swamp. But Mrs. Crowther fared still worse—there was no firm treading for her bearers, and she was obliged to walk nearly all the way.

But far beyond these outward discouragements, the solemn feeling weighed upon their minds of the importance and yet the danger of their present undertaking. They were journeying farther and farther from all civilized society, from all European influence; they were going to settle in a land of strangers, friendly indeed at present, but of whose constancy they had had no proof; their very purpose was to assault the dominions of the prince of darkness, who had, through unnumbered ages, exercised undisputed sovereignty over this people. Would he

tamely yield to their aggressions? would he not stir up the native chiefs against them? and if so, where could they look for help?

Thoughts such as these hung upon their minds, and we do not wonder at the depression we are told they felt at first. Soon, however, their faith and courage rose again; they believed and felt that their covenant God was guiding them; and, confiding in his loving-kindness and tender mercies, their spirits revived, and they set out again with hope and alacrity.

They had spent the night on the bank of the Mojuba, generally a little stream, forded without difficulty, but now so swollen with the rains as to have been impassable, but for the kind forethought of Mr. Gollmer, who had provided them with a large tub to serve as a boat, and in which they safely crossed.*

They knew that they should meet with no human

* The circumstances that attended the conveyance of this tub, gave them a specimen of the difficulty they would hereafter find in procuring supplies of any kind from Badagry. Mr. Gollmer had had some difficulty in finding carriers for their goods, but at last supposed he had succeeded; just as they were starting, the men who were to have carried the tub, changed their minds, and would not stir, and the tub was left behind. Their indefatigable friend would not, however, be so easily daunted; with much trouble he procured other carriers, sent them by another road, and to the agreeable surprise of the travellers, they found their newly-invented boat ready for them.

habitation for three days,* and that probably they would not see a human face; but to their great delight, soon after crossing the Mojuba, they saw a friendly party approaching, and found it was Andrew Wilhelm,† and some messengers from the Abbeokutan chiefs to welcome them.

The rain still fell fast, and the road grew worse and worse, but they cheerfully went on; again they halted in the bush, and again proceeded on their journey, till on the third night after their leaving Mo, they reached a farm, where they were hospitably received, and on the Saturday, fatigued and exhausted, arrived at Awoyade, about eight miles from Abbeokuta. Here they passed their Sunday, and on the next day were ferried across the Ogūn, which the rain had swollen into a deep and rapid stream, navigable for large canoes. At the river they were met by a number of Sierra Leone emigrants, well mounted and dressed in English clothes, and we can imagine how hearty were the mutual greetings, and how numerous the mutual inquiries.

Thus attended, they entered Abbeokuta; and though it was raining heavily, they found they must yield

* Two busy and thriving towns through which Mr. Townsend passed in 1842, were now in ruins; in one of them, which only affords shelter to a solitary hunter, he had then spent the Sabbath, and had preached a crucified Saviour to two hundred attentive hearers. May it not have been a word of life to some among them? † See page 90.

to the desire of the people, and be led about the town* before they visited the chief. The warmth of their reception soon made them forget the toils and discouragements of the journey; the people had learnt to love the English; and the chiefs were especially proud of the honour of Abbeokuta being the first town in which white people intended to reside, and exclaimed that the news of their arrival "would fly from Lagos to Illorin, and excite the envy of all the chiefs!" It appeared that the public crier † had been sent round the town to make proclamation that no one was to rob or insult the expected travellers, and they found too that the preceding day had been spent in warmly discussing who should have the honour of receiving them as guests. This was at last awarded to Sagbua, the senior chief, and who, though not possessed of the talents of Shodeke, has ever proved himself a constant

* Mrs. Townsend and her side-saddle were the chief objects of attention, no white lady having been there before.

† We have been kindly favoured with a sketch of this man taken from the life, and are thus enabled to give our readers some idea of his wild yet not unpicturesque appearance. He is tall and large, and the peculiarity of his costume is increased by a head-dress of black monkey's skin, ornamented with metal rings and a coin. The cloths that are folded round him are of native manufacture, and striped with various colours. In one hand he holds his bell and the stick with which he strikes it, and in the other is a very suspicious-looking axe.

and true friend to the white man; and the missionaries were accordingly lodged in the house of Oso Ligregere, one of his relatives and his most confidential adviser. Sagbua, on this occasion, showed a degree of tact and good sense, and freedom from covetousness, very rare among these nations; for on being presented by the missionaries with a large mirror they had brought with them for the purpose, he made it over to the public council-room, to prevent any feeling of jealousy in the other chiefs at his possessing so great a treasure.

A public meeting of the chiefs was summoned, at which the missionaries entered into an explanation of their motives and intentions; and all present united in one common expression of satisfaction and delight. They promised to send their children to learn, and perhaps would come themselves; they would throw no hindrance in the way of their preaching to the people; and would assist them in building their houses. When the missionaries withdrew, the expressions of approbation and gratitude were repeated among themselves; "and no wonder," adds Mr. Crowther, "some of the chiefs had liberated relatives of their own sitting by them at the very time!"

A piece of land, about three acres in extent, was, without delay, presented to them on which to build; and to prevent dissatisfaction, the town of Akè had

been fixed upon, as being the "royal town," *i.e.*, that in which Shodeke had resided, and in which, as we have said, the general councils are still held.

The missionaries lost no time in beginning their operations. The walls of their houses were to be, like all the rest in Abbeokuta, of clay, and they expected they should have to seek for labourers. But no sooner was their wish known, than the women came forward to fetch the material from the pit. The first day there were thirty of these willing people, to whom they gave at the rate of three pence each; but finding, towards evening, that they were likely to have more hands than they should need, they lowered the future pay to two pence. Instead, however, of losing any of their labourers, the number on the second day increased to between 300 and 400. Again they reduced their wages to a penny, but in vain, for on the third day, to their dismay, no less than 670 presented themselves for employment! They then tried to lessen the number, by sending away any that loitered at their work, but all was of no avail, the number still increased, and they were at last obliged to apply to the chiefs to disperse them. They complied, but full of astonishment at the unwonted industry and diligence of the women, exclaimed, "God is great, white men have sense!"—probably thinking that they had exercised some magical power over their minds. The water to mix

the clay was procured by the same ready hands, and the house progressed as fast as could be expected.

Chiefs and people would spend hours in looking on; —the walls were mud like their own, the roofs too were thatched like theirs, with grass, but the doors, seven feet high, and the glass windows, were strange sights in Abbeokuta. The boards were from the neighbouring woods, sawn by Sierra Leone men; the nails were of native iron, smelted in the town; and the people could but feel that the inferiority of their own dwellings arose solely from their own want of skill. The pickaxes in particular delighted them, and they wondered they had not themselves thought of inventing such things, often crying out, “Ah! white men foresee something.”

Nor did the missionaries lose any time in entering upon the special work that had brought them to Abbeokuta. They found that many of the Christian emigrants, who had so earnestly desired that missionaries might be sent there, and who had received them with such unfeigned delight, had, notwithstanding, more or less fallen from their stedfastness. Some had yielded to the solicitations of their friends, in adding the worship of idols to that of the true God; while others, following the evil custom of the country, had a plurality of wives. Some, however, had stood firm and faithful, and these were greatly strengthened by the example and exhortations

of Andrew Wilhelm, who, as it will be remembered had arrived here in 1843, and had throughout maintained an upright and consistent conduct, which had won for him the esteem and respect of all. He held Divine service regularly on the Sundays, and on week-days took every opportunity of drawing sinners from the evil of their ways. He had had much to contend with, and met with many discouragements, but he persevered. A few gathered round him, like-minded with himself, and to others he was made the means of awakening their consciences and preparing them for further progress.

Two of those who had remained firm and faithful to their God, notwithstanding the opposition and ill-treatment of their relations, were called to their rest soon after the arrival of the missionaries; and it almost seems as if their departure had been delayed that they might have the comfort of their ministry on their dying beds. They died, declaring their entire dependence on the blood of Christ, and their peace in the prospect of approaching death.

Mr. Townsend and Mr. Crowther began their public ministry immediately on their arrival. The only available place for their regular Sunday service was a rude piazza; but here the people assembled, some under shelter, and some in the open air, and listened attentively while Mr. Crowther spoke to them in their native tongue, or while Mr. Townsend

preached, and Andrew Wilhelm translated to them the words of eternal life. The number of hearers increased every Sabbath-day; and the chiefs Ogunbonna and Shumoi were among the listeners. On the afternoons of Sunday, and on week-days, the missionaries often addressed the people in the streets, or in the markets, and sometimes in the houses of the chiefs, and were everywhere received with interest and attention. On one occasion, Ogubonna having given them permission to preach in his district of Ikija, not only attended himself, but collected together all the principal men of the neighbourhood, who, with the rest of the people, made up a congregation of between four and five hundred.

And here we shall interrupt our recital of missionary proceedings, and give our readers, somewhat in detail, an account of one of those affecting re-unions, which were continually occurring in Abbeokuta, but of so few of which we know anything more than the bare facts.

As we have already said, Mr. Crowther (or Adjai, as was then his name,) was kidnapped in 1821 together with his mother and two sisters. Though sold to different masters, they had for some months occasional opportunities of intercourse, till, early in 1822, Adjai was again sold, and sent down to the coast, and put on board the slaver. From that time he heard nothing of his family; but we need not

attempt to describe the yearnings of his heart towards them. How often, when a captured slave-vessel was brought into Sierra Leone, he had hurried down to the landing-place, in the hope that among the rescued ones, he might see some well-remembered face,* or catch the sound of some familiar voice, or might at least hear tidings of those he loved. But it had been in vain, and for twenty-five years no rumour of them had reached his ears, till he had given them up as lost.† We are not told what his feelings were when appointed to be a missionary in his native land, but doubtless hope again revived, though mixed with fear and misgiving; and his detention on the coast must have been additionally trying to him on this account.

But, even while at Badagry, God was ordering events to his future happiness. One day, a Sierra Leone man came to Mr. Gollmer, to tell him that some slaves had just been brought from the interior, in order to be sold to Domingo, among whom there was one who said he was a relation of Mr. Crowther's.

* This was very frequently the case; and parents and children, brothers and sisters, were thus unexpectedly restored to each other.

† In a letter written some time afterwards, he says, "When I was a boy at Sierra Leone, the history of Joseph was my favourite reading. I had no thoughts of ever returning to my native land, nor of seeing my relations, but it led me to lie passive in God's hands, and to follow the leadings of Providence as my safest guide."

Mr. Gollmer requested the man might be brought to him, in order to ascertain the truth of the statement; but the poor captive, who had never before seen white men, and had only known of them by the barbarities of the slave-traders, was so alarmed, that it was difficult to obtain any coherent account of himself. By degrees, however, it appeared certain that he was an uncle of Mr. Crowther's, of the name of Shano, and that having escaped from the destruction of Oshogūn, he had fled far into the interior, where he had resided till now. By some means he had heard of his nephew's return to the country, and, in company with six others, had set off in search of him; but when within two days of reaching Abbeokuta, a band of men-stealers rushed out upon them, and, after a severe struggle, succeeded in securing them all. He was again sold and resold several times, and at last had been brought hither. Forty-one heads of cowries (or £10, 5s.) were demanded for his ransom; and the liberality of the emigrants left not more than one-third of this sum to be paid by Mr. Crowther and his brother missionaries. What joy for the uncle and nephew thus to recognise each other, and to the latter, to hear that his mother and sisters had been alive, and in freedom, five years before! Twenty years were thus in a moment swept away from the long interval of dreary darkness; and though five still remained of doubt and

uncertainty, yet oh! how short they seemed, compared with the whole amount! His uncle would have had later intelligence to give him, but the country had been so unsettled, he had not ventured to go so far from home.

As soon as Mr. Crowther arrived at Abbeokuta, he followed up the clue his uncle had given him, and soon found that his mother and sisters were residing in the neighbouring town of Abàkà. He sent to tell them of his arrival, but the news seemed impossible, and they could not believe the messengers.* The mother's heart, however, could not rest, and in company with a half-brother of Mr. Crowther's, she set out at once for Abbeokuta. The account of the visit we shall give in Mr. Crowther's own words:—

“ Aug. 21. The text for to-day in the Christian almanac is, ‘Thou art the helper of the fatherless.’ I have never felt the force of this text more than I did this day, as I have to relate that my mother, from whom I was torn away about five-and-twenty years ago, came, with my brother, in quest of me. When she saw me she trembled. She could not believe her own eyes. We grasped one another, looking at each other in silence and great astonishment, while the big tears rolled down her emaciated cheeks. She trembled as she held me by the hand,

* Gen. xlv. 26.

and called me by the familiar names, which I well remembered I used to be called by my grandmother, who has since died in slavery. We could not say much, but sat still, casting many an affectionate look towards each other;* a look which violence and oppression had long checked; an affection which twenty-five years had not extinguished. My two sisters who were captured with me, and their children, are all residing with my mother. I cannot describe my feelings; I had given up all hope; and now, after a separation of twenty-five years, without any plan or device of mine, we are brought together again!"

It appears, that some time after Mr. Crowther was taken down to the coast, his mother and sisters regained their liberty by the exertions of the above-mentioned half-brother, who was very kind to them, and brought them to Abàkà to reside with him. A fruitless search was made in every direction for the missing Adjai, and after two or three years the hope of finding him was given up. The sisters married,

* "Un tacer havvi,
Figlio d'amor, che tutte esprime; e dice
Più che lingua non puote," &c.

Agamemnone—Tragedia del Conte Alfieri.

There is a silence,
Offspring of fondest love, that does more strongly speak,
Than words can do, the full heart's deep emotion.

and all lived for some years in peace and comfort. But one day, as the mother and elder sister were going to a market in the neighbourhood, they were kidnapped and again separated. The sister was soon discovered and ransomed by her husband; but the poor mother was taken about from place to place, exposed for sale in the market, and as, on account of her advancing age, no purchaser was found for her, she was made a domestic slave. Her mistress having sent her on some business to Abbeokuta, she was, for the third time, captured on the road, and brought into the town. Here she was in hard bondage for several years, till her daughters at last, hearing of her fate, collected together all the cowries they possessed, and purchased her for 18 heads, or about £4, 10s. of our money. "Thus," adds Mr. Crowther, "has my poor mother been suffering since I left the country; and this is only one case among thousands of similar ones. Could the friends of the Africans witness the happy meetings of those who have by their means been restored to each other; could they hear, at this moment, how many thanks are given to them by parents, whose declining years are now cheered by the return of their children from Sierra Leone, they would thank God, and take courage to go on in that work which God has so signally blessed, and the effect of which is being felt far in the interior."


The sisters with their children soon paid Mr. Crowther a visit, and returned to Abàkà; but his mother, unable to tear herself from the son who had thus been lost and was found again, consented to take up her residence with him.*

In the course of a few weeks, Mr. Crowther's anxiety for the safety of his sisters was again awakened. Suffering and danger had indeed united the people of Abbeokuta among themselves, but they had not yet learnt sympathy or consideration for others. Mohammedan slave-dealers had gained great influence over some of the principal men; the slave-trade was carried on by individuals among them, and too often some of the chiefs were instigated by the love of gain to join them, and to take advantage of a real or imagined offence to make war on one or other of the neighbouring towns.

Abàkà was now their object; a strong party suddenly attacked it, hoping to find it an easy prey, but the inhabitants were prepared for resistance, and repulsed the enemy. Provoked by their disappointment, the Abbeokutans, assisted by Porto Novians,

* Mr. Marsh, a liberated African, now at Badagry, had, during a visit to Abbeokuta some months before, also found his mother; and now these two happy parents were seen "sitting together, talking over past sorrows and captivities, and present joys." As yet, however, they knew not to whom they owed these joys. "May God open their eyes!" exclaims Mr. Crowther, "but they must be led like little children."

surrounded the town so as to prevent the possibility of escape; and, after bravely defending themselves for four months, famine and the poisoned arrows of the enemies obliged the people of Abàkà to surrender themselves. They were all brought as prisoners to Abbeokuta, and how did the hearts of our missionaries mourn over this melancholy proof of the misery of slave-wars! Mr. Townsend writes, "Another town is swept off from the face of the earth! it was full of life and activity; now all is silent and desolate. And wherefore? That a few Brazilian merchants may more quickly fill their coffers; that the luxuries of civilized nations may be a little cheaper, and that war-chiefs with their rabble train may gratify their love of display and applause. This whole country is filled with the sighs and groans of the helpless, and the soil is moistened with the blood of the slain." We may imagine the anxiety of Mr. Crowther; he sent persons to watch the trains of captives as they were led into the town; and to his great joy found his brother, his two sisters, and their children among the number, all of whom he gladly ransomed at the expense of 150 dollars. They were all nearly starved, and his brother was wounded and very ill, but covered all over with some charmed mixture that was to preserve him against musket balls or poisoned arrows!



CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK—BAPTISM OF FIRST CONVERTS.

"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—
Acts ii. 47.

IT was with no small satisfaction that the missionaries took possession of their own dwellings* in December of this same year (1846); for the hospitable Oso Ligregere had it not in his power to afford them much accommodation; and a single room, 13 feet by 6, for each of the two families, was all they had for every purpose. This new home was soon made good use of. Divine service was regularly held there, an adult Sunday school was opened, and a weekly meeting was established for prayer and reading the Scriptures with the Sierra Leone people.

* The kind-hearted Sagbua was much distressed at their removing into their new premises before the accustomed ceremonies had been performed, as he was persuaded some harm would happen to them. According to the notions of the country, the demon of the soil ought to have been propitiated by a sacrifice; and two slaves ought to have previously slept on the ground, lest any hurtful charm should have been buried there by an enemy.

In the mean time, the interest excited by the intention of Mr. Townsend and Mr. Crowther to take up their abode at Abbeokuta, had spread beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Messengers arrived from Ketu, a large town, three days' journey to the west, and on the confines of Dahomey, to inquire about them; and the chiefs of Ijaye* and Aggo-Oja† had sent privately to one of the Abbeokuta chiefs, for they had heard an extraordinary report, through some Sierra Leone emigrants. This was no other than that a white man and his wife had come to live at Abbeokuta! but this seemed so incredible, that the messenger was charged to see them with his own eyes, that, if true, it might be placed beyond the possibility of doubt.

The year 1847 was one of quiet steady progress in the Abbeokuta mission. On March 21st, a church was opened for Divine service in the Akè district, near the mission compound, and humble and unpretending as it was in its material frame, with its walls, its floor, and its seats of mud, and its roof of thatch, yet within it were gathered together, from week to week, from 150 to 200 immortal souls, to whom the word of life was regularly preached, and to some of whom it gradually became the savour of life unto life. Inferior also as it was to our sim-

* Another large town two days north of Abbeokuta.

† The residence of the king, three days to the north-east.

plest English churches, it excited the admiration of the people around, who frequently visited it, though, as they knew it was intended for the worship of God, they were extremely surprised at finding no idol or symbol to which adoration was to be paid. The Sierra Leone people were delighted, "Who," they exclaimed, "would ever have expected to see a church-house in our own land!"

Application was soon after made to different chiefs for permission to erect some kind of building in their respective districts, that would afford the missionaries and their hearers shelter during the heavy rains that so often fall; and would secure more regular services, and, as it was hoped, a more regular attendance. The request was readily complied with, and before Christmas-day 1847, four of these sheds had been erected, and thus, in addition to the church at Akè, the banner of the cross was unfurled on Sundays, and on week-days, in the districts of Igbein in the south, of Owu in the south-western quarter, of Itoku near the centre, and of Ikija in the north-west. Ogubonna, the chief of the last-mentioned town, was particularly kind and friendly; the spot fixed upon was in front of his own house, of which he offered to pull down a part if more space was required for the chapel. He with his own hands assisted in measuring the ground, and upon being reminded, while so employed, that a

fetish-house had formerly stood there, he angrily reproved the man who spoke, saying, that if any wished to rebuild the fetish-house, they must do so somewhere else. The 12th of August was appointed for opening it, and though much perplexed just at the time with some political affairs, he did not forget either the day or hour; he was the first to enter, bringing with him two little boys, one of them his own child, and the other a little captive from Abàkà, both dressed in new cotton cloths in honour of the occasion.

Ogubonna showed also a great desire for the general improvement of his people, and proposed to the missionaries to send a young relation of his own, Madarikan,* to Sierra Leone, to learn English car-

* A very interesting circumstance occurred to Madarikan after his arrival at Sierra Leone. He had made his passage in a native trading vessel, manned by liberated Africans. Many months after his arrival one of the crew came to him, and told him that he was persuaded that among some boys lately captured, and now at the barracks, enlisted for soldiers, was a brother of his. Madarikan, who had been placed in the grammar school at Freetown, seized the first opportunity that presented itself, of going to the barracks at the time of parade, and, anxiously watching the recruits, was not long in recognising his brother, though in so different a costume. We may imagine the overflowing of mutual joy on the occasion. It appeared that some months after Madarikan had quitted Abbeokuta, this lad had been sent by his father to pay his respects to the chief of Aji, a neighbouring town, who, in revenge for some injury he had received from some other Ab-

pentering. His proposal was accepted, and the young man soon after sailed for the colony, accompanied by a youth from Mr. Gollmer's school at Badagry. The confidence thus reposed by Ogunbonna in his English friends was shared by most of the chiefs; "and if," says Mr. Townsend, "a suspicion of our good intentions, suggested by the designing agents of Domingo, at any time arises in their minds, the very sight of a Sierra Leone emigrant suffices to remove it, and their conduct towards us is marked by kindness and confidence."

