

# "INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT"

A STORY OF  
50 YEARS  
SERVICE IN  
CENTRAL AFRICA



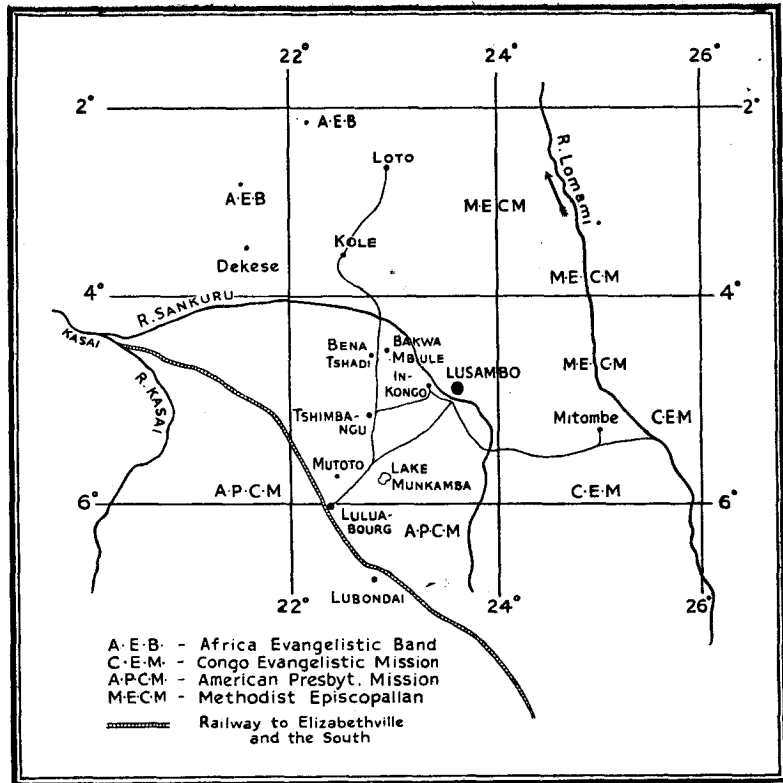
## *Introduction*

AMONGST the many favours from God, granted to me, I esteem it a great one that I have had some acquaintance with the work recorded in these pages, and with those who have laboured therein, from a very early date. My first clear recollection of it is that of meeting Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott and Selenge at a house in North London in 1900. Half a century has now passed since the brothers Westcott first set foot on the soil of the Belgian Congo at the mouth of the Congo River.

These fifty years have seen a miraculous transformation. The miracles that affect the spirit of man are more remarkable than those which only affect his body, and they have taken place by the thousand in the territory covered by this booklet, as all who read will discover. I commend the reading of it, especially to younger Christians, who may not know how and when the work began and the great difficulties that beset the pioneers. Their labours have now produced an abundant harvest.

May the reading of it stir us all to more zeal, more devotedness to the Lord and His Gospel, and to fervent prayer. And may our prayers be mingled with equally fervent praise to GOD for all that HE has wrought.

F. B. HOLE.



Outline of area occupied by the Westcott Mission, indicating also

Seated in Front :

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Mr. and Mrs.  
W. H. Westcott  
and Children.