Another very hopeful sign of the influence that Divine truth was silently gaining among the people was, that their former idolatry was evidently losing its hold upon their minds. Many were convinced of its folly and vanity, and would have thrown away their "Ifas," had it not been from fear of their own families. One striking instance of this insensible influence is

beokutan, detained him and sold him as a slave. He was, as usual, sold and resold, and shipped on board a Brazilian slaver, then happily captured by a British cruiser and brought to Sierra Leone. It was feared that as he was regularly enlisted there would be some difficulty in procuring his discharge, but as soon as the circumstances were known at home, Major Straith (the lay secretary of the Church Missionary Society) wrote an official letter to the adjutant-general of the army, requesting him to submit the case to the Commander-in-chief, the Duke of Wellington; he did so, and the Duke immediately gave authority for the discharge of the young man from the regiment.

mentioned by Mr. Crowther, in his journal of Nov. 17, 1847. It seems that on the preceding night a large party had gone as usual into the bush to make Oro, as it is called, that is, to call up some of their deceased relatives from the world of spirits. When all was ready, the men looked at each other to see who would begin the incantation. There was no response, all seemed conscience-stricken, when one of the party broke silence by referring to a lecture of Mr. Crowther's a few Sundays before at Itoku chapel, at which many of the party had been present. The subject had been Judges vi. 25-27: they remembered how the preacher had spoken of the conduct of Gideon, how he had appealed to their own consciousness of truth and error; and the thought pressed upon their minds, "Will not these words rise up in judgment against us?" They could no longer remain in what they had hitherto considered the sacred grove; but, though it was midnight, went to the house of a lay helper in the mission, called him up, opened their minds to him, and talked with him till break of day. "May the Sun of Righteousness, indeed," Mr. Crowther adds, "rise upon their souls!"

The chiefs were not slow to acknowledge the influence the missionaries had over them. One day Mr. Townsend was talking to Sagbua about the chief of Ijaye, who had lately kidnapped some Sierra

Leone men. Sagbua made excuses for him : "Ikumi has not heard from white man the words we have ; we did so in Abbeokuta before we knew better, but now we dare not. Softly, softly," added he, "when Ikumi hears, he too will forsake these ways." Ogunbonna afterwards used nearly the same expressions. And it was an encouraging proof of the truth of this assertion, that as early as April 1847, a public meeting was held, at which above a thousand persons were present, when a law was passed against kidnapping under pain of death from Oro.*

The adult Sunday school had fifty-two scholars, all making more or less progress in the art of reading, though the want of an elementary book in their own language added greatly to their difficulties. They were taught in an English primer, and had thus to acquire a new language as well as a new art.

* The supreme authority of the town seems to be vested in this mysterious and undefined power. When any public business is to be considered, a meeting is convened in the name of "Oro ;" and sentences against criminals are pronounced under the same sanction. He is often supposed to perambulate the town for hours or even days together, and during his visits no woman is suffered to appear in the streets, or to be seen at the door of a house. Upon the present occasion Oro had convened the meeting for Sunday, but at Mr. Townsend's request the day was changed to Saturday, that the women of the congregation might not be prevented from attending public worship. The same thing occurred some time afterwards ; Oro was again put off, nor has he been called out since, on a Sunday.

The average attendance at each of the four new places of worship was about one hundred and fifty on Sunday, and from forty to fifty on the week-day; and often would the people wait after the service to ask the missionaries questions on the truths that had been brought before them. A new centre of light and influence was also formed by the removal of Mr. Crowther and his family to the Igbein district, in November of this same year, and it was pleasant to hear the regret expressed by Shomolu, a man of influence in Akè, at thus losing him from his town, and his fears lest Mr. Townsend should also leave him. Sagbua and himself, he said, had narrowly watched them for the last twelve months, and now that they were beginning to feel entire confidence in them, they were going to leave them. Mr. Townsend, however, soon reassured him as to any intentions of his own to remove.

The close of the year found the missionaries with thirty-two communicants from among the Sierra Leone people, so greatly had God blessed their labours among this portion of their flock. The congregations continued to increase, not only at the church but at the chapels, where Andrew Wilhelm and William Goodwill assisted by taking the services in turn, and the missionaries thanked God who had given them such devoted and efficient helpers.

A schoolmaster, Charles Philips,* had arrived from Sierra Leone, and the desire for instruction seemed increasing. There were no less than forty candidates for baptism, of whom six or seven were Sierra Leone people, and the rest were natives.†

Could the individual history of these candidates be laid open before us, what cause should we find to adore the God of all grace in the means he had used for their conversion! We know, however, but little of them, but we will not withhold that little from our readers.

One of the first applicants was a woman of the name of *Ijè*, formerly a priestess, but now having received the message of God into her heart, she had thrown away her country gods and sought for salvation through Christ alone. Mr. Crowther's attention had first been drawn towards her in November, 1846,

* The arrival of Charles Philips gave Ogubonna a fresh opportunity of showing his kindness and anxiety to promote the happiness of others. Mr. Townsend had taken Philips with him on the week-day evening to Ikijà chapel. Ogubonna saw him there, sent for him, and inquired carefully of him as to the connections he had left behind when taken captive. He set his people to work in all directions, and in a few days found an aged woman who might, he thought, be his mother. He sent her to the mission-house, the conjecture proved to be right, and mother and son were restored to each other after a hopeless absence of twenty-one years.

† The missionaries often use the word "native" in contradistinction to the emigrants from Sierra Leone, to denote those who had never left the country.

when he accidentally overheard part of a conversation between her and a man who was at work on the Akè church. The poor woman was telling the man of her troubles, her poverty, her ill-health, her want of children, of the number of sacrifices she had made, and of the inefficiency of them all, adding, that she had heard of this new religion, and wondered if it would do her any good. Her companion answered her that he was very much in the same case himself; he was dissatisfied with the old religion, and knew very little of the new; but he was determined to learn it, and advised her to do the same. He then urged her to attend regularly the Sunday services, where she would "hear wonderful things such as their forefathers had never known," and exhorted her on no account to be unstable, or to go back to her former ways, but to go straight on till she found the right path. She followed his advice, and was soon observed as one of the most regular and attentive listeners to the word of God.

After this she had two serious illnesses, from one of which she was not expected to recover; and her friends, concluding that she was suffering from the displeasure of the deity she had forsaken, pressed her, with the greatest earnestness, to return to her "country fashion." Her faith, though of such recent date, was firm and unwavering; no superstitious fears hung upon her mind, and she steadfastly refused

to comply, resolved, if it should be the will of God, that she would die in Christ, if she were not permitted to live for him.

She recovered, and soon after joined the class of candidates, employing herself more strenuously than ever in bringing others to the truth she had herself embraced.

But the most interesting of the early candidates for baptism was *Afala*, the aged mother of Mr. Crowther. When she was first restored to him his heart had been deeply, though not unexpectedly, pained by her ascribing his return to the influence of his deceased father in the unseen world; but by degrees her mind became enlightened, and she also joined Mr. Townsend's class of candidates. Soon after this she was very ill, but instead of returning to her old customs, she quietly told her son, "Had I been left alone I should have attributed my sickness to this or that deity, and should have made sacrifices accordingly, but now I have seen the folly of so doing; all my hopes are in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom now I serve."

We may easily suppose with what joyful anxiety Mr. Crowther watched the progress of divine truth in his mother's heart, and with what overflowing thankfulness he witnessed her baptism by Mr. Townsend on February 5, 1848, after above a year's instruction.

The ceremony was a deeply affecting one.* Two other women and two men had been selected as the most advanced among the candidates; and as these, the first fruits of the mission, surrounded by their heathen friends and relations, boldly confessed their faith in Christ crucified, and received the sign and seal of their adoption, must not the feeling of every Christian heart then present have been, "What hath God wrought!"

One of these newly baptised was Ijè, whose little history we have just given, and who now received the Christian name of *Susan*; and the other woman, now *Sarah Ibikotan*, was the wife of *Oso Ligregere*, under whose hospitable roof the missionaries had been sheltered for the first five months of their residence in *Abbeokuta*. *Ibikotan* was a woman of an eager and inquiring mind; and the words of Divine truth from the lips of her husband's guests fell upon her heart as good seed sown in good soil. When *Mr. Crowther's* mother came to reside with him, her affections were strongly drawn out towards her; and often might she be seen sitting with her aged friend, talking of the new world which was beginning to open before them both.

One of the men was *Bankole*, who had been awakened to a concern for his soul by a relation

* The baptismal service had been translated into the Yoruban language expressly for this occasion.

of his, one of the earliest emigrants from Sierra Leone, and who had, before the arrival of the missionaries, been under the instruction of Andrew Wilhelm. He was, probably, the very first inquirer among the native population.

The other was *Aina*, who had suffered much from domestic persecution. His wife and his mother-in-law were bigotted idolaters; they had long tried in vain to withdraw him from attending the public services, but when, in addition to this, he threw away his *Ifa*, their anger knew no bounds; and they summoned him before the elders of his town to answer for his conduct in forsaking the gods of his fathers. The man stood firm, and quietly but manfully asserted his right to worship according to his own convictions. The elders acknowledged the justice of his claim, and his wife, finding that neither entreaties nor reproaches had any effect, left him, taking with her their only child. He often visited the missionaries for comfort and advice. "Commit thy way unto the Lord," was the counsel they gave him; and so it was, that before long his wife, doubtless influenced by the gentleness and patience he had invariably exhibited, returned, bringing the child with her. She afterwards attended the services at the church, but we are not aware whether any further accounts of her have been received. The two men, thus the first baptised in Abbeokuta,

received the names of *Thomas* and *Edward*, in remembrance of two of Africa's most faithful friends, Sir Thomas Acland, and Sir Edward Buxton.

When the adult baptisms were ended, Mr. Crowther had the pleasure of baptizing his own four nieces, the children of his two sisters, who, though not yet themselves prepared to take this decided step, desired that their little ones should be admitted into Christ's fold; and it must have been very touching to see *Hannah*, the aged grandmother, and the almost infant grandchildren, thus at the same time made members of the visible church.

A few weeks after this interesting event, Mr. and Mrs. Townsend were obliged to leave Abbeokuta and return to England, on account of the failure of Mrs. Townsend's health. Happily the Rev. J. C. Müller had just arrived, and Mr. Townsend rejoiced in being able to place the district of Akè in his hands.

Sagbua and the other chiefs greatly lamented the departure of our missionaries, but they took advantage of it to send a letter to the Queen of England, accompanied by a present of country cloth. A meeting was held for the purpose, which Mr. Townsend attended, accompanied by Philips and Morgan, schoolmaster and catechist from Sierra Leone. Sagbua dictated the letter, which Mr. Townsend wrote down in Yoruban, and read over to the party

for correction and approval. The letter, when translated, is as follows:—"The words which Sagbua and other chiefs of Abbeokuta send to the Queen of England. May God preserve the Queen in life for ever! Shodeke, who communicated with the Queen before, is no more. It will be four or five years before another takes his office. We have seen your servants, the missionaries, whom you have sent to us in this country. What they have done is agreeable to us. They have built a house of God. They have taught the people the Word of God, and our children besides. We begin to understand them. There is a matter of great importance that troubles us, what shall we do that it may be removed? We do not understand the doings of the people of Lagos and other people on the coast. They are not pleased that you should deliver our country people from slavery. They wish that the road may be closed, that we may never have any intercourse with you. What shall we do that the road may be opened, that we may navigate the river Ogun to the river Ossa? The laws that you have in your country we wish to follow—the slave-trade, that it may be abolished. We wish it to be so. The Lagos people will not permit; they are supporting the slave-traders. We wish for lawful traders to trade with us. We want also those who will teach our children mechanical arts, agriculture, and how things are prepared, as

tobacco, rum, and sugar. If such a teacher should come to us, do not let it be known, for the Lagos people, and the people on the coast, are not pleased at the friendship you show us. We thank the Queen of England for the good she has done in delivering our people from slavery. Respecting the road that it should not be closed, there remains yet much to speak with each other."

It was very gratifying to Mr. Townsend to have this unsought-for testimony of the good feelings of the chiefs towards himself and his fellow-labourers, and not less so to have this fresh assurance of the anxious desire of the principal people in Abbeokuta for the entire abolition of the slave-trade.

He was also very much pleased with a farewell address to himself from thirty-nine Sierra Leone communicants, acknowledging their obligations to the Church Missionary Society for sending missionaries to Abbeokuta, and expressing their personal gratitude to Mr. Townsend, through whose ministry they had been rescued or preserved from falling into the evil practices around them.

Mr. and Mrs. Townsend left Abbeokuta on March 24, 1848.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REV. J. C. MULLER.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth. *Yea,* saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."—Revelation xiv. 13.

THE course of the Rev. J. C. Müller was so short, and yet so bright, and his journals give us so interesting a specimen of missionary work, that we are tempted to devote this chapter to a separate account of his labours.

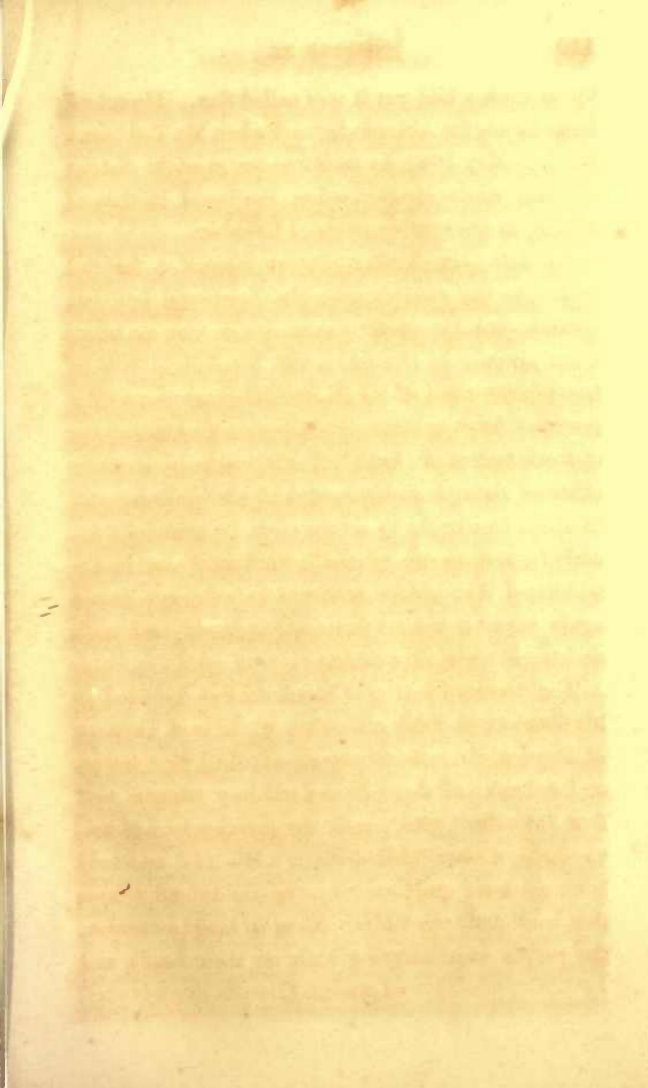
He had landed at Badagry in January 1848, accompanied by one whose heart, like his own, glowed with love to God and man, and whose sympathy and help, in weal and in woe, he fondly hoped to have enjoyed for many years. But God, in His wisdom, saw fit to take her from him; and on the 26th of February, a month after their landing, Mrs. Müller was carried off by fever, leaving her husband alone, yet not alone; cast down, but not forsaken. This loss of his earthly treasure, far from paralysing his energies, or damping his zeal, only quickened his intense desire that the name of Jesus might be known among the heathen; and, ripening fast as he was himself for glory, he was the more stirred

up to work while yet it was called day. He set off immediately for Abbeokuta; and when Mr. Townsend left it in May 1848, he took the charge of the district of Akè, while Mr. Crowther continued in that of Igbein, in the southern part of the town.

At Akè, Mr. Müller proved himself a faithful pastor to the congregation Mr. Townsend had left behind; but his predominant desire was to bring other sheep into the fold; and his delight was to tread in the steps of his Divine Master, and go from town to town, "preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God."* Taking with him one or other of those faithful men, Andrew Wilhelm and William Goodwill, as interpreters, he would set out early in the morning; and, returning home in the middle of the day for rest and refreshment, would again take up his favourite employment, and walk and teach again till evening.

The northern part of Abbeokuta was included in his district; and day after day, the hills of Ikija, or of Bagura, the narrow streets of the lower towns, or the banks of the different winding streams that flow into the Ogūn, heard the joyful sound of salvation by a merciful Redeemer. His zeal and holy boldness were quickened by the sights and sounds that continually met him. Now, in long procession, the people were carrying idols on their heads, and

* Luke viii. 1.





MISSIONARY PREACHING THE GOSPEL

shouting in honour of the deities ; at another time, a company of women were drumming, dancing, and uttering hideous cries, as their religious worship. Here two Babbalawos* were dispensing blessings to those who would purchase them for cowries ; and there a woman, with an image of the devil, promised happiness to whoever touched it. Priests and priestesses of the different deities abounded ; and if he entered the house of a chief, the figures of Orisha and of Obbafulo showed that earthly riches, and success in war, were the objects of supreme desire. ✓

He followed too the example of his Lord in his mode of teaching, and in taking the subjects of his addresses from the spot on which he stood, or the objects with which he was surrounded. A projecting rock at Ijenmo served him for a pulpit, as he unfolded to the numbers seated at its base the infinite value of the true "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The spreading tree under which he sometimes rested, while a company gathered round him, furnished him with an illustration of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. At one time, crossing the little stream that divides Ilugun from its neighbouring township, he stopped and drew attention to the cleansing power of its waters, and led his hearers to the blood of Jesus, that cleanseth from all sin. At another

* Priests of Ifa.

place, he met above a hundred people coming up from the river, with calabashes of water, and arrested their steps, and fixed their attention, by crying out in the words of the prophet, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" and then spoke to them of that salvation which is indeed as "wine and milk, without money and without price."

The markets afforded him abundant opportunities; sometimes thousands were to be found congregated together; and no sooner did he stand still among them, than a group, sometimes more and sometimes fewer, would gather round him, while the corn, the salt, the dry wood, exposed for sale, supplied him with topics for instruction and solemn warning. There seems to have been an earnestness and holy unction about his preaching, that peculiarly attracted the people; they often literally thronged him, and some among his listeners would occasionally follow him from place to place, that they might hear more of those wonderful things of which he spoke. They were almost always serious and attentive; though now and then a Mohammedan or a babbalawo would begin to cavil; but even in such cases, generally speaking, Mr. Müller had no need to answer the objectors; some one among the crowd would of his own accord do it for him. On one occasion, as he and his interpreter were walking along, they heard voices calling to them to stop,

and asking why they should have been passed by. They stood still, and soon a number was collected, to whom, as usual, they declared the gospel. Some of those present began to talk in praise of their Orisha, when a young man, a stranger, silenced them by saying, "If the missionary carried about some strange image you would fall down and worship it; but it is his speaking the truth that offends you. Truth is always bitter. You know that country fashions are folly; he speaks the truth, let us submit to it." And sometimes on a second visit to a spot, they received a friendly welcome from some of those very people who had before been angry. Many were evidently, at least for a time, seriously impressed; among other instances, we may notice that of a woman, bearing with her the figure of the devil, who happening to pass along, while Mr. Müller was speaking, stayed to listen, when presently she was seen to throw the image to the ground. Another time, while preaching to the people Christ Jesus, and him crucified, they exclaimed with one voice, "We will serve him whom you preach to us."

The mere fact of the missionaries coming so far for their benefit struck them much. "Is it true," said one of a company of women whom he stopped as they were drumming and making country fashion, "Is it true that white men walk over the sea?" "Yes," was the answer, "and only that we may

declare unto you that gospel whereby ye may be saved;" and they quietly listened while he went on to tell them the words of eternal truth. Another day, when preaching to a large number, a man interrupted him by saying something in praise of Ifa. He was immediately answered by a young man, who exclaimed that if they had no other proof of the truth of God's word, than that the missionaries had left their own country, and all that was dear to them, and had come over the sea to declare it to them, this alone ought to be enough to lead them to believe it. It was upon this occasion that Mr. Müller was particularly struck with one young woman, who, indifferent and insensible to all around, appeared absorbed in what she heard; her eyes were rivetted on the messenger of good tidings, and she seemed, like Mary, to ponder them in her heart; for when he ceased to speak, she anxiously enquired of him, "How can I pray to God?" and went on to ask how she might find peace and happiness for her soul.

It was encouraging to hear the testimony of the people, and even of some of the chiefs, as to the general improvement in Abbeokuta since anything of Christianity had been known there. Even one of the babbalawos, in conversation with Mr. Müller, volunteered an observation to the same effect, saying, that the town had formerly been notorious for rapine

and cruelty, but that now persons and property were tolerably secure. "We old men," he continued, "are sure that good will come from preaching God's Word here. Preach, preach—do not mind what some say, but persevere. God will do his work in his own time." So spake this friendly babalawo, but Mr. Müller could not let him go without a serious warning—not to turn a deaf ear himself to that Word of God, lest it should be said of him, and others like himself, Woe unto thee, Abbeokuta! for if the mighty words that have been spoken in thee had been spoken in cities beyond thee, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Our readers will not be surprised at the blessing that attended these evangelising labours of Mr. Müller, and the more pastoral ones of Mr. Crowther.

On December 24, 1848, Mr. Müller reports, "A crowded congregation, many standing," and on Christmas-day: "Divine worship exceedingly well attended; the people flocked in from all quarters, and the attention was marked throughout the whole service. The novelty and curiosity of our preaching have nearly passed away, and I hope and believe they come from a desire to hear the truth. It has been the same at Igbein for the two last Sabbaths; I believe our heavenly Father is powerfully drawing myriads of this people to His Son. Even now is He shaking the Abbeokuta heaven and earth; He that

is the desire of this people is come, and Jehovah is about to fill this land with glory." There was not much Christmas feasting at Akè on that day; for so many persons came into the compound that they might spend the day more quietly than they could do at home, and the opportunity of talking to them was so inviting, that Mr. Müller and his assistants "had not time so much as to eat."

For eighteen months Mr. Müller thus continued his work, never relaxing in it, except when prevented by ministerial work at home, or when incapacitated by illness and over-fatigue. In the course of those eighteen months, the thirty candidates for baptism who had been left in his charge, had increased to one hundred and thirty-nine, besides more than thirty whom he had had the privilege of baptising.

Speaking of those whom he had thus baptised, Mr. Müller says, "They are all stedfast people, and know what they are about; they have experienced the vanity and evil of the world, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious. There is much personal piety among the baptised and the candidates. They are exposed to sun and rain, to storms and calms, but they are not exposed to European influence; and at present, they take it for granted, that every Englishman must be a good man."

Among the candidates at this time was a balogun, or war-chief, who, on his first visit to Mr. Müller,

told him that he had long been dissatisfied with country-fashion, and had thought of embracing Mahomedanism, but having one day heard the Word of God when working at his farm, he desired to hear it also at church; he came, and was so deeply interested, that from that time he determined to serve the true and living God.

There were several interesting cases of inquirers of whom it is not related whether they were ever baptised, or even became candidates for baptism, though most probably they did so. One of these was a soldier and kidnapper, who one day came to Mr. Müller, saying that when he awoke that morning the thought came across his mind that his ways were not good, and that he would go to the white man and ask about the ways of God. The missionary had some conversation with him, and he was evidently much impressed.

There was also another kidnapper who had, by seizing a man belonging to Ijayè, occasioned hostilities between that place and Abbeokuta. He was, according to the recent law, sentenced to death, but was spared at the intercession of Sagbua; and, struck with astonishment at his unexpected deliverance, acknowledged that it was God who had rescued him, and became a regular attendant at the Sunday-school, and at church. Another time Mr. Müller was visited by a young man who came to him

with twenty of his companions. "I heard," said he, "that God's messenger lives here, and I am come to ask the will of God." After some earnest conversation, the question of the Philipian jailer was again asked in Abbeokuta in nearly the same words; and the same reply was given. The next day the young man was at church and much interested in what he heard.

There was one very painful case of backsliding that occurred among the candidates. This was a babbalawo of the name of Olishido; he was a venerable old man who heard the word with wonder and with joy, and appeared to receive it to his soul's salvation; but his fellow-priests could not bear to lose him thus, and one day when Mr. Müller, having missed him from church, went to seek him, he found a host of these men gathered round him and preparing a sacrifice, of which they compelled Olishido to partake. His heart wept for the poor man, who evidently joined them against his convictions and his inclinations. The shepherd did not give up this straying sheep; he continued to visit him, though we fear without any satisfactory result, for the last we hear of him is that he was convinced of his guilt, but still afraid to confess Christ openly.

This fear of man kept back another person from becoming a candidate. It was a priestess, who had formerly been a violent opponent, but who was

pricked in her heart, and became anxious and uneasy. She had not, however, courage to come forward openly, because as she had long deceived so many persons by her pretended enchantments, she feared lest if it were known she had embraced the new religion she should in revenge be given to *Oro*, or in other words, be murdered.

One of those whom Mr. Müller baptised was Mary Ijé, the mother of Mr. Thomas King,* a catechist at Sierra Leone. She was a very aged woman, and had found it impossible to learn the creed or the ten commandments; but the general state of her mind, her consistent conduct, and the simple earnestness with which, in answer to some question, she replied, "I look to Jesus alone for the saving of my soul," were satisfactory evidences of a meetness for the rite.

Another of the baptised was Susanna Kutè. While yet only a candidate she had suffered much for her faith in Christ, and had been seized and put in chains on no other ground than her attendance at church and at the classes. Mr. Müller obtained her release through the friendly intervention of Ogubonna, and the patience and gentleness of her conduct during her trial so moved the heart of her persecutor, that very soon afterwards she had the satisfaction of seeing him become a regular attendant at church and at the Sunday school.

Several similar instances occurred about this time ; they were the precursors of the violent persecutions that broke out in October of this same year (1849), but as we intend to reserve the particulars of this for a separate chapter, we shall here only state that although these individual cases occurred in the district, and though Mr. Müller was greatly hindered in his visits to the distant quarters of the town, yet, on the whole, the converts and congregation of Akè remained throughout unmolested.

But before the persecution ceased, our missionary's health became the source of great uneasiness to his friends ; frequent attacks of illness laid him aside for days together, and these illnesses were increased by the impossibility of his having the food he required. Yams, plantains, and Indian corn were unfit for him ; neither rice, flour, nor biscuits could at this time be procured from Badagry ; and he was reduced to meat or fowls as his only nourishment. He had been much interested in building the mission-house and church at the new station of Ikija at the north-west extremity of the town, two miles from Akè, and three from Igbein. The church was erected by the contributions of friends in England, through that faithful friend of missionary work, Miss Barber, of Brighton ; and stands on rising ground, the property of the mission, in the open road, and not within the compound.

Mr. Müller moved into his new residence in April; and for a time, the change appeared to benefit him, but his attacks soon returned again.*

It is very affecting to read his journals during this spring of 1850, to mark how every respite from pain and sickness was seized upon to resume his Sunday-work in the church and in the schools, and, when possible, to return again to his preaching in the streets. The last entry in his journal is on May 26, when he speaks of a good attendance at the services, but that he himself was too ill to take any part in them. Mr. Hinderer, who was now residing at Akè, found him on the 7th of June so ill that he determined not to leave him again; and except when kindly relieved by Mr. Crowther, watched him unceasingly by day and night. It was a period of severe trial to them both; and during the last night more especially, for Mr. Müller's weakness prevented him from speaking so as to be understood, and the anxiety and fatigue of the nine preceding days and nights had so shaken the nerves of Mr. Hinderer, that when he attempted to speak words of consolation to his dying brother, he found his sentences were so incoherent that he was obliged to

* There seems little doubt but that these attacks were sometimes brought on by over-exertion, or by exposure to heavy rains. But it seemed as if he could not do enough for what he called his "beloved Abbeokuta."

desist. "We could," he says, "do no more than look at one another, but why art thou troubled at this, O my soul? The Sun of righteousness, when lighting a happy soul through the valley of the shadow of death to its future home above, needs not thy smoking flax to increase his brightness."

The spirit of this man of God fled at day-break of June 16, 1850, and it adds another to the many touching incidents of his history, that the church in which he had hoped to proclaim the tidings of salvation by a crucified Redeemer, was first opened for Divine service on the Sunday after his death.

CHAPTER XII.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK—THE QUEEN'S AND PRINCE ALBERT'S PRESENTS TO THE CHIEFS.

“And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”—Eph. iv. 11, 12.

WHILE Mr. Müller was thus, as we have seen, honoured in his more especial work of an evangelist, Mr. Crowther was equally blessed in his more pastoral labours.

He was now settled in the newly erected mission-premises in Igbein, in the southern quarter of the town, and about two miles from Akè; and here, in April 1848, he was permitted to open another church for Divine worship. It was of the same rude materials as that at Akè, but when filled with between 200 and 300 worshippers, he felt that if only a portion of these were indeed made “lively stones” of the spiritual temple, it mattered little that the walls of the earthly building were of mud and its roof of thatch.*

* The circumstances attending the erection of this church were particularly gratifying to Mr. Crowther. The requisite funds (£42) had, at the suggestion of Mr. Townsend, been

Mr. Crowther, and his catechist Morgan, also held regular services in the so-called chapels of Owu and Itoku, but the latter was burnt down by a destructive fire† in the beginning of this same year, and the services were suspended for some months. A donation from the widow of that devoted servant of God whose name had been given him at his baptism, enabled him at last to rebuild it; and the manner in which the site was given was another proof of the influence the missionaries were gradually gaining. As the former situation had not been found a convenient one, Lajoyé, the war-chief of Itoku, accompanied Mr. Crowther in search of another, and coming to a piece of land belonging to himself, Lajoyé advised him to build it there, as it was the place of greatest resort in the whole town. Mr. Crowther pointed out to him that the spot was so

contributed by his Christian fellow-countrymen at Sierra Leone; the congregation gave the labour; and as it was carefully built, it was a tolerably substantial structure. The women too had improved the appearance of the interior by washing it over with ochre.

† These fires are so frequent and so destructive in Abbeokuta, as to cause the missionaries considerable anxiety. Once Mr. Crowther's house was injured; and on another occasion, when the fire swept for between one and two miles across the town till it was stopped by the river, both his own house and that at Akè were only saved by a providential change of wind. Partly from terror and partly from superstition the people make very little attempt to extinguish them.

near a fetish grove belonging to the people of Igbore, that they would object to it; but Lajoyé overruled all objections by saying that it was the most suitable for his purpose, and he had only to do as he bade him. Mr. Crowther was but too glad to do so, and though the people of Igbore were very angry, and reviled the workmen while building it, yet they were obliged to submit to Lajoyé's decision. The chief had judged rightly as to the situation; the chapel was quickly thronged, and on one occasion, soon after it was finished, the numbers so increased, that Mr. Crowther was obliged to dismiss one congregation, and begin afresh with a new one.

We have mentioned that before Mr. Crowther left Sierra Leone,* he had translated part of the Liturgy into the Yoruban language; this he now used, and found how suitable it was to the wants and feelings of his people. The comprehensiveness of the prayers in the Litany particularly struck them; and even bigotted idolaters, if they happened to come in at that part of the service, were astonished at Christians praying for their enemies. Our missionaries longed to receive printed copies of it from England, that the congregations might join more effectually in the service.†

* Page 93.

† In 1850 they had their wish, and they speak with joy of the way in which the responses resounded through the churches.

The "interpretation of tongues" was among Mr. Crowther's most important occupations, and he had already sent home the Gospel of St. Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistle to the Romans, besides a translation of Watts' First Catechism. He had also revised a Yoruban primer, which had been prepared by Mr. Townsend and Mr. Gollmer in England, and its reappearance at Abbeokuta *in print* was hailed with delight by his hundred-and-eight Sunday adult scholars. Half their difficulties* vanished when they found that the strange characters now conveyed to them some familiar sound; they were never tired of reading it; several of them committed the whole to memory; and they were particularly interested in comparing the passages of Scripture it contained with the corresponding ones in their English Testaments. The thirst of these people for instruction was most encouraging; and could it have been given them for three hours in the morning, and as much in the afternoon, they would still have thought the time too short. ✓

Mr. Crowther had established a school for boys, and Mrs. Crowther one for girls, and they seemed likely to prosper. Ogubonna regularly sent some of his household, though the distance was considerable, and they had to come over a rocky road; and two

* See page 129.

even of the babbalawos brought their little girls to Mrs. Crowther. "What shall I sacrifice?" said one of them, "a pig or a fowl? or what shall I pay?" adding, "if you do not like their heathen names, change them for some of your own." When assured that no sacrifice was needed, that there was nothing to pay, and that there was no wish to change their names, he could not sufficiently express his surprise; nor was his astonishment lessened when he was conducted into the room where Mrs. Crowther was teaching her twenty pupils to sew; for in Yoruba the men alone are considered worthy of being initiated into the mysteries of needlework!

The attention paid by the people to the observance of the Sabbath-day was a token of the sincerity of their professions, and Mr. Crowther mentions one instance in particular that shows a strength of faith we should hardly have expected from such recent converts.

It appears that some of the Christians supported themselves by trading at the Lagos market, which was held once in seventeen days, and consequently occasionally involved the necessity of either travelling or trading on the Lord's-day. The rivers were unsafe except for large parties; for the Ijebbus often lay in ambush on the banks, ready to catch and plunder any who were not strong enough to resist them. The question among the converts was,

whether when the market occurred at such times, they should, as a case of necessity, travel with the rest of the traders on Sunday, or whether they should on these occasions refrain altogether. Neither of these alternatives satisfied the minds of our friends; and after much deliberation and prayer, they resolved at all risks to keep the Sabbath holy; but as they were not well able to relinquish their attendance at the market, they determined to trust in the good providence of their God, and when necessary, to travel with only their own small party. And God honoured their courage and their confidence in Him, for no instance has occurred of their being molested, while the larger parties have more than once been attacked and plundered, and some of the people seized as slaves.

Mr. Crowther was anxious to promote in every way the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of his people, especially to encourage agriculture among them. He planted rice in his own compound, and induced others to do the same; and took advantage of a liberal present, sent him by the Dowager Lady Buxton, to bestow trifling gratuities on the small cultivators, according to their skill; and it was pleasant to find that "half-a-crown or five shillings thus given was more valued than gallons of rum would have been."

There was evidently an increasing activity and

desire for improvement, generally, among the people, in which Ogubonna took the lead. A new house he was building had doors and glass windows,* in imitation of the missionaries' dwellings; and even before Mr. and Mrs. Townsend left Abbeokuta, he had prevailed on them to accompany him on a visit to his farm. They were very much pleased with this little excursion. The farm lay a short distance from the town, and was very picturesquely situated on the side of a rocky hill. Much care had evidently been taken in its cultivation, according to their native fashion, and it was with some degree of pride that the chief led his visitors through fields of cotton, of ginger, and of ground pepper,† which he had planted in the sanguine, though undefined hope, that they might some day obtain a place in the English market.‡ Ogubonna was much gratified by this visit from Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, and as they were passing through a plantation of yams, they heard him say to the overseer of the farm, "No Osha, however famous, would have been believed,

* The windows had been taken out by Mr. Townsend.

† A trailing plant that produces a kind of pepper.

‡ When Mr. Crowther came to England, in 1851, he brought some African cotton with him as a sample, and it was so much approved of by some of the great Manchester manufacturers, that there is good reason to hope, that with an improved cultivation, it will become a staple article of trade between Abbeokuta and England.

had it foretold that Europeans would ever visit the farm!" ending by an exhortation to the man to be more than ever diligent, that it might always be in a fit state to be seen.

We mentioned in our tenth chapter, the letter sent by Sagbua and his colleagues to the Queen, when Mr. Townsend returned to England, in 1848; and the arrival of an answer in May, 1849, is too memorable an event in the annals of this people, to be passed over in silence. Her Majesty had been pleased very graciously to receive the letter from the Abbeokutan chiefs, with the present of country cloth that accompanied it, and authorised the Earl of Chichester, as President of the Church Missionary Society, to return the following reply.

"I have had the honour of presenting to the Queen the letter of Sagbua and other chiefs of Abbeokuta, and also their present of a piece of cloth.

"The Queen has commanded me to convey her thanks to Sagbua and the chiefs, and her best wishes for their true and lasting happiness, and for the peace and prosperity of the Yoruba nation.

"The Queen hopes that arrangements may be made for affording to the Yoruba natives the free use of the river Ossa, so as to give them opportunities for commerce with this and other countries.

"The commerce between nations, in exchanging

the fruits of the earth, and of each other's industry, is blessed by God. Not so the commerce in slaves, which makes poor and miserable the nation that sells them, and brings neither wealth nor the blessing of God to the nation that buys them, but the contrary.

“The Queen and people of England are very glad to know that Sagbua and the chiefs think as they do upon this subject of commerce. But commerce alone will not make a nation great and happy like England. England has become great and happy by the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ.

“The Queen is therefore very glad to hear that Sagbua and the chiefs have so kindly received the missionaries, who carry with them the Word of God, and that so many of the people are willing to hear it.

“In order to show how much the Queen values God's Word, she sends with this, as a present to Sagbua, a copy of this Word in two languages, one the Arabic, the other the English.

“The Church Missionary Society wish all happiness and the blessing of eternal life to Sagbua and all the people of Abbeokuta. They are very thankful to the chiefs for the kindness and protection afforded to their missionaries; and they will not cease to pray for the spread of God's truth, and of all other blessings, in Abbeokuta and throughout Africa, in

the name and for the sake of our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(Signed) "CHICHESTER."

The Bibles were handsomely bound in red morocco, and Prince Albert added the valuable present of a steel mill for the grinding of their Indian corn. The Rev. D. Hinderer, who was just then proceeding to Abbeokuta as a missionary, was entrusted with the letter and the presents: at Badagry he was joined by the Rev. I. Smith, then stationed there, and they arrived at Abbeokuta on May 14th.

Sagbua immediately sent round the crier to summon the chiefs for the 23rd, when Mr. Crowther, Mr. Müller, Mr. Smith, Mr. Hinderer, and a number of converts were invited to meet them in the outer court of the council-house at Akè. There was a large assembly, and Mr. Crowther read and translated the letter, paragraph by paragraph; the Bibles and corn-mill were then presented to them, and Mr. Crowther addressed them. He drew their attention to that portion of Lord Chichester's letter in which the Queen so gracefully acknowledges that it is not commerce alone that can make a nation great or happy, but the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ; and then, with the Bibles in his hand, spoke of the prosperous reigns of David, of Jehoshaphat, and of other kings of Judea who feared God, and led their people to serve Him; and then referred to the

unhappy state of the Jewish nation when prince and people turned from Him to idolatry and wickedness. The other missionaries followed, and, as it was not often that they had the opportunity of speaking to so many chiefs, they endeavoured to turn the occasion to good account.

The mill was then brought forward, some Indian corn was put into it, and the chiefs were taken quite by surprise, when they found that by merely turning the handle of the mill, it came out as fine flour. They all crowded round, each begging for a little of the flour to take home to show his people.

Sagbua and his brother chiefs were very much gratified by all the proceedings; they evidently felt that a great honour had been conferred upon them, and there is reason to believe that a powerful effect was produced by the whole transaction. The friendly Sagbua showed his appreciation of the Queen's present in a way that, though natural, was painful to the missionaries. Mr. Crowther happened to call on him a few days after, when he inquired whether he ought not to offer some sort of sacrifice to the things that had been sent. Mr. Crowther asked, "What thing? the corn-mill or the Bibles?" "The Bibles," was the reply, and our missionary, opening the Bible, and reading from it the first and second commandments, endeavoured to show the chief how contrary to that very book such an act would be.

Ogubenna afterwards spoke of the deep impressions that had been made altogether upon the meeting, and added that it was his firm persuasion that in six years Christianity would become the national faith of Abbeokuta.

We shall close this chapter with an account of one or two of Mr. Crowther's communicants.

The first we will mention is a man of the name of *Kâshi*. He was a carpenter and a carver of wooden idols. Observing the superior skill of the workmen from Sierra Leone, and anxious to improve in his art, he frequently visited a carpenter who worked for Mr. Townsend. Happily for *Kâshi* this man was a Christian, and, while instructing him in his work, often spoke to him on the concerns of his soul. *Kâshi* became in some degree impressed, gave up working on the Sabbath day, and attended public worship. One Sunday, the missionary was led to read and explain Isaiah xlv. 13—17. The man was astonished, he could hardly believe the passage was in the Bible; it seemed as if written on purpose to describe himself. He returned home, but the words followed him; he walked out to a neighbouring plantation, and looked at the trees of his own planting:—"He planteth an ash and the rain doth nourish it; he taketh an oak which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest;"—how true of himself!—"The carpenter stretcheth

out his rule, he marketh it out with a line, he fitteth it with planes, and marketh it out with a compass."—how accurate the description! "Then he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it."

Thus did his mind run over the whole passage; the Holy Spirit brought it home to his conscience; he reflected that while the tree was alive and brought forth fruit it was nothing thought of; how then when it is dead can it become an object of adoration? He gave up idol worship, determined to examine more closely into Christianity, and became a regular attendant on the means of grace. Some of the chiefs observed the change and became alarmed; for his abilities had procured for him the headship of the artisans in Abbeokuta, and he had great influence among the people. They tried to bribe him to relinquish his new opinions, and to identify himself with them; but he had already learnt too much of Christianity to be so moved, and continued to maintain his ground. He gave up, of course, the carving of images; and had it not been for Mr. Crowther's persuasion, would have laid aside also his occupation as carpenter, lest it should prove a temptation to him.

His wives now deserted him, and soon his two children were also taken away; and thus, in time of

his greatest need, when his struggling soul was seeking for an answer to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" he was left alone without one of his friends to sympathise with, or to care for him. But none of these things moved him; he steadily advanced in knowledge and in grace, and was in February 1851 baptised, and soon after admitted to the table of the Lord.

The Dahomian attack, of which we shall give the account in a future chapter, occurred very soon after his baptism, and he was called upon to assist in the defence of his country. A watchful, and perhaps suspicious, eye, was kept upon the converts during the conflict, and an observation of one of the war-chiefs was therefore the more satisfactory, when, happening to meet Kâshi in the very heat of the battle, he exclaimed, "Ah, Kâshi, if all fought like you, they might follow what religion they liked!"

The other case we will relate is that of a young woman named *Oteshade*. She was engaged in marriage to one of the babbalawos, when, by the instrumentality of her grandmother, who had been baptised some time before, her heart was opened to the influences of real religion, and she began to attend the instructions of the missionaries. Her convictions and desire to become a Christian increased continually, and she begged to be baptised. Her engagement to the priest prevented Mr. Crowther

from acceding to her request, and her way seemed hedged up, for the engagement could not be broken through on her side. The only course that seemed open to her was to endeavour to make conditions with her future husband that she might continue to attend the services of the church, and to keep the Sabbath day holy; requesting him, if he disapproved of this, to go to one of the services and hear and judge for himself.

This proposal stirred up the most angry passions; he put her in the stocks, and used other severe measures in the hope of inducing her to yield. But all his ill-treatment was of no avail; she remained steadfast, and at the end of nine days of this ill-treatment, one of the chiefs, heathen though he was, interceded for her. The babbalawo then concerted other measures with her own family, and she was treated with the greatest kindness. But, when Sunday came, she found that she was expected to give up her religion, for they put a basket into her hand and bade her go to a distant field and bring home some cassada. Her resolution was promptly taken, she quietly received the basket, and without making any observation, set off in the direction of the field; but after a while turned round and making a long circuit, reached the mission-premises just as the service was commencing. Her feelings were overcome, and setting down her basket, she joined the

congregation. Afraid of returning home, she lingered on till evening, when her family, finding she did not come back from the field, set out in search of her. We may imagine their rage when at last they found her in the mission-premises; they reproved and threatened her, but she continued stedfast; and finding that they could make no impression on her, they at length returned home, leaving her under the care of Mr. Crowther. There she remained for some time, receiving instruction as a candidate, was baptised, and afterwards married a Christian young man. She still continues to walk stedfastly in the fear of the Lord.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERSECUTION.

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed"—Psalm ii. 2.

THE persecution of the converts at Abbeokuta forms so important a feature in the early history of this church, that we have decided, instead of interweaving the details of it with the more general account of the mission, to reserve them for a separate chapter, so that, extending as it did over a year and a half, it may yet be presented to the readers as a whole.