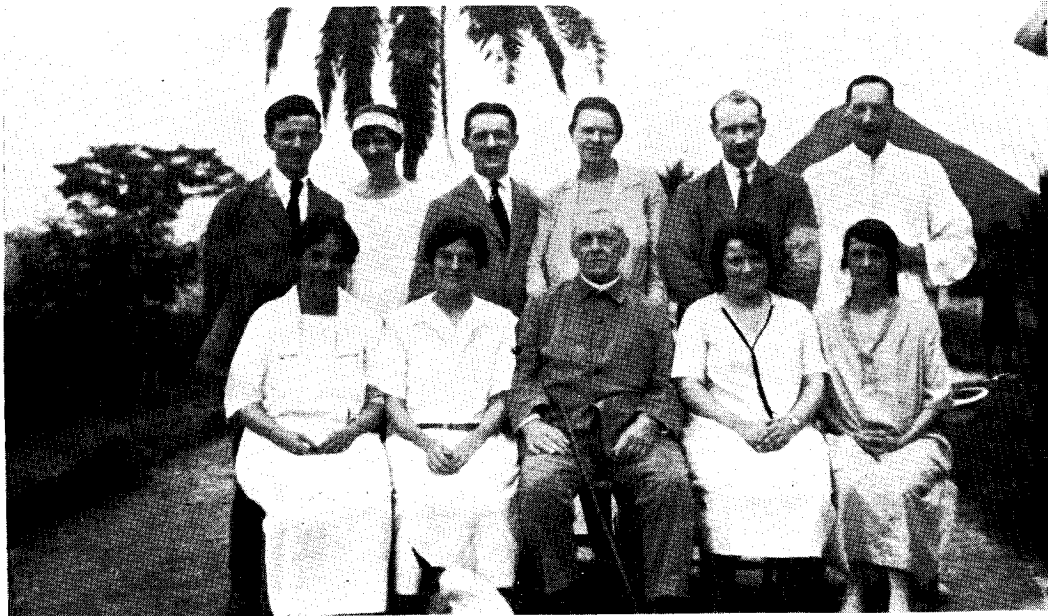


Behind :

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Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilson,  
Mr. Upton Westcott, Mr.  
T. Nixon.

(Taken in 1910).



Standing: Mr. and Mrs. McTavish, Mr. and Mrs. Amies, Mr. H. Moyes, Mr. H. Wilson.  
Seated: Mrs. H. Wilson, Miss Isaac, Mr. U. Westcott, Mrs. Moyes, Nurse Thomas.  
(Taken in 1927).

## *Early History of Central Africa*

THE West Coast of Africa was explored by the Portuguese and the Congo entered in 1484, but the 200 miles of rapids above Matadi kept the interior closed to the outside world. Livingstone, after exploring Lake Tanganyika, found a large river called the Lualaba, and as it flowed northwards he thought it might be the Nile. After his death Stanley, in 1877, travelled down it in canoes and found that it was the Congo. Great Britain did not want to add to her colonies, so the vast tract of 910,000 square miles in Central Africa was taken over by Belgium and called "The Congo Free State," and still later, "The Belgian Congo."

The whole country was in a deplorable condition. Although trading in slaves had been declared illegal by European nations, and the sending of slave-ships from the Congo checked, there was continuous warfare going on between the many tribes, and captives were sold as slaves to Arab dealers and others coming from the East Coast. There is a man living at Inkongo

who was one of a thousand sold in one day at a large market. A village would go raiding and take, let us say, ten captives ; these would be exchanged for an elephant tusk, and this used to buy flint-lock guns, by the help of which other defenceless people would be captured and sold. Food was so scarce in some districts that a man could be exchanged for a fowl. Cannibalism was common, and probably owed its origin to the scarcity of food.

The Belgian pioneers had truly a gigantic task before them. They took steamers in sections past the 200 miles of rapids and put them on the river, using them to penetrate far into the interior, where they established camps and trading posts, and a railway was soon commenced to pass the long stretch of unnavigable river. One military camp was established at LUSAMBO, on the river Sankuru, nearly 1,000 miles from the coast, and a little band of Belgians with enlisted troops did their best to stop the raiding for slaves and the battles between the various tribes ; Basonge to the east, Batetela to the north, Baluba to the south, and Bakuba to the west along the river. The latter were seldom raided, as they took refuge on the river and in the forests at the approach of danger, but they bought many slaves from others.

Many people have described the Central Africans as " degraded people," and think of them as scarcely human. One writer said long ago : " Cannibalism can surely only be practised by peoples of the most degraded level of human

morality, without any general experience of spiritual refinement or progress.”

Let us hear what a more recent writer has to say: “On my travels in 1904-06, I considered some Basonge, a people inhabiting the districts of the upper Sankuru and Lomami, as amongst the best men in the expedition. They were clever and intelligent fellows, but they can give the Batetela points in the subtlest refinements of cannibalism. Others only occasionally eat the flesh of those who happen to be killed in war; the Basonge institute man-hunts and fatten their captives for the sole purpose of eating them.”