We must, therefore, ask them to go back with us to the early part of the year 1848, when the seed of Divine truth, which had been so freely scattered among the people, and was gradually taking root in many hearts, had as yet scarcely appeared above the surface of the ground. A few had come out from the heathen around them, and publicly confessed that Jesus was the Saviour; and some had undergone much domestic trial from members of their own families, but the number was not sufficiently large to excite general attention, and the congregations

were allowed to assemble, and the classes to meet for instruction, without being molested by any person in authority.

But as time went on, the effects of the gospel became more apparent; the churches of Akè and of Igbein were filled to overflowing, the chapels multiplied, and were attended by hundreds, while wherever a missionary stopped to preach in the streets he was immediately surrounded by a crowd of eager listeners. Increasing numbers had become candidates for Christian baptism; and it was well known that many more, who were not prepared to take this decided step, had yet left off their idolatry, and were seeking for the truth.

The priests and priestesses of the various gods could not see and know all this without perceiving that if things went on thus, they should lose their influence and their gains; and they set themselves in good earnest to stop the progress of this new religion. There were other parties in the town who participated in their views and feelings—the dealers in goats and fowls feared that as the number of sacrifices diminished, their sales would diminish also; the Mohammedan slave-dealers were shrewd enough to know that their iniquitous traffic could not stand side by side with Christianity; and, sadder than any of these, there were some among the Sierra Leone emigrants who had either never

embraced Christianity, or had apostatised from it, who felt that the consistent conduct of their Christian countrymen was a tacit reflection on themselves, and would rejoice in their being drawn back into idolatry ; while the usurping Kosoko of Lagos, who hated Christianity and civilisation as interfering with his wicked gains, assisted the movement in every way that he could, and helped to unite the others in their attempts upon the converts.

At first the babbalawos did not venture upon any active measures : they began by using persuasions and arguments, not unmixed with threats, and by privately exciting the heads of families against any of the younger members who attended the instruction of the missionaries. But finding these measures had no effect, they had recourse to a plan which they confidently hoped would detach some at least from the religion they dreaded.

Many of Mr. Crowther's candidates were young unmarried men, some of them were already betrothed to their intended wives, and the babbalawos persuaded the fathers of the young women to withhold their daughters from any who would not worship Ifa and promise to purchase "Osha"* for their brides. As soon as the young men heard of this, they met together and determined not only that they would not submit to these conditions, but that they would

* Osha means the household gods of the wives.

not marry any person who would not join with them in reading the Word of God. This resolution was soon put to the test. The father of one of these affianced young women was a babbalawo, and he sent to his intended son-in-law to propose that the marriage should no longer be delayed, but mentioning also the above condition. The young man returned for answer that he had made up his mind never to worship Ifa, nor to purchase Osha, but that he wished to marry according to the law of God, and that if the father did not approve of this he might return the two bags of cowries he had given him at the time of the betrothment, and he would seek a wife elsewhere. He ended by saying, that if no one in Abbeokuta would give him one of their daughters, he should, when he felt disposed, redeem a slave, and marry her. Nor was he moved from his purpose by being brought before the chief and head men of Igbore, who were however obliged to dismiss the case, finding no pretext for punishing him.

The rest of the young men stood equally firm, and thus this scheme fell to the ground.

The next idea was to poison some among the candidates, that the others might be alarmed, and return to Ifa; and with this view some of the babbalawos of Igbore purchased poison at Ibara, and hid it in the bush till a fitting time should come. They sent a spy to Igbein church to watch who were the most

regular attendants there, and the plot seemed ripe for execution, when the spy was taken ill and died; the eldest daughter of the head babbalawo died also; all were frightened from their purpose, and the intended victims were delivered from a danger of which they knew nothing till it was past!

With the female candidates they took a different course, and hoped to intimidate them by "Oro." This mysterious power is an object of the greatest dread to the women of Abbeokuta, who are forbidden to appear in the streets during any of his visits, under pain of death. Notice was publicly given that "Oro" would take possession of the town for four days and nights, and steps were taken to make it believed that the Christians were the objects of his severest displeasure. The song usually sung was altered to suit the occasion, and the "Lion of the book-people" was invoked to execute vengeance upon them.

One poor woman, who was alone in the house with her two little boys when the tumultuous procession passed along, was very much alarmed. It stopped before the house; and above the deafening noise of drums and shouts, rose the shrill song, or rather cry, "Lion of the book-people, seize her, seize her!" while the roof of her dwelling was shaken so violently as if to bring it down. The frightened children clung to their scarcely less

frightened mother, who, that she might at least see the danger, lighted a lamp, but was instantly ordered to extinguish it, and the roof was shaken still more violently. Then, scarcely knowing what she did, she bade the children sing the alphabet as loudly as they could. They obeyed, and to her surprise and infinite relief, the drumming and shouting suddenly ceased, and she heard the crowd move quickly off, doubtless supposing that this was some counter-charm against them.

The summer of 1848 had now passed away, and no impressions had been made upon the converts, but with autumn came stronger measures against them. The first person seized was Susannah Kutè, the member of Mr. Müller's congregation at Akè, of whose sufferings we have spoken before.* The next was a convert of the Wesleyan missionary, who, after three days' imprisonment, was released through Mr. Crowther's influence with Olufoko, the war-chief. Soon after the blow fell upon one of Mr. Crowther's own people, named Oguntolla. He had been a man of a fierce and violent disposition, ready to avenge the slightest injury; but the grace of God had wrought upon his heart, and the tiger was changed into a lamb. Knowing his natural temper, the persons who were sent to apprehend him thought to entrap him by offering a razor with which to kill

* Page 149.

either himself or one of those who had come to take him. But Oguntolla quietly answered that he had two knives, which, if he wished it, would answer the same purpose, but that he had learnt "Thou shalt do no murder." He was led away without making any resistance, taken to the council-house, and had his feet made fast in the stocks by being thrust through a perforated wall. Mr. Crowther thought it better not to interfere in this case as he had done in others, that it might be seen that the strength of the sufferers lay not in man, but in God. He sent him therefore a message to this effect, exhorting him at the same time to perseverance; and the noble-minded man, instead of being discouraged at what might have appeared a desertion of him in the time of his greatest need, replied by begging Mr. Crowther not to be afraid about him, his mind was made up to live or die for Christ. He remained thus for five days, his legs and feet swollen and very painful; while the babbalawos gathered round him like bees,* using every method to induce him to recant. At the end of this time he was summoned before the Ogoni, or council of elders of the town,† who,

* Psalm cxviii. 12.

† It must be remembered that though all matters of *general* interest are settled in the general council of Akè, each township has its own council, and keeps the government of all *local* affairs in its own hands. And it was owing to this independence of action, that, while the persecution raged so

finding they could not frighten him into submission, and knowing the voice of the people was in his favour, dismissed him, after forcing him to become a member of their secret council.

All these attempts against the converts served to strengthen rather than weaken them. Six of the candidates indeed forsook Mr. Crowther from fear of the consequences; but the remainder stood firmer than before—the timid were encouraged, and the weak were strengthened; the churches were fuller than ever, and fresh candidates were continually coming forward.* Frustrated in their attempts, the persecutors desisted for a time. “The churches had rest, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

God was thus fitting them for further trials; and few Christian communities probably have been better prepared than this was for the fire of persecution. “Unity, life, energy, and courage,” writes Mr. Müller at the time, “are the characteristics of the infant church of Abbeokuta.” Their sense of the atonement was so strong, that we are told tears fiercely in some of the towns, others were entirely exempt from it, as we shall presently see.

* At this time Mr. Crowther had *fifty* communicants, and *forty-eight* candidates for baptism, in addition to Mr. Müller's *fifty-two* of the former, and *one hundred and thirty-nine* of the latter.

would run down their cheeks when the subject was specially dwelt upon; and subsequent events have shown that to Mr. Müller's list of Christian graces was to be added constancy in confessing Christ before men.

Individual cases of ill-treatment again occurred in the summer of 1849, but these did not satisfy the enemies of the gospel, who only waited for some favourable opportunity of commencing a more systematic persecution; and the burial of a native* convert in the autumn of that year afforded them a pretext of which they were but too ready to avail themselves.

Idini was a man who had suffered the loss of all things for the sake of Christ; he had been forsaken by his relations and deprived of his employment. Mr. Hinderer took him as horsekeeper, and, after some months of faithful service, the poor man died in the Akè mission-house. His master, knowing what his own wishes would have been, obtained the consent of his relations, and buried him in the Christian burying-ground.

But neither he nor his fellow-missionaries were prepared for the consequences of this step. It was the first case of the death of a *native* convert; and

* In speaking of the *converts* the missionaries often apply the term *native* to those who have never left their country, to distinguish them from the *Sierra Leone* emigrants.

the Ogboni, who have by law, it appeared, the arrangement and the profits of all the funerals, considered their rights were infringed upon, and lost no time in taking advantage of the alleged misdemeanour.* Six of the converts were seized and confined in the council-house of Itoku; but the remonstrances of Mr. Hinderer, and the decision with which he acted, procured their release after five days of suffering; not however without severe scourging, and such heavy fines that some of them will hardly be free from during their life-time. They were also strictly prohibited from attending the instructions of the missionaries, and the chiefs of Itoku still continued to seize and imprison others. In a few days, the missionaries received intelligence from the Obbashorun (or principal war-chief), who was unvarying in the friendliness of his conduct towards them, that the chiefs of Igbore were intending to follow the example of Itoku, and to seize as many as they could of their own townspeople who were converts. Accordingly, on the 20th of October, the storm again burst out with redoubled fury. "Nothing," writes Mr. Crowther, "was omitted that could make the circumstances appalling to the poor sufferers; 'Oro' was called out in Igbore town, the Ogboni

* There had been several deaths among the Sierra Leone people; but in those cases the governments never interfered—they were considered as rightfully belonging to the English.

drums were beating furiously, and a great multitude, armed with bill-hooks, clubs and whips, were catching and dragging our poor converts to the council house. Here they were unmercifully beaten, and then the feet of each of the men were thrust into holes in the walls and made fast on the other side in stocks—some of the holes being two feet from the ground. There they lay for five days, exposed to the scorching sun by day and floods of rain by night. Food was also denied them, and many must have died under their accumulated sufferings, had there not been some among the council who, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, would not consent to the persecution.” These men succoured the prisoners as far as it was possible, privately sending them provisions and words of comfort.* “The women were cruelly scourged and pinioned, without regard to age or sickness; and while all this was going on in the council-house, the houses of the imprisoned were being plundered, their household utensils destroyed, their doors unhinged and carried away.”

Nor were the sufferers left unmolested in their imprisonment; repeated attempts were made to induce them to recant; and finding they would not

* There is reason to believe that, had it not been for this influence, the whole number, amounting (inclusive of the Wesleyan converts) to nearly a hundred, would have been put to death.

yield, their tormentors shaved the heads of all, in order, as they said, to shave off baptism; and on the heads of the women they wrung out the blood of a pigeon, setting before them the figure of an idol for them to worship. All their attempts were vain; baptised and unbaptised stood stedfast in their new faith, and comforted each other with the example of their Lord. Several times they sent messengers to Mr. Crowther, begging him "not to be cast down on their account," for that their "only fear was that he would have over-much sorrow for them." "Wonderful manifestation," exclaims Mr. Hinderer, "of the power of the Word and Spirit of God! A young and tender flock, tormented by wolves and lions, send to comfort their shepherd!" The persecutors were perplexed. "Day after day," said they, "we torment them, but they still say, 'we will die rather than recant.'" "What is it," they asked some of the prisoners, "what is it that Oibo* gives you to eat that makes your hearts so strong?"† They would have been still more puzzled, could they have penetrated deeper, and have known that these very men, some‡ of whom were not long ago the plague

* The white man.

† They knew not that they were eating of the tree of life, and that they were "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."—Col. i. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

of the town—thieves, kidnappers, incendiaries, adulterers, and murderers—were now often engaged in prayer for these their enemies, and “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” many times ascended from the council-house of Igbore.

The fierce attack by the Igbore chiefs was the signal for a similar course of action in other towns. In Igbein, in Itori, in Imo, the converts were sought for and seized; but there were very few in any of these places, and several of the most influential chiefs of other towns refused to take any part in the matter. Sagbua, Ogubonna, Sokenu, and the Obbashorun, protected the Christians in their own towns,* and sent repeatedly to the missionaries to beg them not to be discouraged. They endeavoured to prevail upon the persecutors to relent, and so far succeeded, that at the end of the five days they were set free, but like those of Itoku, they had heavy fines to pay, and were forbidden under pain of death to attend church, or go to white man’s house.

For a time the converts submitted to the restriction, saying they had “the Bible in their hearts, and for the present would keep church at home.” By degrees, however, they began to feel the want of intercourse with their ministers, and notwithstanding the spies that were set to watch the mission-house,

* The congregation at Akè church was not disturbed.

would pay Mr. Crowther visits by stealth, coming through byways and unfrequented paths.

Things continued thus for some weeks. Mr. Crowther's church at Igbein was attended only by Sierra Leone people, and a few natives from some of the quieter districts; for the road to it was watched, and neither the Itoku nor the Igbore people dared to venture. At last the influential Obbashorun, whom we have had several times occasion to mention, interfered on their behalf with so much determination, that the persecutors were obliged to yield, and the prohibition was withdrawn. Various means were, however, still made use of to prevent the Christians from attending public worship, and though some of the most courageous forced their way thither on Christmas day, it was not till the end of February that Mr. Crowther's congregation assembled in their former numbers. In this instance, as in many others, the wicked fell into their own trap, and Satan was defeated by his own weapons. The general feeling among the people of Abbeokuta was strongly in favour of the sufferers; they shuddered at the torments that had been inflicted on them, and wondered at the spirit in which they had been enabled to endure them. Some of the chiefs, who had at first taken part with the persecutors, were disgusted at the lengths to which they had carried their measures, and withdrew from any further participation in their scheme; and

the converts themselves clung still more closely to Him who had been with them in the fiery furnace.

One of the prisoners, of the name of *Anoke*, had, in addition to his other sufferings, been compelled to swallow poison. In his distress he appealed solemnly to God, intreating Him, if he had done wrong in this matter, to give him strength to bear it as a punishment due to him; but if not, it was in His power to deliver him from so dreadful a death, and beseeching Him to do it. When released, he returned home and took some medicine, threw off the poison, and felt no harm.

A similar attempt was made upon a woman, a communicant, of the name of *Agola*, who almost lost the use of one side, from its having been rubbed with poison. She had suffered dreadfully from its effects, had been flogged, and nearly starved; "but," said she to Mr. Müller, "no man can ever take out of my heart the Word of God you have taught me."

Another of these sufferers was *Olu Walla*, a man of a fierce, impetuous temper, well fitted to be the confidential agent of the principal slave-dealer in *Abbeokuta*. Had any poor slave made his escape, or was any deed of violence to be perpetrated, *Olu Walla* was the man to do it; and the life of a fellow-creature was of little account in his eyes, if it stood in the way of any of his designs.

On one occasion, his master had been brought

before the council, on some charge of violence or injustice; he told Olu Walla of the circumstance, and desired him to manage his affairs for him. The too-ready agent collected a band of men nearly as desperate as himself, armed them with swords, and took his place with them in some open space near the chiefs, as if merely spectators of the proceedings. The cause came on; arguments were heard on either side; the chiefs were preparing to give their judgment, when Olu Walla, seeing that it was going against his master, started up, and calling out they were all wrong, rushed forward with his men, sword in hand, and so thoroughly frightened the whole assembly, that they all ran away in a most undignified manner, and the poor plaintiff lost his cause.

About the time of the missionaries' arrival at Abbeokuta, Olu Walla went to Illorin on some business of his own, and remained there a considerable time. During his absence, some of his companions had begun to inquire after truth, and to attend the church and the Sunday-school; but they forbore to mention it to their former comrade on his return, fearing to excite his anger. One day he saw some of them with their primers in their hands, and inquired what they were doing; they told him, and his interest was so awakened, that he determined to go to church, and hear what went on there. The next

Sunday he made his appearance. The congregation were astonished, and the whisper went round—“What! Olu Walla here? He will not come again, for this will not suit him.” But he did come again, yes, again and again, and soon begged for more regular instruction. The blessing of God rested on the teaching; and the fierce and desperate Olu Walla, once the terror of the neighbourhood, is now the patient, quiet Matthew, sitting at the feet of his teacher, and learning the way of eternal life.

The rage of his former master, at thus losing one who had been so valuable an assistant in all his wicked projects, knew no bounds, and he urged on with all his might the persecution which was then beginning. Matthew was more severely dealt with than the rest, but he was enabled to stand firm, and has ever since continued faithfully attached to the mission, to which the natural energy of his character renders him a valuable acquisition.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REV. D. HINDERER—EXTENSION OF MISSION.

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”—Isaiah liv. 2.

THE Rev. David Hinderer joined the mission, as we have said, in May, 1849, and, during the remainder of Mr. Müller’s earthly sojourn, was associated with him in the care of the congregations at Akè and at Ikija, as well as in his preaching in “the streets and lanes of the city.”

But the return of Mr. and Mrs. Townsend in March, 1850, and the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Smith in August of the same year,* set Mr. Hinderer free for a work to which his inclination strongly prompted him, and for which he seemed peculiarly qualified—the lengthening of the mission cords; and, after dwelling for a few pages on the history of Abbeokuta for the year 1850, we shall devote the rest of the chapter to an account of some of Mr. Hinderer’s visits to distant places.

* Mr. and Mrs. Smith had been at Badagry since January, 1848.

The feelings of Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, upon this their return to Abbeokuta, were very different from those on their first journey hither in 1846, and, to those of our readers who remember the account we then gave, the following extract from one of Mr. Townsend's letters of 1850 will not be unacceptable: "How different is our present journey from our former one! Then what anxious nights I passed, full of fear at the prospect before us! We were strangers in a strange land; Andrew Wilhelm indeed was working for God in Abbeokuta; but we knew of no one but himself who would help or welcome us there. Now we return, no longer as strangers, but to meet a goodly band of helpers, to a friendly people, and to a settled home." The people on their part were delighted to see them back again; different parties of Sierra Leone emigrants, of native converts, and of school children went out to welcome them, they were soon comfortably settled in their old place again, and Mr. Townsend rejoiced to be again permitted to minister to his overflowing congregations in the church of Akè.

Mr. Townsend was accompanied by Mr. T. King, whom our readers already are acquainted with as having accompanied the Niger Expedition; another native catechist, Mr. Barber, and several Sierra Leone emigrants; and the next day, which was Easter Sunday, was one of peculiar joy and thank-

fulness in the Abbeokuta congregations; for several of the women received as from the dead their long-lost children. One of these was Mary Ijè, the mother of Mr. King; and their mutual joy was deepened by their mutual hopes as fellow-heirs of the kingdom of Christ.* Not so Mr. King's companion, Mr. Barber; he too was restored to his aged and attached father, but, poor man, he was still a heathen; and though his heart overflowed with gratitude to England for the restoration of his son, it was impossible to make him understand that his chief thanks were due to an infinitely higher Power.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were appointed to what had been intended for Mr. Müller, the station at Ikija, and the change from the discouraging and apparently fruitless labour at Badagry to a sphere where all was full of hope and promise filled them with thankfulness. It was no small comfort to them also to have the friendly Ogubonna as the chief of their district, for they knew that from him they were sure of receiving every kindness and assistance he could render them. And among the minor advantages of Ikija was the situation of their house. It stands on a rising ground, the air is free and healthy, and the view is very interesting. The eye traverses the towns of Ikija, Lao, Ilugun, and part of Bagura, till it crosses the bright and beautiful Ogūn, which

is here 400 or 500 yards wide at its fullest time, and rests at length on the opposite bank, where the uneven ground is carefully and richly cultivated with maize and Indian corn, interspersed with pasture land, and where the plantations of yams, trained up the low poles, almost made Mrs. Smith fancy she was looking on a newly planted Kentish hop-garden.

The adult Sunday-school was an object of Mr. Smith's special interest. It was held in the church, which stands near the mission-compound, but in the open street, that passers by may feel they are at liberty to enter.* Here, on the morning and afternoon of every Lord's Day, eighty persons were assembled to learn to read, in their own tongue, "the wonderful works of God." They were divided into classes, in which the primer, Watts' first Catechism, the Liturgy, all in Yoruba, were the subjects of instruction, while the more advanced were reading the Yoruban translation of the epistle to the Romans, and entering into St. Paul's descriptions and reasonings in a way which showed how truly they must have been taught by the Spirit of God. But perhaps the most interesting of all the classes was the lowest, where, with a large alphabet board, a little boy belonging to Mr. Smith's day-school, would be endeavouring to impress on the memories of his scholars, some of whom were old enough to have

* This is also the case at Akè and at Igbein.

been the father or mother of his own parents, the mysterious connection between the forms and sounds of the various letters.

One event, in the summer of 1850, gave the missionaries great pain: it was the death of Oso Ligregere, who had been, it will be remembered, Mr. Townsend's and Mr. Crowther's host, for the first five months of their residence in Abbeokuta. He had always shown a sincere attachment to them, and, as the confidential friend and agent of Sagbua, had rendered them much assistance. His wife was Sarah Ibikotan, of whom we have spoken* as among the earliest who were baptized; his only child was entrusted to Mr. Crowther's care, and he had lost all confidence in idols. But the fear of man kept him back from a full reception of the gospel, and all that Mr. Townsend, who visited him in his last sickness, could say of him was, that he was almost a Christian.

And now, turning for a little while from Abbeokuta itself, we shall fulfil our promise of accompanying Mr. Hinderer in some of his pioneering expeditions.

It was arranged that he should begin by visiting some of the towns that lie to the west of Abbeokuta; and he accordingly set out on the 18th of July, taking with him Mr. Phillips, as interpreter, and proceeded to the Abàkà gate, at the north-western

extremity of the town. Here, after addressing a number of people who, like himself, were waiting on the bank for canoes, he crossed the river, and rode on across a wide plain, partly cultivated and partly grass land, for ten miles, when he reached a small farm town called Ibàra. At first, the chief was displeased, because he had not sent him notice of his intention, that he might have made suitable preparations; but upon Mr. Hinderer assuring him that as he was no great man no great preparations were required, his good-humour returned, and he treated the missionary with the most friendly kindness.

Mr. Hinderer was soon surrounded by a host of people, to whom he explained the objects of the white men in coming to Abbeokuta, and preached the way of salvation. They listened with the greatest attention, only that now and then while he was speaking, one and another would exclaim, "Amin! God helps the English people to do all this;"* and then a general "Amin" would burst from the assembled crowd. The next day was the market, when the surrounding farmers bring in their produce; and these men, to whom the slave-trade brings only misery and ruin, lent a willing ear, while, standing on the broken mud walls of a ruinous house,

* "*Amin*," though now become a common Yoruba word, has evidently been derived from the Arabic, through the Mohammedans, and is less characteristic than their own native expression—"Ke oh sheh," "So be it."

Mr. Hinderer told them of the efforts of the Queen and people of England to suppress it, and went on to speak of a heavier bondage, and a far more blessed deliverance.

From Ibára Mr. Hinderer proceeded to *Isagga*, seven miles farther to the west; the country resembled that which he had already passed, except that it was diversified with groves of tall trees; and as he journeyed on, the undulating ground gradually swelled into hills, apparently the outlying spurs of the not very distant Kong mountains. The same friendly greeting awaited him here as he had experienced at Ibára. The chief sent for the elders of the town, and the people thronged round him to know why he had come among them. He told them of all England had done and was doing for their country; and spoke to them of a crucified and risen Saviour. When he ceased, the chief and elders bowed their heads, and rubbed their hands together in token of approbation, while some were heard praising God,* and invoking blessings on their benefactors. Mr. Hinderer exclaims—"What an inexpressible cause of thankfulness to missionaries in this benighted land is it to be thus received! The

* "Olorūn," which means, "the Lord of *Orun* or Heaven." This instance is another of the many proofs, that though these people have "gods many and lords many," yet that they have an idea of one supreme Being, the original author of all good. See remarks on same subject in chapter iii.

tidings of a Saviour dying for sinners* always fall on willing ears, except when addressed to Moham-medans."

In the evening, many of the surrounding farmers came into the town, telling Mr. Hinderer that they were working on their farms far away, when all at once they heard that white man was come for good and not for evil, for he spoke good words. So "their hearts would no more sit down, they must come and see for themselves, and now they saw, and heard, and were glad."

The following morning Mr. Hinderer again preached a crucified Saviour to the people; and again the hearty farmer chief thanked him for his visit, and for a small present he had made him the day before, and asked his elders to help him to express the joy they felt at his having visited them. "Never," says Mr. Hinderer, "did I experience more African affection than at Isagga and Ibàra. Would to God that these two towns, containing not less than 5,000 souls, might soon have a missionary placed among them; there are many villages round to which he would also have access."

* The missionaries frequently speak of the effect which the declaration of the atonement has upon the people. It fills them with astonishment, as too good and too wonderful to be believed; and when enabled at all to realise it, they are melted and humbled before that glorious truth, which even in our own days, is "to the Greeks foolishness."

The first out-station from Abbeokuta was not however formed either at Ibàra or Isagga, but at Osielle, a town about eight miles to the north-east of Abbeokuta. Mr. Hinderer had paid it two or three passing visits early in 1850, and was received with the greatest friendliness both by chiefs and people. They afterwards sent him repeated messages begging him to come and "sit down" there; for that they would do all in their power to make him comfortable; and he found that some of the people delayed cutting down their best timber trees, till they should ascertain whether they would be of use to him in building his house amongst them. It was therefore settled that he should take up his abode there for a time; and on October 16th he set out for his new temporary home, leaving Mr. King to carry on his work of "highway" preaching.

Osielle, though not so populous, is nearly as large as Badagry, and beautifully situated on uneven ground. On one side an impenetrable bush protects it from attack, on the other three a small stream adds to the beauty as well as security of the place; and a good substantial wall completes its defences. The country around is very picturesque; and one of the most attractive spots is a farm belonging to Sagbua. It lies on the slope of a hill, and commands an extensive view. Towards the south-east the eye ranges over the country of the Ijebbus, and far off to the

south-west is seen the high land near Awoyade. Abbeokuta lies between, but is hidden by intervening hills, and only the high bare rocks near Ikija are visible; while looking nearer home, the villages and well cultivated fields show an industrious and thriving population.

The Osielle chief readily gave Mr. Hinderer two rooms within his own compound. In one of these his idols and charms had hitherto been kept, and here he had daily worshipped; but he had not the slightest hesitation in removing them, "for," said he, "it is all the same to them where they are put, and I can find them some other room." After they were removed, it was with some degree of satisfaction that Mr. Hinderer with his own hands demolished the altar near the wall.

The two rooms together measured only fifteen feet by six, yet when windows were cut out, and two smaller rooms were afterwards added for stores, it made a very tolerably comfortable abode.

But before Mr. Hinderer would complete his own house, he obtained from the chief a piece of ground for a church; and though the difficulty in obtaining labourers greatly hindered him, and obliged him often to work at it with his own hands, yet before very long it was finished;* and the services were

* The funds for the erection of this church also were collected by Miss Barber.

regularly attended by a goodly number, among whom might generally be seen the chief himself.

One of the helpers in building this church must not be passed over without mentioning a few particulars about him. His name was Tombarchi; like Olu Walla,* he lived by plunder and violence, and was the terror of the Abbeokuta markets. He was a man of a very diminutive stature, and was commonly known by the soubriquet of Akerikora, "Little-but-bitter." The cry that Akerikora was coming was enough to spread dismay through the ranks of the market-women, for they knew it was the signal for insult and robbery; and his character had also become notorious in the neighbouring villages. It was therefore with the greatest astonishment that some of the people at Osielle saw him patiently helping Mr. Hinderer to rear the walls of his little mud church. "What! you," they exclaimed, "you Akerikora, you Little-but-bitter! we never expected to see *you* here." "You may well say so," was the reply, "but I will tell you the reason; it is very different with me now from what it was when you last saw me. All that you say of me *was* true once; but I have since got 'ikonigba,' the gift of the knees; and the gift of a new heart, only to be gained by kneeling for it to the great King of kings."

* Page 183.

Mr. Hinderer opened also a Sunday-school for adults, and the people seemed very pleased to attend it, and were delighted with the books in their own language; but there was not among the people of Osielle so much of that eager desire for instruction that had been so remarkable at Abbeokuta. Occasionally, Mr. Hinderer made excursions to the neighbouring villages, and everywhere found the same friendly greeting, and the same desire that a white man would "sit down" among them. But in those excursions he too plainly saw the perpetual dread in which these poor people were living from fear of the slave-hunters. "It sometimes happens," he writes, "when I ride out to the more remote farms, that I meet a man working behind a bush or a tree. On hearing my horse's steps, he starts up with a hoe or a cutlass in his hand, ready to run away or to prepare for self-defence. But, on seeing it is a white man, his terrified countenance assumes a cheerful smile, and he exclaims: 'Oh, I thought it was a warrior; but no! you are our real friend—you will never do us harm; you come for good, for peace.'"

And now, while Mr. Hinderer is prosecuting his Master's work at Osielle, encouraged by the general kindness of the people, by the conduct of the chief, who was beginning to reverence the Lord's day and refusing to hold palavers, saying, "It is white man's

holy day, and, therefore, I wish to be left alone," and especially encouraged by the hopeful evidences given by some of the people that they were earnestly caring for their souls. While he is thus engaged, we shall return to Abbeokuta, for the purpose of relating one or two circumstances that occurred there in the end of 1850 and the beginning of the year 1851.

The first of these was a renewal of the persecution of 1849; it was, as before, chiefly confined to the town of Igbore, and stirred up by the same enemy to Christianity and civilization, the great slave-dealer, Akigbogun, or, as was his usual appellation among the converts, Pharaoh of Igbore. He was in league with Kosoko, and, fancying that the missionaries received money from their converts, imagined that by lessening their number, and consequently decreasing the gains of the white men, they would be obliged to leave the place, and there would no longer be any check upon the slave-trade. He again, therefore, prevailed on the chiefs of Igbore to renew the prohibition to attend public worship on pain of death, and to forbid any to buy or sell in the market unless they would worship Ifa. There were many instances of noble suffering, as on the preceding occasions, but we must refer our readers to the Society's periodicals for further particulars. By Sagbua's intervention, it was again

stopped,* and a visit paid to Abbeokuta by Mr. Beecroft, Her Majesty's Consul in the Bights, in January, 1851, had a very salutary effect.

Mr. Beecroft arrived on the 10th of January, and was astonished at the size and population of the town, which he thought had been considerably underrated by the missionaries. The chiefs felt themselves greatly honoured by this official recognition of Abbeokuta, and prepared to give him an honourable reception. The town-crier was sent round to proclaim the 14th as the day for a public audience; and in the morning drums were heard, and chiefs, with their gaudy native umbrellas, were seen gathering in the great square of Akè, where the meeting was to be held. Chairs and benches had been prepared for the consul and the missionaries under the shade of a large tree; the war-chiefs were seated on the ground on the right, Sagbua and the Ogonis on the left, under the verandah of the council-house, and a host of spectators occupied the rest of the space. Mr. Beecroft, who was in full uniform, read his commission from the Queen, which was interpreted by Mr. Crowther; and the consul then, after thanking the chiefs for the protection

* It would seem as though Sagbua desired to identify himself with the Christians, for he took this opportunity of requesting Mr. Townsend to re-admit one of his wives into the class of candidates for baptism.

they had afforded to the missionaries, and reminding them that the English were the only people who had endeavoured to benefit them, and to remove "from Africa the awful darkness that overshadows her," proceeded to recount to them a visit he had made in the preceding year to Abomey, the capital of Dahomey, and to set before them the danger they were in from Gezo the tyrant king. He then spoke of the desire of the Queen of England for the welfare of Abbeokuta, of the importance of lawful commerce, and the necessity of suppressing the slave-trade, if they ever hoped for peace or prosperity. All this was warmly responded to by the chiefs, both now and at a subsequent meeting; they assured the consul they had not words to express their feelings of gratitude to the Queen for sending him, or to himself for taking the trouble of coming so far; and spoke very strongly of their earnest desire for the removal of the usurping Kosoko from Lagos, being well assured that no peace could be expected as long as he was there. The consul then represented to them in strong language the injustice as well as impolicy of suffering a few designing and interested men to stir up persecution of the converts, when they themselves were, with perhaps one or two exceptions, opposed to it; and the chiefs gave a proof of their assent to all he said, by sending for three women

who had taken refuge from their persecutors in the Aké mission-premises, and telling them they were free to go where they would.

Mr. Beecroft left Abbeokuta on the 22nd of January, carrying with him the good wishes and blessings of all. Doubtless his own venerable and dignified appearance contributed to the effect of his visit; for, they said, "if the messenger is so great a man, what must the Queen be who sent him?"

The chiefs gave him a fine pony and a goat, and Ogubonna supplied him with some of the produce of his own farm, viz. a large bale of cotton, a bag of ginger, and another of fine red pepper. He had also an opportunity, of which he was not slow to avail himself, of showing the natural generosity and delicacy of his mind, by another present that he made him. The evening before the consul's departure, Ogubonna paid him a visit at Mr. Townsend's, and in the course of the conversation Mr. Beecroft took hold of a very handsome country cloth that the chief had on, and admiring its colours and texture, asked him what he gave for it. Ogubonna answered, with an indifferent tone and manner, that he believed about twelve dollars. Here the matter dropped, and Mr. Beecroft thought no more of the cloth or of the price. Not so, however, the chief himself; for, on Mr. Beecroft's calling on him the next morning to

bid him farewell, he found the cloth had been neatly folded and pressed, and Ogubonna now insisted on his accepting it.

The next event of importance to Abbeokuta was the Dahomian attack, and of this our readers will find a full account in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DAHOMIAN ATTACK.

"Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."—Job xxxviii. 11.

It was Sunday, March 2, 1851; but the Sabbath at Abbeokuta was far from being one of peace and tranquillity. All was excitement in the town; the congregations indeed met as usual, but care and anxiety were marked on every brow; and it seemed as if the petition, "From battle, and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord deliver us," had on this day a peculiar emphasis.

As night approached, the noise and confusion in the town increased; horsemen who had been sent out in the morning were returning at full speed; war-gongs were beating in every township; war-chiefs and their soldiers were hurrying to the walls; while women and children ran wildly about the streets, screaming, crying, and exciting the men to courage.

Evidently an enemy was at hand; and we shall turn from Abbeokuta to tell our readers who that enemy was, and what cause the Egbas had for fear.

When we used to read in ancient history of the Amazons, and shuddered at their unfeminine delight in war and carnage, we little thought that even now there could be a stern reality of what we then believed to be a fable. But the last few years have taught us differently; and we now know that among the daughters of Africa, for the most part so affectionate and full of pity,* there exists at this present time a band of women, who, treading under foot every tender feeling, and setting at nought the ties of nature and of home, have enrolled themselves as an army of blood-thirsty female warriors. And we know too there is a nation that is not ashamed to suffer them to fight its battles, and a king who shrinks not from leading them to the conflict!

* Every body knows the story of the African woman of Bambarra, who, when Mungo Park, weary, destitute, neglected, and almost exhausted from want of food, was one evening sitting under a tree, with a heavy storm coming on, and in fear of wild beasts at night, looked on him with pity as she passed along, and invited him to her house. Here she supplied him with food, spread a mat for him to sleep on, and when she had prevailed on him to lie down, she called to the female part of her family to resume their spinning. As they spun, they sung, and one of their songs was an extempore kind of ballad on himself; it was sung by one of the young women, and the others joined in chorus. The melody was simple and plaintive, and the words ran thus: "The winds roared and the rains fell. The poor white man, faint and weary, came and sat under our tree. He has no mother to bring him milk, no wife to grind his corn."—*Chorus*—"Let us pity the white man; no mother has he," &c.

Our readers will know that we are speaking of the fierce Dahomians and their cruel king; a people whose occupation is war; whose delight is in bloodshed and rapine; whose favourite ornaments are the skulls of their slaughtered enemies; and whose religion chiefly consists in offering a daily human sacrifice to the manes of their ancestors, and annually "watering their graves" with the blood of hundreds of their fellow-creatures.*

Gezo, their king, derives his large revenues from the slave-trade, both by kidnapping and selling slaves on his own account, and by the tax he imposes on every slave exported from his dominions. Neither agriculture nor lawful commerce would, he thinks, yield him so rich a harvest, and hence he does all in his power to repress them, and takes every means of encouraging the profitable slave-wars. All the country round is depopulated and laid waste, as one town after another has fallen beneath his murderous sword; and the dreadful history

* It is needful that such things should be known, that we may see how debased our nature can become, when left to its own ungoverned will, and that we may be moved the more earnestly to pity and to care for the souls of those who care not for their own. But we may be spared the pain of entering into further details ourselves, as this has been done in the Church Missionary Intelligencer of May 1851, and more fully by Commander Forbes himself in his "Dahomey and the Dahomians."

of Okeâdan* is only one among the many others that, were the earth to disclose her slain, would rise up to the condemnation of the tyrant. Abbeokuta, as likely to become the seat of civilization and industry in this part of Africa, was particularly hateful to him and to his troops; and when the late Commander Forbes and Mr. Beecroft, her Majesty's consul, visited Abomey, the capital, in May, 1850, and 5000 female warriors were paraded before them, the fierce cry went up from these unhappy women, "Give us Abbeokuta! Attahpahm is destroyed! give us Abbeokuta!"

The two English gentlemen well knew that this tyrant king dared not refuse a demand thrice made by this portion of his army; yet they endeavoured to avert the threatened blow by representing to the king that the Egbas of Abbeokuta were our allies, that several English people were residing there, and that even the emigrants returned from Sierra Leone

* Okeâdan was a large town inhabited by Ottas; they were at peace with Dahomey, and were actually entertaining some Dahomian messengers when intelligence was brought that the army was coming against them. At first they disbelieved such treachery from their allies, and, when convinced of its truth, it was too late to make any effectual resistance. The chief and large numbers of the people were slain, the town burnt, and 20,000 captives led to Abomey, some to be sacrificed, the rest to be sold for slaves! A few escaped to the bush, and afterwards settled themselves again near their former homes.

were British subjects. The only answer they could obtain was, to advise them to remove the white men from the place, for that he should certainly visit it in his next campaign.

Mr. Beecroft lost no time in sending the missionaries notice of their danger, and they immediately communicated the intelligence to the chiefs. But few, however, of these took any heed to it. The Dahomians had threatened Abbeokuta before, but had changed their purpose, and doubtless it would be so now. There were some, however, who attended to the advice of the missionaries, among whom were Sagbua and Ogubonna, and these set about the repair of the walls, which were in a most ruinous state, as far as their jurisdiction extended. They had great difficulty in persuading the people to assist them, and it was not till they saw their chief going himself to the wall with basket and implements that they were effectually roused.

Much of the wall remained untouched, and this of course added to the anxiety of the missionaries. But they determined at all risks to remain at their posts, and we are not quite sure whether their repeated assurances to the people that, come what would, they intended to cast in their lot with them, might not in some degree have lulled their apprehensions. Heathens can little understand the self-forgetting heroism of Christianity; and it is not

improbable that they attributed this determination to a secret disbelief of the real danger.

Under these trying circumstances the missionaries had no resource but to place themselves and their whole concerns in the hands of that God who had brought them thither, and whose almighty power could preserve them from harm if He saw fit. "This," said Mr. Crowther, "is the only place where the light of the Gospel shines. Surely God will not let it be quenched, nor will He permit the labours of England for the destruction of the slave-trade and the conversion of Africa to be thwarted by a blood-thirsty tyrant!" They knew, too, how many prayers were continually ascending for themselves and for their mission; and thus as the time drew near and their anxiety increased, they endeavoured to comfort one another with these thoughts of peace.

The visit of the consul to Abbeokuta in January 1851,* and the kindness with which he entered into their dangers and difficulties, was a great relief to the minds of our friends. As we mentioned in the preceding chapter, he narrated to the chiefs the visit he had paid to Abomey,† and the imminent danger which that visit had convinced him they were in, and urgently pressed them to take immediate steps to put their town in as strong a position of self-defence as possible. The result was the repair of

* Page 199.

† Page 200.

another small portion of the wall (which afterwards proved of great importance), and now the western and south-western quarters were effectually strengthened, though the north-western remained as exposed as before.

And here we again trace the hand of God overruling events for the welfare and preservation of His people: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Our readers will remember a visit that Mr. Hinderer some months before paid to Isagga, a town seventeen miles to the west of Abbeokuta, and the friendly kindness with which he was received. The Isaggans were not Egbas, but all their sympathies were with them, and they took advantage of an unexpected opportunity, to render them a most important service.

Their town lay in the direct road to Abbeokuta; and the natural and shortest course for the Dahomian army to have taken, after passing Isagga, would have been to have gone straight to the *Abakà* gate at the north-west extremity of the town. But they were ignorant of the local details of the country, and when they reached Isagga, instead of destroying it, as doubtless they would otherwise have done, they endeavoured to make use of the people by proposing a treaty of peace. The Isaggans, afraid to

refuse, consented; a sacrifice was killed, and the two parties sat down to feast upon it.

During the repast, the Dahomians made various inquiries about Abbeokuta, stating that they proposed to make the attack on the north-western portion. "On no account attack it there," exclaimed the Isaggans, who well knew the state of the Abbeokutan defences, "the people in that quarter are the bravest of any; they will not even have a wall for their protection, but depend on their own prowess and valour. No, go to the south-west, where the people are so cowardly, that hearing of your coming, they have built a high wall that they may hide themselves behind it. Trust yourselves to us, we will guide you the right way. And at what time of the day," they continued, "do you think of falling upon them?" "In the night," was the answer. "You are again mistaken," replied the Isaggans, "in the night the men are all in the town, and will give you a great deal of trouble. Wait till noon; the men will then most of them be at their farms, and the few that remain will be asleep under the palm-wine sheds."

While this conversation was going on, the Isaggans dispatched some trusty messengers to Abbeokuta with the bones of the sacrifice, and a message to the Abbeokutan chiefs that the Isaggans had made a treaty with the Dahomians, and intended to lead

them the next day by the *best way* to their town. The Abbeokutan chiefs understood the meaning of this enigmatical message; and it was this that gave rise to the anxiety and dismay we spoke of at the beginning of this chapter.

The suspense of that Sunday, and that Sunday night, are not to be forgotten. The Dahomians were almost at their gates, their well-trained army was 16,000 strong, 10,000 men, and 6,000 women, all animated by a ferocity and recklessness of danger that very rarely failed to secure them an easy victory. In Abbeokuta there were only 8,000 fighting men, and none of these had been regularly disciplined. The odds were fearful. Yet a determined spirit animated the Egbas; they knew the conflict would be for life, and liberty, and all that was dear to them; and the sober yet courageous bearing of the people showed they expected and were prepared for a desperate struggle.

When the morning of Monday dawned, fresh accounts arrived of the enemy's advance; and at noon a heavy fire of musketry proclaimed that the work of destruction had begun. Mr. Crowther's house was too near the south-west wall to be a place of safety; and Mrs. Crowther was prevailed on to take refuge at Mr. Townsend's less exposed abode at Akè, while he himself remained behind to minister help and comfort to his agitated people. Mr. and Mrs. Smith had gone that morning from Ikija to

Akè, to spend some time with Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, but when the mid-day firing began, Mr. Smith returned immediately to his station, adoring the sparing mercy of his covenant God. Had the Dahomians followed out their first intentions, and assailed the town on the *north-west*, nothing could have saved himself, and all that belonged to him, from destruction; for the Ikija mission-house is near the Abàkà gate, and there is only the church between it and the wall. As it was, he saw, from the western side of his house, Ogubonna's portion of the army with desperate courage defending the wall that lies beyond the river.*

Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Bowen,† ascended a rock that stands in the Akè mission-premises, and took a survey of the sorrowful scene around. It was sad to see the throngs of frightened fugitives; the old and the very young, the sick and the infirm, women and children wending their way as fast as their feeble steps would carry them, to the north-eastern gates, hoping to find

* As Mr. Smith passed from Akè to Ikija, it was very distressing to hear the terrified people calling out for help, some to Ifa, some to Sango, and some to their revered and departed Shodeke; while many, when they saw him approaching, changed their cry into "O white man, and white man's God, save us!"

† An American missionary, who was endeavouring to penetrate into the interior.

shelter in the neighbouring towns. Some were leading a sheep, some a goat, others bore with them all they could collect of their household goods; but the excitement and distress in all was too great for utterance, and they moved on in silence under the scorching glare of a tropical noonday sun.*

There was no silence in the opposite quarters of the town. Here, as the missionaries from their different positions look to the south or the south-west, they see the Dahomians come on in compact and well-ordered masses. They hear the tremendous fire poured upon them from the wall; the progress of the enemy is arrested;—they expected not so stout a resistance, and they change their mode of assault. Now they extend their line in front of the wall. The soldiers within make a similar movement, and the firing recommences. A fresh party of Dahomians is coming up; there is a narrow space between the river and the wall, and here they make a desperate assault, but they are as desperately resisted, and are repulsed with dreadful slaughter.† Again the Daho-

* Poor people! many of them had not been beyond the walls for years, some perhaps never; and so great was the agitation, that Mr. Hinderer, who met hundreds of them as he came in from Osielle, mentions that many were fainting, and some were even lying dead by the side of the road.

† The next day Mr. Crowther counted *eighty* dead bodies of Dahomians within the space of a few yards on this spot, all of whom, *except five, were women!*

mians extend their line, till more than a mile is occupied; but the Egbas do the same, and at last outflank them. For six hours the murderous strife has lasted, and evening is coming on. The enemy seems to waver. Can it be that they are giving way? Yes—for see how the Egbas are pouring out from those gates; the Dahomians are retreating, and they are in hot pursuit—God has indeed heard the prayers of His people, and has sent them deliverance!

Could the Abbeokutans have continued the pursuit, there is little doubt that the Dahomian army would have been destroyed or dispersed. But they were exhausted with fatigue and hunger, and they returned to the town, leaving the enemy about two miles from the walls, where it was supposed they would take up their position for the night.

The Egbas rose at early dawn, and, encouraged by success, set off to meet the Dahomians again in combat. To their surprise they were nowhere to be seen, they had fled, and the only traces they had left behind were the headless bodies of near a hundred poor farming people, men, women and children, whom they had seized as they advanced on the preceding day, and had now mercilessly beheaded, that they might carry the heads away as trophies!

It afterwards appeared that when the Dahomians reckoned up at night those who were missing, they

were alarmed at the unusual loss they had sustained,* and feared to risk a second battle.

The Egbas followed them to Isagga, which they were preparing to attack and destroy, in revenge for the evil counsel they had given them.† Another battle ensued, more deadly, it was said, than before; the Egbas were again victorious, and rejoiced in thus delivering the Isaggans from a danger they had incurred for them; while the discomfited Dahomians hastened back to their own country, mortified and enraged, and determined to embrace the first opportunity of avenging themselves on Abbeokuta.

The loss they sustained cannot be accurately known, but it is supposed that it must have been more than 3,000 killed and 1,000 taken prisoners. What a frightful loss of human life! Well might Mr. Hinderer say, “my heart is bleeding for bleeding

* There could scarcely have been less than eighteen hundred Dahomians left slain before the walls of Abbeokuta. They were the flower of the army, and were chiefly women, who are always placed in the foremost of their battles as more to be depended on. The Abbeokutans had heard that women fought in the Dahomian army, but would not believe it; and now when they found it really was so, their indignation knew no bounds, and doubtless helped to urge them on to the pursuit and to the second battle before Isagga.

† Not only had the Isaggans misled the Dahomians as to the best point and time of attack, but had purposely led them to cross the river at a spot much deeper than the proper fording place, so that some of the soldiers lost their muskets in the river, and much of the ammunition was spoilt.

Africa! Thus to see Satan snatching away thousands of immortal souls to a hopeless eternity; and yet this is only one of Africa's many scenes!"

And all to satisfy the avarice of Gezo and the savage bravery of his army!* Oh that the gospel of peace might soon be proclaimed in Dahomey! that the grace of God might change the hearts of this fierce people, that the men might bow their necks to the King of kings, and that the women, turning with horror from their present ornaments, † might adorn themselves with that "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

The women of Abbeokuta showed upon this occasion that they were not behind their Amazonian neighbours in the courage that belongs to woman. Not a few of them, during the hottest of the fight, regardless of the bullets that were flying in every direction, employed themselves in carrying water to the thirsty soldiers on the walls, and two of them had the satisfaction of thus relieving a man who, at the

* Gezo was also urged on by Kosoko of Lagos, and the other principal slave-dealers, from whom he received large presents and assistance in various ways. Kosoko was so delighted at the prospect of driving the white men away, and of destroying Abbeokuta, that, never doubting the issue of the conflict, he actually had salutes fired when he found the Dahomians were approaching Abbeokuta.

† The very drinking cups which the ladies of the royal harem carry at their girdles are polished human skulls.

time of the persecution, had been one of the bitterest of their foes.

Mr. Hinderer, who was engaged in the same errand of mercy, and was conveying refreshment to the exhausted chiefs at the south-west extremity of the town, told us that as he approached the wall, he found the road lined with women. One had a calabash of water, another some palm-wine, a third some country beer, and others were provided with some substantial food. As he drew near, a soldier was coming up from the walls. "Where are you going?" cried the women: "Into the town," was the answer. "I am hungry and thirsty, and tired of fighting." "What," they exclaimed, "turn your back upon the enemy! here is food for you, eat and drink, and go back to your post; but if not, leave your musket behind you, and we will find some one to take your place." Once and again did this happen, as Mr. Hinderer rode along. The soldiers ate and drank, and, refreshed and encouraged, returned to drive the invaders from the walls.

What a day had that day of battle been for the missionaries! In the morning, the remembrance of the fate of other towns, and the thought that this might be the last day of Abbeokuta; as the hours passed on, the agitation of the actual combat, the imminent danger to themselves and to their children, the crowding of terrified people into the mission-

compound for succour they had no means of giving them, and the bringing in of wounded soldiers! And then the evening, bringing the consciousness of a deliverance almost too great to be believed; a confused sense of joy and thankfulness scarcely realized, mingled with deep distress for the sufferings of others. We do not wonder at the excitement they speak of, from which it took them days to recover.

We may imagine the joy of the Abbeokutans at this preservation from misery and ruin. Even the heathen openly acknowledged that they owed it to the God of the Christians; and they all felt the missionaries to be their truest friends. They often also spoke with gratitude of the consul's visit: "Had it not been *he* who told us of our danger, we should have taken less notice of it, nor should we have repaired that small portion of the wall that did us so much service."

The conduct of the Dahomian prisoners, especially of the women,* was so violent that the chiefs talked of putting them to death; but the missionaries interceded, and they were spared.

With what different feelings did the Christians of Abbeokuta meet on the following Sunday, the 9th of March! The anxiety and dismay of the preceding

* Two of these Amazons killed the persons who brought their food.

Sabbath were changed into joy and gladness; and the Psalms must have appeared as though purposely selected. How thankfully could they exclaim, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," and how feelingly acknowledge "I will not trust in my bow, neither is it my sword that shall help, but it is Thou that hast saved us from our enemies, and puttest them to confusion that hate us. We make our boast in God all day long, and will praise Thy name for ever."*

And it was a happy coincidence, that by a previous arrangement no less than twenty-four adults were on that day baptised in the church of Akè—twenty-four men and women—who had so lately seen what earthly warfare was, and were now professing themselves "not ashamed manfully to fight under the banner of Christ crucified" against all their spiritual foes, "and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end."

But in the church of Igbein a note of sorrow mingled with the hallelujahs; for one was missing from among them, and they believed him numbered with the dead. This was John Baptist, a communicant whose history must not be passed over; but as it is too long to be inserted here, we will reserve it for the next chapter.

* Psalm xlv. 1; xlv.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN BAPTIST DASALU.

"The darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."—Ps. cxxxix. 12.

WE promised our readers that in this chapter we would give them some account of John Baptist, and we have the greater reason for making it a separate history, as we have more particulars to relate of him than we have been able to collect of the other converts.

His heathen name was Dasalu, and his heathen occupation was the purchase of slaves in the interior, and the sale of them again to the regular dealers at Lagos. But even the trader in his fellow-men is not beyond the reach of Divine grace; and before the regular establishment of the mission in 1846, this man's attention had been drawn to Christianity, either by Andrew Wilhelm, or by some of the other emigrants.

When the missionaries arrived at Abbeokuta in 1846, Dasalu was among the earliest of those who applied for instruction, and notwithstanding the reproaches and opposition of his family, he soon became a candidate for baptism.

God and Belial could not reign together in his heart, but he was not long in deciding which he would serve. His former trade was now hateful in his sight, and he determined to substitute the sale of provisions at Lagos market for that of his fellow-men. This decision involved a considerable pecuniary sacrifice; for slaves were at that time fetching a high price upon the coast, while in order to keep up the supply, the Lagos merchants had agreed among themselves to allow no one to purchase tobacco (the chief article of trade in the interior) till all the slave-dealers had taken as much as they wished. As this was generally the whole quantity in the market, Dasalu seldom could procure any, and was obliged to content himself with less profitable merchandise. But he had learned that "godliness with contentment is great gain," and with a heart at ease, could listen to the taunts of his travelling companions with a smile; and, when they deridingly asked him where were his slaves, would point to his sheep and goats, and thankfully rejoice in the exchange he had been enabled to make.

But, after a time, the tide most unexpectedly turned; in consequence of the vigilance of our cruisers, the demand for slaves rapidly decreased, and the Abbeokutan dealers being unable to dispose of those they carried to Lagos, were equally unable

to purchase tobacco as heretofore. Dasalu had now in great measure the command of the market, and the merchants were glad to dispose of their tobacco to him upon fair and reasonable terms.

It was in vain that the angry slave-dealers remonstrated with them on this point, the only answer they gave was, "We cannot buy your slaves, for we cannot sell them again; but food we must have, and we are glad now to give tobacco for it." Dasalu began to prosper more than in proportion to his former losses,—the slave-dealers of Abbeokuta, particularly the Mohammedans, were increasingly exasperated against him, and by bribes and threats and misrepresentations, they, after some time, prevailed on the chiefs to close the markets in their respective towns to any who would not worship Ifa. It was one of the first public trials of the new converts, but they were enabled to stand firm, though some of them, who were only beginners in the school of Christ, would have resented this act of injustice, had not Mr. Crowther's Christian arguments and persuasion brought them to a better mind. By degrees the chiefs relented, and the Christians were allowed to take their places in the markets as usual.

At the end of two years from his becoming a candidate, Dasalu was baptised, and it was by his own request that he received the name of *John Baptist*. He had great admiration for the character of the

Baptist, and probably his choice of the name was connected with some undefined feeling that similarity of name produces similarity of disposition.* His wife, who had followed in her husband's footsteps, received the name of *Martha*.

About this time his father, who was a chief, died, and John, fearful lest his conscience should be entangled, declined succeeding him in his office. His enemies, who continued to watch his every step, took advantage of his refusal, and when the persecution broke out in the autumn of 1849 they summoned him before the council on a charge of contempt for his father and ancestors. He was heavily fined, and forced to become a member of the Ogboni or secret council, but they seem to have been afraid of taking any stronger measures, and he was spared the sufferings which so many endured. He made good use of his liberty and of the prosperity with which God had blessed him, and spent a considerable sum in the succour of those who were "hungry" and "in prison." He would not set at nought the orders of the local authorities, and, until they were rescinded,† refrained from attending public worship; but he was one of that small band

* See page 35. It was on this account that one of the first baptised objected to the name of "Thomas," lest he should partake of the incredulity of the apostle.

† Page 182.

who privately visited the Igbein mission-house, and the tearful nights he passed there in conversation with Mr. Crowther were times of refreshment and support. As soon as the public edict was withdrawn, at the instance of the Obbashorun, he determined to brave all the unauthorised attempts against himself and his fellow-believers; and he was the first to force his way to Igbein church on that Christmas day when Mr. Crowther's flock began to re-assemble.*

When the Dahomians appeared before the town, in March, 1851, John Baptist was summoned to assist in its defence. He was seen to fight bravely, but was among the missing ones when the fight was over. Mr. Crowther, who was greatly attached to him, went out into the battle-field to search for him among the slain, but without success. His brother, however, thought he recognised his body among those headless ones left by the Dahomians in the bush, and he was mourned for as dead.

In the following May, when Mr. Crowther was at Badagry, in his way to England, he met with some of the Abbeokutans who had been taken prisoners by the Dahomians, but who, having been redeemed, were on their way home. To his surprise and joy he found from them that John was still alive, though shut up with eighty or ninety others as a captive at Abomey. Mr. Crowther made all the inquiry he

could about him, and rejoiced in the voluntary testimony borne by these *heathen*, that had it not been for John's Christian example and exhortation, speaking to them of God, and begging them to put their trust in Him, they would all have sunk into utter despair. This is not the first time that the Gospel has been preached within the walls of a prison!

Poor Martha was all this time in great distress; she had not only, as she believed, lost her husband, but was unkindly treated by his family. The eldest brother went so far as, after possessing himself of all John's property, to give Martha notice to leave the premises, as he did not wish to have any "book-people" there. Her own family were equally opposed, and the missionaries were endeavouring to arrange some plan for her, when the joyful tidings of her husband's being yet alive reached her, and she hurried to Badagry, in the hope of being able to facilitate his release. She went directly to Mr. Gollmer, who, knowing that a woman of some importance named Tinuba (a sister of Akitoye's), then residing in the town, was likely to have influence with the king of Dahomey, requested her to use any means that lay in her power to procure John's redemption. She promised to do so, and it would appear that she kept this promise; for, some time after, an English gentleman unexpectedly met John at Whydah, and heard from him that he had been

liberated by Gezo, because of some supposed connection with Tinuba; that he had been sent down to Whydah, with the assurance of his being perfectly free; but that he could not leave the place till a canoe was sent for him. One was accordingly sent the next day, at the hour and to the spot appointed by John himself; but, when it arrived, he was nowhere to be seen, and the search for him by the canoe-men was fruitless.

Since that time Mr. Gollmer has made repeated application to the proper authorities, and has used every means in his power to discover where he is, but hitherto without success. The only intelligence that has since been received of him has been a symbolical letter, sent to his poor wife, who still lingers at Badagry, consisting of a *stone*, a *piece of charcoal*, a *pepper-pod*, a *grain of parched corn*, and a *piece of rag*. All were tied up in a small piece of cloth, and were interpreted by the messenger as follows: That he was as *strong as a stone*, but his prospects were *dark as charcoal*, that he was so feverish with anxiety that his skin was *as hot as pepper*, and *corn might be parched* upon it, and that his clothing was nothing but a *rag*. The only other information that Martha seems to have been able to gain from the messenger was, that he certainly was still at Whydah; but whether, though nominally free, the poor man is detained there in the hope of a large ransom, or

whether his enemies are administering to him some slow poison gradually to destroy the powers of mind and body, we know not. We do know, however, that God's servants, whether at Lagos or Badagry, will not leave him uncared for and unsought for; and we know that while his enemies may be saying that "surely darkness shall cover" him, He to whom "the darkness and light are both alike," can by His blessed presence, make "the night to be light about" His afflicted servant.

We shall end this chapter by a short notice of a young woman of Igbore, who was almost drawn aside again into heathenism by that same closing of the market to Christians of which we have just spoken. She seems to have been the only one of her family who had been awakened to any religious concern, and she herself was but a young disciple, for at the time the order was issued, it was only three weeks since she had made up her mind to renounce idolatry, and had cleared her house of all the imagined deities. Akigbogun or Pharaoh,* as he was called by the converts, the great slave-dealer of Igbore, who was also the "master of the market," hoped to find her an easy prey, and went to talk with her on the subject. He reminded her of the loss of livelihood which would, as he said, inevitably follow from her persisting in her present course, and, insi-

diously representing to her that she could still worship the God of the Christians in her heart, urged her to set up the idols in her house, and to offer pigeons to them as an outward service. The poor young woman fell into the snare, and thought she could compromise the matter with her own conscience by borrowing a god for the occasion. She went to her sister, who was still a heathen, and, without telling her her purpose, procured from her one of the sacred calabashes, carried it home, and set it up in her house. But God had mercy on His weak and backsliding servant: the sister, suspecting that all was not right, went to Akigbogun, and told him what had occurred. Akigbogun immediately proceeded to the young woman's house, and, telling her that he had discovered that the idol was not her own, insisted on her purchasing some for herself, and on her expiating her offence by offering a sheep instead of the pigeons. But the tormentor had miscalculated the effects of this severity. The young woman recalled to mind what some of her friends had said of the danger of the first downward step, and He who looked on the backsliding Peter melted her heart also into penitence, and gave her courage to retrace her wandering steps. Afraid of remaining in her own house, she placed the few articles of property she possessed in the hands of Christian friends, and herself took refuge with an uncle, who, though still

a heathen, always treated her with kindness. Here Akigbogun again visited her, and tried to bring her over, but the only answer he received was, in the figurative language of the Egbas, "Pharaoh, if you try to make me go where your father went,* I shall leave your town." She did so, settled in another district, put herself under regular instruction, and, growing in grace and strengthened in spirit, is now among the candidates for baptism.

* This woman seems to have considered the Red Sea as an emblem of eternal punishment.

CHAPTER XVII.

IBADAN.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation."—Isaiah lii. 7.

A FURTHER advance into the interior had long been the aim of the Committee at home, and the endeavour of the missionaries themselves, but, hitherto, every application to the Abbeokutan chiefs for permission to proceed thither, had been met with so decided a refusal, that the only course seemed to be to wait quietly till, in the providence of God, some way should be opened for the accomplishment of their wishes. The Dahomian attack unexpectedly opened this way. The conduct of the missionaries at that critical time, and under those trying circumstances, had so won the admiration and confidence of the chiefs, that they were evidently more inclined to listen to their requests; and advantage was taken of this favourable disposition to renew the proposal that Mr. Hinderer should pay a visit to Ibadan. The two principal persons whose consent it was necessary to obtain, were Sagbua, as senior chief, and the war-chief Sokenu, who was "master of the

road" to Ibadan. When the chiefs received this renewed message from the missionaries they at first, as usual, objected, on the ground that the road was not safe,* and what would the English people think if they should consent to his going, and any harm should happen to him? With some adroitness the messenger met this difficulty by suggesting another, and reminding them that it was "his fathers in England" who had bade him go, and what answer could the chiefs send to them if they put any obstacle in the way? adding, "and, besides, you know that when white men set their minds upon a thing, they will do it."

This reasoning succeeded, and the chiefs consented that a messenger should be dispatched to Ibadan, to propose a visit from Mr. Hinderer to the chief there, secretly hoping and believing that the proposal would be declined. Contrary to their expectations and their wishes, the messenger brought back a very cordial invitation; and as there was now no alternative, the chiefs courteously did all in their power to make the journey safe, and the reception favourable. Each of the two chiefs appointed special messengers of their

* This consideration doubtless weighed strongly with them, but there was another cogent reason for their wishing the missionaries not to proceed into the interior, viz. the unwillingness that any of their neighbours should share with them in the honour of having white men residing among them.

own to accompany him, and those from Sagbua took with them the Akè staff of office, as a symbol that Mr. Hinderer's expedition was sanctioned by the government.

A caravan was on the point of starting for Ibadan, and though Mr. Hinderer would have greatly preferred travelling with only his own attendants, he thought it better to submit to the delay* and inconvenience of a caravan, than to run the risk of encountering the Ijebbus, who were, he knew, roaming about that part of the country in search of plunder.

Mr. Hinderer could not leave Osielle without great regret; he had become much attached to the people, and they to him; but it was evidently his work to push on farther, and he knew that Osielle would be well taken care of, for Mr. Moore, a native catechist from Sierra Leone, was to reside there, and it would be occasionally visited by Mr. Townsend and Mr. Smith.

He started on May 16th, 1851, and the next day, at Atade, the Abbeokutan halting-place† on the Ibadan road, he joined the caravan of travelling merchants, who, with a number of "rough soldiers" as an escort, made up a party of about four thou-

* A person travelling on horseback might reach Ibadan in two days, but a caravan takes four or five days to accomplish the journey.

† Page 106—note.

sand. On the 18th they came to a place called Otere, where the soldiers became very troublesome, drinking and quarrelling, and exacting money from the travellers. The next day, finding the soldiers still in the same state, and knowing that their conduct would involve delay and other serious inconveniences, Mr. Hinderer resolved to risk the perils of the road, and to start by himself, trusting to God for protection. His determination gave courage to some of the traders, who joined him, and they left Otere tolerably strong in numbers, but entirely unprotected. As they travelled through forest and bush, over hill and dale, "I must confess," says Mr. Hinderer, "that I sometimes felt uneasy, ahead of all the caravan in the midst of the dark lurking-places of our sworn enemies the Ijebbus; but my trust was in the Lord on whose errand I was thus exposed. About noon we halted, and soon the headman with some soldiers made his appearance. He advised us not to continue in the direct road, as he had had fresh intelligence of the Ijebbus, but to turn aside into the intricate paths of the hunters. He gave me six soldiers as a guard, and I proceeded onward with them, leaving him and the rest of the caravan to follow. After we had travelled about an hour, the soldiers slackened their pace, looked mysterious, and I found they were frightened by the sight of one of the robbers on our right. But he

was frightened also, and crept into the bush. The trouble I had hitherto had in forcing my horse through the entangled bush, and over logs of wood, was nothing to what I now met with from the exceeding narrowness of the path, the straggling underwood, and the overhanging shrubs and branches, for which however I was sometimes compensated by the delicious fragrance of the flowers of this forest. About four p.m. the soldiers sat down and refused to go any farther. I proceeded with the carriers of my goods, hoping to reach some of the Ibadan farms before night-fall. But we found it would be impossible, and only went on in search of water, for we could scarcely lie down without quenching our thirst. It was not till dark that we met with a large dried-up watercourse in the midst of a gloomy forest, where however we found a little of last night's rain in a small hollow rock in the channel. It was so dark that we could scarcely see each other, and we had no means of striking a light or making a fire. My tent also was behind, and we had no alternative but to lay ourselves down under the canopy of heaven, imploring the gracious protection of our Almighty Preserver. My situation was very dismal all night; all were fast asleep except myself, and the doleful yelling of the wild beasts of the forest, by which the silence of the dark night was every now and then interrupted, added not a little to the awful lone-

liness. But He with whom is no darkness was near. After midnight the moon made her appearance, but her pale lamp could find little or no admittance into the darkness of the forest."

At daybreak the party started again, and by nine o'clock a.m. reached the ferry over the little river Onna, four miles from Ibadan. Here they halted till the chief should send his messengers to conduct them into the town. These soon arrived, and as the party proceeded through the streets, they were joined by numbers who saluted them with cheers, and with cries of "Oku ewa onna!" a salutation at having escaped the dangers of a journey. And Mr. Hinderer found that his anxieties had not been unfounded, for the Ijebbus were really in the bush. He was very kindly received, and Abere the head chief, lodged him in a small dwelling belonging to one of his own people.

Ibadan, like most of the towns in Yoruba, stands on rising ground, on the declivity of a range of hills that run from north-west to south-east. It is a large and important town, though not so large or so populous as Abbeokuta; its mud walls being not more than ten miles in circuit, and its population being about 60,000.* Its inhabitants are Yorubans, specially so called,† and are very different from the Egbas of

* See page 41—notes.

† See page 19—note.

Abbeokuta and its neighbourhood. They are less inclined to agriculture, and their delight is in war; almost all the chiefs are war-chiefs, and the fierce boldness of the soldiery has procured for them the unenviable name of "the mad dogs of Ibadan." The late chief was almost as ferocious as Gezo of Dahomey; human sacrifices were continually offered by him, and at his death seventy unhappy victims were slaughtered on his grave. Happily for the cause of religion and humanity, he had died about two years before Mr. Hinderer's visit, and his successor, Abere, was of a less barbarous disposition. But all the higher classes, including Abere himself, were cruel and demoralised, and the chiefs were so frequently intoxicated, that when Mr. Hinderer visited the council on any matter of business, they sometimes were not able to give him a rational answer.

There was one exception however to this in an elderly chief of the name of *Agbaki*. He was very superior to all the rest in morals and in ability, and had consequently obtained so much influence that even Abere would seldom take any step in opposition to this faithful counsellor. At Mr. Hinderer's first coming to Ibadan, Agbaki had received him with an unexpected and gratifying warmth of affection, as if he had a kind of instinctive feeling that he was one of those "who bringeth good tidings," though probably he had no idea whatever of the nature of those

“tidings;” and during his abode there he rendered him essential service in various ways. On one occasion, not long after his arrival, some Mohammedan slave-dealers, who were in great favour with Abere, appealed to the council to have him sent out of the place, on the plea that “the white men had made the people of Abbeokuta like women,* so that they no more went out to war.” When the matter began to be discussed, Agbaki rose, and boldly answered, “White man shall stop, but you (addressing the Mohammedans) may leave the town as soon as you please, the sooner the better; but if you stay, learn at least not again to slander a good man.”

But it was not all the population of Ibadan that were fond of war; the lower classes, the few farmers, and indeed all but the chiefs and the soldiers were crying out for peace, and longing for some change in their present oppressed condition. The ears and heart of our missionary, as he passed along, were often saluted by such exclamations as these, “God bless you and help you! You always speak words of peace, but our headmen are for war. You must come and help us, white man, for though they will not attend to us, they will listen to you.”

Not however all the oppressions under which they

* This was rather an unfortunate time for a remark of this kind, as it was not three months since the repulse of the Dahomians!

groaned could destroy the gaiety of heart that is so natural to the children of Yoruba, and we must here relate a little incident that not only shows the buoyancy of their youthful spirits, but gives token of a liveliness of imagination that, when sanctified by the grace of God, will shine with attractive brightness.

Mr. Hinderer's abode at Ibadan consisted of one small low room, about six feet long and five feet wide, without any window, and with the door opening into the usual low piazza, of which a piece was parted off for his use about the same size as the inner room. This inner apartment served him for bedroom, study, eating-room and store-room, and the piazza was occupied by his servant and his horse. One day as his servant was opening a bundle of grass in the little compound, the seeds were scattered on the ground and were instantly attacked by birds of different kind and plumage. Some were of an almost dazzling blue, some were a brilliant red, and among the rest was one little active busy bird that fluttered here and there, now darting down among the others, and snatching up a seed or two, and instantly springing up and fluttering again over its companions.

There had often been some little bright eyes peeping over the low wall that divided Mr. Hinderer's premises from those of his neighbours, observing the

movements of the white man; but these birds were more attractive even than the stranger, and the children, clambering to the top of the wall, were eagerly watching the pretty group of feathered intruders, when they caught sight of Mr. Hinderer, and suddenly disappeared. In a minute after they began to sing; it was a playful merry ditty, and as the birds were the subject of it, Mr. Hinderer went out to listen. The children were frightened and ran away, but he overtook them, and when he had succeeded in quieting their fears, he persuaded them to repeat the little impromptu song several times over that he might write it down. We have not the words in Yoruba, nor if we had, could we convey them to our readers with the spirit and animation with which they were repeated to us, but the following is a rough version of the meaning:—

There's the bird of dazzling blue
 That stole from indigo its hue;
 And there's the bird that seeks to vie
 With the cam-wood's brilliant dye;
 But there's the one we love the best,
 Better far than all the rest;
 Now it hovers overhead,
 Now it darts upon the seed,
 Then again it upward springs,
 Fluttering on its buoyant wings,
 The sunbeams glancing on its breast—
 Oh! that's the bird we love the best.

During Mr. Hinderer's residence of three months

at Ibadan, he was three times visited by messengers from the chief of Ede,* a town two days farther to the north-east. The name of the chief was Temi, and the purport of his repeated messages was to urge the white man to come to his town. Mr. Hinderer would very much have liked to have visited him, particularly as he understood that he was the only ruler in all that part of the country that had resolutely set his face against kidnapping. Under any circumstances he would not have been able to do this, but during the greatest part of the time he was at Ibadan he was laid aside with illness, and all the answer he could send to Temi was a promise that if he returned there, as he hoped to do, he would use his best endeavours to visit him.

Mr. Hinderer left Ibadan on the 2d of October 1851, to the great regret of all the people, and, as our readers will readily believe, especially of Agbaki. The chiefs and headmen were unanimous in their expressions of earnest hope that he would soon return and "sit down" among them; and even Oso, the fiercest of the war-chiefs, spoke of his great disappointment that they could not "hold him fast now."

Mr. Hinderer on his part could not leave them without sorrow. The vice and wickedness he had seen and heard while residing there had painfully distressed him, yet to himself they had shown unva-

rying love and kindness, and, as he himself says, "African affection binds very closely."

Soon after this Mr. Hinderer was obliged to come home to England on account of health; he has now returned to Africa; and we hope soon to hear that he has been permitted to take up his abode again at Ibadan. We shall be looking out to hear of the reception of the "good tidings" there; and especially to find that the affectionate and faithful Agbaki may indeed have accepted the message of "peace" and "salvation" that Mr. Hinderer is privileged to "publish."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ABBEOKUTA SCHOOLS—MESSAGES FROM DISTANT CHIEFS—VISIT OF COMMANDER FORBES.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—Eccles. ix. 10.

THE permission given to Mr. Hinderer to visit Ibadan, was not the only fruit of the increased confidence felt at Abbeokuta in the white men. It seemed as if the chiefs had suddenly been awakened to the importance of having their children properly educated, and no sooner had the excitement of the Dahomian attack a little subsided, than they came forward, intreating the missionaries to take both sons and daughters to live entirely with them. Mr. Townsend already had several children living in his house, whose expenses were paid by friends in England, but so urgently did the chiefs press him to admit their own children, and so important did he feel the matter to be, that he was induced to increase his number to twenty-four, trusting that He who had thus so evidently influenced the hearts of the chiefs to send their children, would not fail to supply him with means for their support.

In the same spirit and with the same confidence,

Mr. and Mrs. Smith received twelve into their own house at Ikija, and we will not doubt that in both cases our missionaries will find that their confidence has not been in vain.

There were some interesting children in the Ikija school. One of these was Temiwanome, the same little captive boy from Abàkà that we spoke of in a former chapter,* as brought by Ogubonna, in his new white cloth to the chapel at Ikija, when first opened in 1847. The little fellow had for some time attended Mr. Townsend's day-school at Akè, but having met with an accident and becoming seriously ill, Ogubonna prevailed on Mr. Smith to receive him. He soon recovered, and is become a nice lively intelligent boy, making good progress in learning, and is generally the teacher of the alphabet class in the adult Sunday school.†

One of the little girls is Ommaniye; she is Ogubonna's own daughter, but her mother having died some time before, she had been living at one of her father's farms, and having no one to control her, had become half wild. It required a little management to bring her into regular habits, and to accustom her to some degree of restraint; but by degrees Mrs. Smith succeeded, and found her to be a clever and amiable child. She was eleven years old when first admitted, and during the nine months that

* Page 126.

† Page 189.

elapsed, before Mr. and Mrs. Smith left for England, she had learned to sew very neatly, could read with fluency all the books translated into her own tongue, including the epistle to the Romans, some of which she appeared to understand, and had so far mastered the English language as to be able to read her own verse when a chapter in the English New Testament was read in turn, at the morning family worship.* Her great ambition was to possess an English Bible, and she worked so hard at her lessons to gain the required proficiency, that for a time her health was affected.

When, early in 1852, Mr. and Mrs. Smith were preparing to visit England, Ogubonna one day came to the mission-house, evidently with his mind full of some subject of great interest. This proved to be an earnest request that they would take his little Ommaniye to England with them. It was in vain to tell him, in general terms, that the thing was impossible; he must know the separate reasons. The child's discomfort in a foreign land, the embarrassment and responsibility of the charge, the expense that the scheme would involve, were all mentioned to him; but some he could not enter into, and the others were of no account in his eyes. Mr. Smith then mentioned the probability of the climate being too cold for her, and of her not surviving the severity

* In the evening the Bible was read in Yoruba.

of a northern winter. This staggered him for a moment, but after a short pause he replied that not even this would alter his wish, that his child must die somewhere, and it mattered little whether it should be in England or in Abbeokuta. At last Mr. Smith told him plainly that such a step would be contrary to the rules of the Church Missionary Society. This silenced the chief, though it did not satisfy him, and as a sort of compensation it was agreed that during Mr. and Mrs. Smith's absence the child should remain in the mission-house under the care of Mrs. King, whose husband has the charge of the district as catechist, till Mr. Smith's return. Three other children are also, at the urgent request of their friends, left under the charge of Mr. and Mrs. King; one is our young friend Temiwanome; another is Temi, son of the war-chief Sokenu; and the third is a daughter of Atamballa, the chief of Ikreeku.

Before we leave the district of Ikija, we must mention an interesting instance of that eager desire manifested generally by the converts to bring others to the knowledge of God. Our readers will remember Susannah Kutè,* one of Mr. Müller's early converts, who so meekly and stedfastly endured as seeing Him who is invisible. She lived in the town of Ikija, and consequently belonged to Mr. Smith's

* Pages 149 and 174.

congregation. One Sunday morning a heathen woman came to her to ask some questions about the market. Susannah replied that as it was the Lord's day, she could not enter upon worldly business, but begged her to call again the next morning. The woman turned to go away, when Susannah, suddenly recollecting herself, said "Suppose you stop and go with me to God's house." The woman hesitated for a moment, but then replied that she could not go to God's house with all the heathen ornaments and charms with which her arms and feet were covered. "Do not mind them," answered Susannah, "they need not hinder you, nobody will observe them." While this discussion was going on, another Christian woman came up, and exclaiming, "You cannot go to God's house with all those things upon you," so discouraged the poor woman, that she decided not to go. But Susannah would not be so easily conquered. She returned again to the charge, and at last succeeded in prevailing on the woman to accompany her to church. She was astonished at all she saw and heard—the attention and devout behaviour of the people, and the words of our beautiful Liturgy, struck her with admiration; but when Mr. Smith commenced his sermon, her attention was rivetted, and, as he proceeded, she was seen to loosen first one ornament and then another, and gently drop them on the floor, till, before the service was ended,

she had disencumbered herself from all. Within a fortnight she became a candidate for baptism and a regular attendant at the Sunday-school. Some little time after this, Mrs. Smith, observing her to be much depressed, inquired into her family and her circumstances, and found that her depression arose from having, while yet a heathen, pawned her little girl. This is a very common practice among the heathen, and it was not till Christian truth began to influence her mind that she felt the evil or the sin of such a practice. It appeared that some time before, having an unexpected demand for a sum equal to about five shillings of our money, she attempted to borrow it, but could only do so by putting her child in pawn. From that time she had continued to pay as much as threepence a week as interest, and had in this way repaid the original sum over and over again, but she could not raise the required amount in one sum, and thus the poor child remained in pawn, and the interest continued to be paid. We need scarcely add that Mrs. Smith soon took measures for her daughter to be restored to her.

The estimation in which the white men were already held at Abbeokuta continued to extend in the countries round. In the summer of 1851 the chief of Ifè, a town three days to the east of Abbeokuta, sent to propose an union between himself and the Abbeokutans with their English allies, and to

request that missionaries might go and reside there. And this request was the more remarkable, as Ifè has always been the stronghold of idolatry. All the deities are said to have come from thence; the sun and the moon rise there again after having been buried in the earth; and all the human race, white as well as black, were originally created at Ifè. It must then have been a strong impulse that led this chief to send for Christian teachers. Later than this, the chief of Ketu, a large town with a population of 10,000, sixty or seventy miles to the south-west of Abbeokuta, requested a visit from Mr. Crowther;* and the intreaties of the chief of Ijaye, two days to the north, containing 40,000 inhabitants, were so urgent, that in August 1852 Mr. Townsend visited the place, met with a very cordial reception, and made arrangements for the future establishment of a mission there.

Mr. Crowther had returned to Abbeokuta about a month before, to the delight of "a host of friends" who came out to welcome him; and to the thankful joy of his own heart for preservation and many blessings since he had left it in April 1851. He was accompanied by his son, Mr. Samuel Crowther, and by Mr. Macauley, a catechist from Sierra Leone; and the medical knowledge the former of these had

* Later accounts mention that Mr. Crowther has visited Ketu, and been very favourably received there.

acquired in England was no small comfort to the converts, who hitherto in times of sickness had been precluded from seeking any advice, except that of the missionaries, as the babbalawos were the only persons among the natives who understood anything of medicine, and they of course mingled with it their own heathen charms and ceremonies.

We must not omit to speak of a visit paid to Abbeokuta at the end of 1851 by the late lamented Commander Forbes. He was sent by Her Majesty's Government to make a treaty with the chiefs, and to render them any assistance which his superior knowledge and experience would enable him to do, in the expectation of a renewed attack from the Dahomians, which Gezo had positively threatened. Capt. Forbes threw his whole mind into the business, and his own descriptions are so animated, that in giving an account of his proceedings we shall chiefly make use of his own words. He writes:—

“Akè, Abbeokuta, Nov. 16, 1851.

“I arrived here on Thursday the 13th instant, having been met at Awoyade by the Rev. Messrs. Townsend and Smith, and the gentlemen of the Wesleyan mission, at the head of at least one hundred and fifty Africans in European costume, and many of them on horseback. The scene was most interesting, and exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

On Friday, Sagbua and several other chiefs called on me."

"On Saturday, a gathering of the horsemen and soldiers came to perform the ceremony of 'meeting,' and a most interesting sight it was, being particularly novel in this part of Africa. Horsemen in gaudy dresses, on horses showily caparisoned, were galloping about in a confused manner; the whole art of the rider being displayed in making his horse kick, rear, and demi-volt as often and in as small a space as possible. Meanwhile the chiefs assembled, and at noon came to the house."

Captain Forbes then goes on to state the proceedings of this meeting between himself and the chiefs. He told them that the Queen of England, desirous to assist those who had given protection to her subjects, had sent him to Abbeokuta to teach them how to protect themselves. He went on to give them some advice on this point, and ended by saying; "Abbeokuta must not be destroyed. Let the Egbas fight well; your country is under the protection of God; thanks to the missionaries who have taught many of you the power of God. Egbas, protect yourselves, and the Almighty God will guard you."

The chiefs were, as may be supposed, delighted with this address, they warmly thanked him and declared their intention to comply with all his advice. "In their reply," Captain Forbes observes, "there

was no bravado, no gesticulation, no useless expressions, but they evidently said what they intended, and nothing more." He afterwards observes, "I cannot of course describe Abbeokuta; but I am perfectly surprised at all I see. The surrounding country is beautiful and cultivated; the town immense and picturesque, scattered and clustered among granite hills. The walls,—none of the best,—of mud, and extending over a circumference of fifteen miles, are impossible to fortify."

"The Egbas are a nation of farmers, and with the blessings of peace would become traders; but that which calls on Great Britain to make a bold attempt to save Abbeokuta is, that within its walls are several hundred people who are Christians. Indeed, the missionary accounts I have read did not convey to me so sufficient a reason as my own eyes have witnessed."

There could not have been a more fitting person for this embassy than Captain Forbes; the warmth and energy of his character gained for him an influence over the chiefs, which he was able to turn to their own best advantage. He threw his whole heart into the matter, procured some field-pieces from the men-of-war on the coast, had them mounted in the best way that was possible with the scanty means within his reach, and organised a body of men to act as gunners, to the utter astonishment of the

Abbeokutans, who had never seen anything of the kind before. He superintended the repair of the walls as far as was practicable, instructed the people in several other arts, and by his kindness, energy, and zeal, won from them all, we are told, "a respect almost amounting to adoration."

He was very anxious to remain with them till the question of conquest or defeat should be decided; but was summoned to other duties on the coast; and it was not long before his friends in England were called upon to mingle their own regrets with those of the Abbeokutans at his untimely death.

Whether the king of Dahomey was moved by the remonstrances sent to him from England, or alarmed at hearing of the preparations thus made by the Egbas to receive him, or whether any other cause prevented him, we do not know; but after having been kept in anxious suspense for several months, the Abbeokutans found that Gezo had, at least for that year, relinquished his intention of attacking them, and we trust he will never be permitted to put his threat into execution.

CHAPTER XIX.

BADAGRY AND LAGOS.

*Blessed are they that sow beside all waters."—Isaiah xxxii. 20.

THIS passage was quoted by Mr. Van Cooten in one of his letters when speaking of the discouragements at Badagry, and it is so appropriate to the whole course of the missions there, that we have placed it at the head of this chapter.

The Badagry missionaries had, indeed, need to remember that the blessing is promised to the *faithful sower*, for while at Abbeokuta every attempt at cultivation seemed to prosper, at Badagry it has pleased God to withhold the increase, and it has continued as to spiritual things in the same barren unproductive condition as when we left it in 1846; and neither Mr. Gollmer, Mr. Smith, nor Mr. Van Cooten, who, either alone or conjointly, have laboured there from that time, have been permitted to see any satisfactory fruit of their spiritual labours.

In external things there has been an evident improvement through the influence of the missionaries. Their steadfast and consistent conduct won for them the attachment of some and the respect of all the

chiefs, while the people generally have from the first considered them as their friends, and have always deprecated their removal as the greatest misfortune to the place. A taste for agriculture, too, has been awakened among some of the people. Hitherto, though the soil is productive, cultivation had been wholly neglected: the slave-trade seemed to many a more easy and profitable way of living, and some Sierra Leone emigrants who had attempted to plant their land were discouraged by their crops being stolen. But the garden the missionaries made in their own compound, their persuasion, and the distribution of small prizes, had an extraordinary effect. Woods, in which many an unhappy fugitive had been hunted and kidnapped, were cleared and planted; some of the heretofore neglected plains were now covered with beautiful cattle, and the neighbourhood of the town began to assume quite a different appearance.

Among the chiefs by whom the missionaries were received with the most kindness was Akitoye, the ex-king of Lagos, who was now residing at Badagry, and his friend Mewu the chief of Mo, who with a constancy not often found among uncivilised people, had for twenty-three years clung to him in weal and in woe, and never deserted him, even when his fortune appeared at the lowest ebb. Mewu had also come to reside at Badagry: he was as unvary-

ing in his kindness to the missionaries as in his attachment to Akitoye, he was regular in his attendance at Divine worship, often remained behind to talk over the subjects that had been brought before him, and seemed not far from the kingdom of God.* But superstition and early prejudices, and perhaps the fear of man, keep him still in chains. Four of his young relations have been in turn committed to the missionary's care, and received into the boarding-school; and perhaps, through their means, strength may yet be given to this kind and friendly chief to burst through every bond and throw himself at the foot of the cross. Akitoye now and then attended the Sunday services, as did several of the other chiefs, and even Possu, who for a long time showed himself most unfriendly to the mission, was latterly often to be seen there. The average attendance was about 150, including the Sierra Leone people, and 30 boys in the boarding-school; but the number always was considerably increased when a caravan from Abbeokuta happened to be in the town; and it often refreshed the missionary to observe the intelligent countenances of some of these people and their

* At the time of the Church Missionary Jubilee in 1849, Mewu was at Mo, and could not attend the services, but having been at church on the preceding Sunday, when Mr. Smith gave notice of it and explained its purport; he sent in a head of cowries as a contribution to the Jubilee Fund.

devout attention to the service, and to see them at every leisure moment studying their primers, which were their inseparable companions on a journey as well as at home.

The boarding-school was the most encouraging portion of the mission. Besides Mewu's four boys, Possu had sent his son, and Akibode, the chief priest of 'fa, also had two there. All were tractable, well-behaved, and intelligent; but more than this we cannot as yet say of any of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith landed at Badagry in January, 1848, and Mr. Gollmer, whose health had for some time required a change of climate, took advantage of their arrival to pay a visit to England. Neither the chiefs nor people were of course able to appreciate the value of his indefatigable spiritual labours among them, but their conduct at his departure and on his return showed in a very gratifying manner the estimation in which he was personally held. On the morning of his embarkation in April, 1848, several chiefs came to pay him a visit, and to wish him a safe voyage, bringing a sheep or fowls or yams as presents, and among others was his former opponent Possu.

Mewu brought him a bullock and a bag of yams, "to make," as he said, "soup on the salt water, that he might not forget him." Akitoye sent his messenger with his gilt-headed staff of office to bid him farewell, and the still more friendly chief of Ajeido

had three days before sent a confidential agent with a silver-headed staff, and with orders not to return till he had seen Mr. Gollmer and Mr. and Mrs. Townsend (who were going with him to England) safe on board. The man, on his arrival, delivered up his badge of office to Mr. Gollmer, and only resumed it in order to attend him to the beach in proper form.

The greeting was as warm when he returned in March, 1850. The people crowded down to the beach to welcome him; some of them insisted on lifting him out of the canoe, and on the heads of some and on the hands of others he was carried a good way up the beach.

But the missionaries longed to see some signs of spiritual life among those for whom they were spending their strength. A few of the Yorubans gave some evidence of this, and about twenty were at different times baptised,* but among the Popo part of the population all continued dark and dead.

* One of the baptised was a wife of Akibode, the chief-priest of Ifa. She had diligently worshipped the twenty-one palm nuts, and the sixteen pieces of iron, which, suspended on a piece of wire, represented the god Ifa; and as diligently had she endeavoured to propitiate Yemaja, the goddess of brooks and rivers, but found no satisfaction from either. She had heard of Olorūn, the god of heaven, and had listened earnestly to Mr. Gollmer, while he declared God's punishment on the impenitent, and His willingness to receive sinners. When Mr. Smith came, she watched to see if he said the same things,

During Mr. Gollmer's absence, Mr. Smith's anxiety was most strongly excited by the question brought before the House of Commons in 1849 as to the continuance of the cruising squadron in the Bights, for he knew that if it should be withdrawn, there would no longer be any safety for himself and his brother missionaries, nor the English merchants, nor even for the Sierra Leone emigrants, of whom there are several thousands* in the country, and who, as British subjects, have a just claim to British protection.

None but those on the spot can fully estimate the important service that squadron has rendered to European missionaries and merchants, to the emigrants, and to the natives themselves. The happy decision of the question on the side of justice, humanity, and sound policy, was received with joy and

—she found he did, her heart was melted, and after due instruction she was baptised, as well as her mother, and the two sons of her husband, who were in the school. Akibode himself appeared to be seriously seeking the way of salvation; he gave up sacrificing to Ifa, regularly attended the Sunday services, talked with some earnestness on the subject, and it had been at his special request that Mr. Smith had baptised his boys at the same time as the wife. But Satan held him fast, and at the destruction of the town he resumed his sacrifices, privately removed his wife and children from the mission-premises, where he had placed them for security, and took them we know not whither, for he has never been heard of since.

* There are 3000 of these emigrants in Abbeokuta, several hundreds in Badagry, and many others in Lagos and in most of the large towns.

thankfulness not only by Europeans, but by the people of Abbeokuta and the neighbouring towns, and even by the more peaceable of the inhabitants of Badagry. Kosoko, Gezo, Domingo, and their slave-dealing allies, would of course have rejoiced in a contrary result.

Even as it was, the Badagry missionaries continued to be frequently exposed to alarm and danger from the conflicting elements both within and without the town. On these occasions, they used their utmost endeavours to restrain the angry passions of the opponents, and although sometimes a whole day would thus be consumed in a "palaver," they had the comfort of being generally successful, and of thus preventing the effusion of blood.

One of the disputes of this kind that occurred while Mr. Smith was residing there, arose between Akitoye and some of the Badagrian chiefs. Mr. Smith, hearing of it, went to Akitoye, and found him sitting in state among his troops. The main road that led to his house was lined with warriors seated on the ground on either side, with their muskets in their hands, and so close to each other that Mr. Smith had some difficulty in making his way between the rows. The narrow streets that crossed this road were filled with women and girls, dancing, shouting, and exciting the men to war by extempore songs in praise of Akitoye and his allies, and re-

counting their former deeds of valour. It was a strange and stirring scene, not often to be witnessed by an European. Mr. Smith's mediation had the desired effect, and the gong that was to have been employed in summoning to war, now gave out the notes of peace, to the joy not only of Mr. Smith himself, but of the great majority of the inhabitants.

Such things were continually occurring, too often for us to specify; but our friends were enabled to commit themselves and all their concerns into the hands of Him who had placed them there; they knew that Jehovah reigneth, and that if God were for them, it mattered little who were against them.

Twice in the autumn of 1850, the significant token of a faggot, bound up in a particular way, was sent to Mr. Gollmer to warn him that his house was to be set on fire; and during the latter part of 1850 and the beginning of 1851, he and Mrs. Gollmer were subject to continued alarms of war and conflagration.

At last, in June, 1851, the long smothered enmity between Akitoye and Mewu on the one side, and Kosoko and his allies on the other, burst forth afresh, and Mr. Gollmer's attempts at mediation proved unavailing. The town was attacked, and the scenes that followed cannot be described. The firing of the opposing parties close to the mission-house—the town itself in flames—the screams of the women and

children, who ran about in all directions, and several hundreds of whom took refuge in the mission-compound,—were enough to appal the stoutest heart. Some of the poor people crowded into their canoes and tried to cross the Ossa to the opposite shore, but many of the overladen boats were upset. In the afternoon a quantity of gunpowder exploded with a terrific noise, and had not the mission-house been strengthened with new timber during the preceding week, it must have been shaken to the ground. Before night the greatest part of the town was burnt to the ground. In the morning the fight was renewed, the eastern part of the town was set fire to, and nothing escaped the devouring element but the two mission-premises, and the chief part of Mr. Hutton's factory. All this time Mr. Gollmer was ill and unable to walk or even to stand, and could only give instructions from the window. The catechists and others connected with the mission were greatly frightened, and urged him to retire to the beach for safety, but he felt, as he says, "that I was at the post where God had placed me, and I must not desert it without plain and special orders. He knows I am here, and I know and believe His arm is not shortened. So in faith I committed myself to our covenant God, and resolved to await the issue. Blessed be God for His faithfulness in giving me, in this time of need, grace sufficient for the day!"

During the remainder of 1851 all was confusion and ruin. The Abbeokutans sent eight hundred men under Sumoi, the Obbashorun, to the succour of Akitoye, and, by one party or the other, towns and villages on either side of the Ossa were destroyed without mercy.

The affair at Lagos, on the 26th of December, 1851, and the restoration of Akitoye to his lawful authority there, happily put an end to this miserable state of things, and there seems to be some hope that the peace which was then established with the neighbouring tribes may be a permanent one. Even the restless and marauding Ijebbus,* of whom we have so often had occasion to speak, sent to the English resident at Lagos to propose a treaty of peace. The symbolical letter by which this proposal was conveyed is so curious that we shall present our readers with an engraving and a description of it. Certainly we should not have discovered the meaning of the symbols unless we had had the explanation, and we doubt whether any of our readers would have done so either.

1st. The cowries—there are four times two; this mean that there are four corners of the earth all peopled, and that among them the Ijebbus and Lagos people are closely united.

2nd. The round stone-like kernel is used in the game called "ware," which is universal in



SYMBOLICAL LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF THE IJEMVOS

those parts, and means that the Ijebbus and Lagos people used to be friends and play together.

3rd. The next two cowries complete the first sentence, of being one.

4th. The plum-like kernel of the fruit called "ossan" means, "What is good for me is good for you."

5th. The long black bean is a kind of spice called "eree" and means, "Do not make a fool of me, and I will not make a fool of you."

6th. The rest of the cowries, with their faces the same way, and the two other kernels, mean, "Let us go on straight; let us play together, and what is good for you is good for me."

The proposal was gladly accepted, peace was established, and we earnestly hope that it will not be of so fragile a nature as the *rice-straw* on which the letter was strung.

The advantages of peace with the Ijebbus are immense to the whole of the interior; the Ogūn is open, the roads are unmolested, and traders and travellers can safely pass and repass. Christians should arise and take advantage of this favourable moment for carrying the light of the gospel far and wide.

In March, 1852, Mr. Gollmer removed to Lagos.

which is now the chief missionary station on the coast. Badagry remains nearly in ruins; a few of its inhabitants have returned and rebuilt their houses, but it is a mere village, and there is only a catechist residing there.

We must not finally leave Badagry without a short tribute to the memory of one of the most devoted of God's servants that have ever left their native land on a message of mercy to a fallen world. We mean Mr. Van Cooten. He arrived at Badagry in March, 1850, with Mrs. Van Cooten, but like Mr. Müller, of whom his course strongly reminds us, had been called to part with her a few weeks after their arrival. The whole of the missionary party at Badagry were attacked with fever in that spring; Mr. Van Cooten himself suffered severely with it, and while he was too ill to minister to her, Mrs. Van Cooten was, on May 13, taken from the evil to come, leaving behind her the testimony from all who knew her, that "she indeed walked with God."

It was some time before Mr. Van Cooten recovered from his illness, and from the shock this unexpected loss had been to him; but as soon as he was able to go out, he set about the work God had given him to do. His knowledge of medicine gave him access into houses which might otherwise have been closed against him, and he never failed to use every opportunity of proclaiming to others the Sa-

viour whom he loved. For a time, his earnest appeals, coming as they did warm from his own heart, seemed often to reach the hearts of others; but as far as the human eye can see, all these impressions were as the early dew that passeth away, and we have no evidence that any soul in Badagry was converted to God by his instrumentality. His principal work, however, was among the towns and villages around, both on the north and on the south of the Ossa. Though the people are chiefly Popos, they are far less degraded than those of Badagry. He was always courteously, and generally kindly received, and it was seldom that his affectionate and tender appeals were listened to without emotion. They often told him they had never heard such things before, and begged him to come again and tell them more, and he says, "It pains my heart to think it may be months or even years before they again hear the message of salvation. I cannot tell you the deep sorrow that fills my heart when they ask, as many do, 'How can we find the way if we have none to tell us?'"

Mr. Van Cooten's last excursion was along the southern shore of the Ossa, where, as we have before said, there are many towns and large villages between the river and the sea. He was not well when he set out; but the more than usual earnestness of the people, arising probably from his own unconscious

fervency of manner, beguiled him on from village to village, till his strength entirely gave way, and after a day of acute suffering at Porto Novo, he returned in a canoe to Badagry. Here, on the 13th of March 1851, he fell asleep, full of "thanksgiving to God for having permitted him during the few months of his sojourn in Africa to make His name known to thousands;" some of whom, we trust, though unknown to man, may yet be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

A few extracts from the letters of this devoted man of God will be acceptable to our readers.

Writing soon after the death of his wife, he says: "I am now alone, and I desire to give myself to the work before me, and to have the void that is left in my heart filled with supreme love to God and to His work. I feel I am unworthy of the high and holy trust reposed in me by the Committee, but it will be my aim to carry out their views as far as I have grace and ability to do so."

In a later letter he says, "Dr. Krapff's letter to the Committee warmed my heart; I pray that the Christian public may respond to his appeal, and furnish men and means for so noble and glorious a work. I should like to go half way and meet him. I have afresh dedicated myself and all I have to this work. Africa is henceforth my only home on earth; and I desire not to dwell in houses, but to be a

stranger and a pilgrim from day to day. I have one great object at heart—the salvation of the sons of Ham. So that I may but be used in this work, I am content to be like my Saviour, and not have where to lay my head.”

And in a letter written only four days before he set out on his last expedition, and when he was ripening fast for glory, he says, “I can truly say I praise God for putting the desire into my heart thus to spend and be spent in His service. Now I see why I was left alone, why I was tried in the furnace. Silver to be fit for use must first be purified, and the vessels for the Lord’s house must be made meet for the Master’s work. Oh! how much I needed, and still need, the refining process, the cleansing of the blood of Jesus, the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit! I am unworthy of this great work; but God uses ‘the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.’ In myself I can do nothing, in Christ much.”

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

"The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens."—Psal. civ. 22.

WE must now bid farewell to Abbeokuta, with a thankful heart for all the blessings that have been vouchsafed to her. The rapid* progress of the Gospel among the benighted Egbas has been like the dayspring in their own sunny land, like the "sunrise within the tropics," where, as our readers know, there is none of that lengthened dawn of our northern clime, which is so wearying to those who watch for the morning; but scarcely is the eastern sky tinged with the early beams of roseate light, than the sun himself appears, rejoicing "as a strong man to run a race."

In the summer of 1846, when Mr. Townsend and Mr. Crowther first arrived at Abbeokuta, the only persons who could be called Christians there were

* Compared with most other missions, it has been very rapid. Here and there, there has been some more striking instance, such as the work at Sierra Leone, under the ministry of Messrs. Johnson, Düring, &c. (See Memoir of Rev. W. B. Johnson.)

Andrew Wilhelm, and the very few who like himself were "faithful found among the faithless," unstable emigrants from Sierra Leone. Since that time up to the latest reports of 1852, (i.e. in six years and a half,) the numbers that have been baptised from the native population may be counted by hundreds;* there are now three hundred and thirty-three candidates for baptism, three hundred and fifty adults attend the Sunday schools, and two hundred and thirty-three have been admitted to the table of the Lord.

We believe too that there is a hidden work going on in the hearts of many, who as yet only venture to believe "secretly, for fear of the Jews," and that there is among the people generally a consciousness of the vanity of idolatry. The only cloud that dims our bright prospects for Abbeokuta is, that none of the chiefs have yet embraced the Gospel. All of them are kind and friendly to the missionaries, and a few are evidently sincerely attached to them; most of the principal ones send their children to our Christian schools, and there are those among them who frequently attend public worship. But neither the mild and amiable Sagbua, nor the friendly Sumoi and Sokenu, nor even the generous and intelligent Ogubonna, have as yet submitted themselves to the

* We have not been able to ascertain the exact number.

yoke of Christ. It is true that they are placed in difficult circumstances—their position as chiefs necessarily obliges them to the performance of various idolatrous ceremonies, and the omission of these would not only be attended with their own loss of authority, but would probably involve the disorganisation of their own local government, and be the signal for confusion and lawlessness among their own people. We can scarcely believe but that there are hearts and minds among them, upon which some conviction of the truth and vital importance of Christianity must have forced itself, and in this belief we would desire earnestly to implore for them that the Holy Spirit may be sent into their hearts with power, that their eyes may be so enlightened to see the excellency of Christ Jesus, that they may count all things but loss for His sake, may be enabled boldly to confess Him before men, and to leave the consequences with Him who has the hearts of all under His control.

Within the last few months the Yoruba Mission has been strengthened by the return of Mr. Hinderer with Mrs. Hinderer, and by the arrival of the Rev. A. Mann, the Rev. R. C. Paley and Mrs. Paley, with an infant school mistress. Three German missionaries—Messrs. G. T. E. Gerst, J. T. Kefer, and A. Maser—are also gone out as candidates for ordination by the Bishop of Sierra Leone, and we

believe the arrangements for the whole mission will be as follows: Mr. Gollmer will continue at Lagos with his catechist Mr. White, and is to be joined, if God permits, by one of the newly ordained German missionaries. He has two out-stations—Badagry, where a catechist is to be placed; and Otta, a town between Lagos and Abbeokuta, whither Mr. Morgan, a Sierra Leone catechist, has been sent from Abbeokuta. At Abbeokuta itself, there are Mr. Townsend, Mr. Crowther, and Mr. Paley, as missionaries, the latter of whom will especially direct his attention to education, and, as soon as practicable, form an institution for the training of catechists, school-masters, and, as it is hoped, eventually for the raising up of native missionaries. Mr. King, Mr. Samuel Crowther, and Mr. Macaulay, are there as catechists, besides the other valuable assistants whose names we have so frequently mentioned. Early in next year, too, we hope that Mr. and Mrs. Smith will have returned to their station at Ikija.

Mr. Moore is still labouring with diligence and acceptance at Osielle; and we rejoice to find that he speaks of several there who are candidates for baptism.

Mr. Hinderer, we trust, has by this time returned to Ibadan, where he is to be assisted by another of the new German missionaries; and Mr. Mann, accompanied by Mr. Charles Phillips, as catechist, is appointed to the new out-station at Ijaye.

We thankfully rejoice at this, yet when we remember that the earnest entreaties of the chiefs of Ifè, of Ede, of Ketu, of our old friends the Isaggans, and of many smaller places near the coast, cannot yet be complied with, when we hear of the number of populous towns beyond our present stations which would, there is no doubt, now be accessible,* could our missionaries leave their present posts; and then turn our thoughts to the hundreds of thousands still beyond, among whom our friends desire to penetrate if they could; when we consider these things, we feel how great need there is for a far more plentiful out-pouring of the Spirit upon the churches at home, that fitting men and adequate means† may be supplied.

* At different distances from Abbeokuta, varying from two days' journey to six, we find the following places specified, besides those we have mentioned above. To the north, and north-east, are Ogbomoso, with 45,000 souls, and Isehin, with 70,000, neither of which have ever been captured; Aggo-oja, the residence of the king of Yoruba; Awaye, twice as large as Badagry; Berekodo, not so large; Erewa, Baloran-polla, Erin, Iwawoom, and the noted Illorin, whence three days will take you to Rabba and the Niger. On the west, and north-west, there are Igboko, a very large town; Ilewo, Ilugo, Aibo, Isala, Itobdo, Efia, and other smaller ones; while to the south-east, the country is still unexplored.

† How thankful should we be if this little volume were to be made the instrument of stirring up any of its readers to a warmer interest, and more earnest endeavours, in this blessed cause! There are none, be their sphere ever so small, who

Still we bless God for what has been done, and we look forward in believing hope, that the Sun of Righteousness, that has risen on Abbeokuta, will speedily extend His bright beams to the tribes and nations all around her. Then will the fierce forms of idolatry, slavery, and cruelty "gather themselves together and lay them down in their dens;" there we trust to abide in chains of darkness till that more glorious day-spring shall arise, when every enemy shall be destroyed "at the brightness of His coming," who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords!"

Amin—Ke oh sheh—So be it!

cannot be in some way fellow-labourers in this work. Like the members of the body, the feeblest can add to the general usefulness. Those who cannot contribute even occasionally, may collect small sums from others, or speak on the subject to those who are unacquainted with it, or distribute papers that supply information; and for their encouragement there are very few, if any, neighbourhoods in which some friend of the Church Missionary Society may not be found to advise and assist them. Above all, there are none who are excluded from that privilege, as well as command—"Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."



APPENDIX.

I. (Page 10.)

SINCE the preceding pages were printed, we have had the opportunity of hearing a few more particulars about the Fellatahs, and as their sudden awakening to war and conquest seems to be the last effort of the Mohammedan power to recover somewhat of its former glory, anything relating to them becomes the more interesting. It appears that the meaning of their name, whether Fellatah, Foulah, or Fellani, is *yellow*, which has probably been adopted to distinguish them from the whole negro race, from whom, as we have said, they entirely differ in feature, complexion, and hair. They were roused from their quiet pastoral life by, it is said, a vision, in which Mahomet himself appeared to one of their priests, and reproached the people with their sloth and supineness in thus remaining quiet among the Kafirs, by whom they were surrounded, and commanded them to arise and take the sword, and save the souls of the infidels by converting them to the true faith. Messengers were immediately dispatched to Timbuctu, and to all the countries in which the Fellatahs had spread themselves, and the numbers that responded to the call enabled Danfodio to commence

his operations without delay. The town he built in the "woods of Ader" was Sokatu, which has ever since been the capital of the Fellatah empire. But here, as in other countries, the crescent is waning, coming, as we believe, "to his end, and none shall help him."

II. (Page 28.)

The following are some of the Yoruba proverbs, given by Mr. Crowther in his vocabulary of the language :*

"There is," says the Bishop of Sierra Leone in his introductory remarks, "a degree of moral light in them which renders them peculiarly interesting, presenting us with a lively comment on the words of St. Paul concerning the Gentiles, 'which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' These proverbs, in many instances, display ideas concerning the providence of God, the moral rectitude of actions, or the practice of social virtues, which (to say the least) we should hardly have expected to find in a people so wholly separated from the influences, direct or indirect, of that revelation which God was pleased to make of Himself to man."

For example :—

He who injures another, injures himself.

* Vocabulary of the Yoruba language, compiled by Rev. S. Crowther, with introductory remarks by the Bishop of Sierra Leone.—Seeleys, Fleet Street.

The time may be very long, but a lie will be detected at last.

He to whom kindness is shown, and he does not return thanks, you may do him ill, and he will not feel that either.

He who has done you a kindness should never be ill used.

Far, hear the other side before you decide.

Anger does nobody good. Patience is the best disposition. Anger draws arrows from the quiver. Good words draw kola-nuts from the bag.

He who despises another despises himself.

Contempt should never be shown to a fellow-man.

A sick person should never be laughed at; for what happens to him to-day, may happen to you to-morrow.

Disobedience is the father of insolence.

He who sees another's fault knows well how to talk about it, but he covers his own with a potsherd.

He who claps hands for a fool to dance, is himself no better than a fool.

If you have no money to give to a person in distress, you may pay frequent visits; if you cannot visit, you may send good words of the mouth.

He who cannot take up an ant, and yet tries to take up an elephant, will find out his folly.

Every thing has its price; but who can set a price on blood?

A slave is not a block of wood. When a slave dies, his mother hears nothing of it; but when a child dies, there is lamentation; yet the slave was once a child in his mother's house.

You may say that it is only a gentle stroke, but you do not recollect that it hurts the snail.

He who boasts much, can do very little.

A thing that cannot be accomplished should never be undertaken.

No one should ask the fish what is done in the plain, nor should the rat be asked of what takes place in the water.

The dawn does not come twice to wake a man.

He who possesses patience, possesses all things.

Covetousness is the father of unsatisfied desire.

A proverb is the horse of conversation: when conversation flags, a proverb revives it.

THE END.



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