After describing their methods of doing this he continues: “But . . . these cannibal Basonge were one of those rare nations of the African interior which can be classed with the most aesthetic and skilled, most discreet and intelligent of all those generally known to us as the so-called natural races. Before the Arabic invasion they did not dwell in ‘hamlets,’ but in towns with twenty or thirty thousand inhabitants; in towns whose highways were shaded by avenues of splendid palms at regular intervals and laid out with symmetry of colonnades. Their pottery would be fertile in suggestion to every art-craftsman in Europe. Their weapons of iron were so perfectly fashioned that no industrial art from abroad could improve upon their workmanship. The iron blades were cunningly ornamented with damascened copper, and the hilts artistically inlaid with the same metal. Moreover they were most



industrious and capable husbandmen, whose careful tillage of the suburbs made them able competitors of any gardener in Europe. Their sexual and parental relations evidenced an amount of tact and delicacy of feeling unsurpassed among ourselves, either in the simplicity of the country or in the refinements of the town. Originally their political and municipal system was organised on the lines of a representative republic . . . Is it not obvious that such skill in the arts, such great commercial expansion, such town-planning and such municipal construction must be the product of prolonged historical civilization?"\*

The above refers to the Basonge, but other tribes in the Sankuru district are also highly skilled in metal work, basket and pottery making, etc. We believe that the deplorable state of things existing when the Belgians took over the country was caused to a large extent by the greed of those so-called Christian nations who bought and sold slaves to such an extent that at one time 30,000 per year were shipped from the Congo. Surely it is our duty to help these people, after all the wrongs we have done them, and above all to take to them a knowledge of the true God, who has been revealed in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, without whom neither we nor they can

\* From "The Voice of Africa," by Professor Frobenius. He visited Inkongo in 1906 when on the journey referred to.

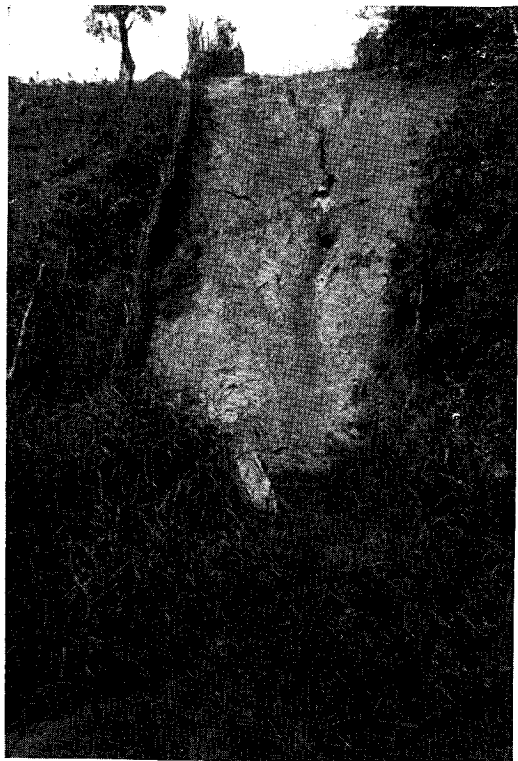
be truly satisfied. Contrast the above conditions with those prevailing today, when one can get from coast to coast without having to walk on foot for a single day's journey. On the 19,000 miles of navigable rivers fleets of steamers are plying, carrying down palm oil, cotton, timber, copper, etc., and going upstream with cars, trucks, saw-mill equipment and almost every article of trade one can mention. Gold, diamonds and tin are exported; it is safe to travel anywhere, and a white lady can travel alone for hundreds of miles and be perfectly safe. Natives wishing to take a train can travel to the station by "bus." The Belgian Government is certainly to be congratulated on having accomplished so much, especially when one considers the enormous task and the great difficulties which faced them in the early days.

## *Entrance of Missionaries into Belgian Congo*

Two missionaries, Grenfell and Comber, arrived in 1878, and others followed. A small steamer was carried in sections past the rapids and put together on Stanley Pool, near what is now called Leopoldville, and the Gospel was carried up the Congo. Many of the early pioneers died of malaria, some after a short time in the country. Later on, the American Presbyterians went along the river Kasai, a branch of the Congo, and commenced work there.

In 1889 Mr. W. H. Westcott gave up his secular occupation with the Congo in view, and after five years of ministry in Great Britain and two in South Africa, he travelled thence to the mouth of the River Congo. His brother, Upton, arrived from England on December 30th, 1896. He arrived from South Africa three weeks later.

By that time a railway had been commenced from Matadi to Leopoldville, but the brothers had 100 miles to walk, and both suffered severely from fever. They received much kindness from the missionaries at both places, and then boarded a small steamer which took them up the Congo for two



**Left:**  
Main road Inkongo to  
Lusambo in 1919, for  
foot passengers only.  
(Note the plank over  
the stream).



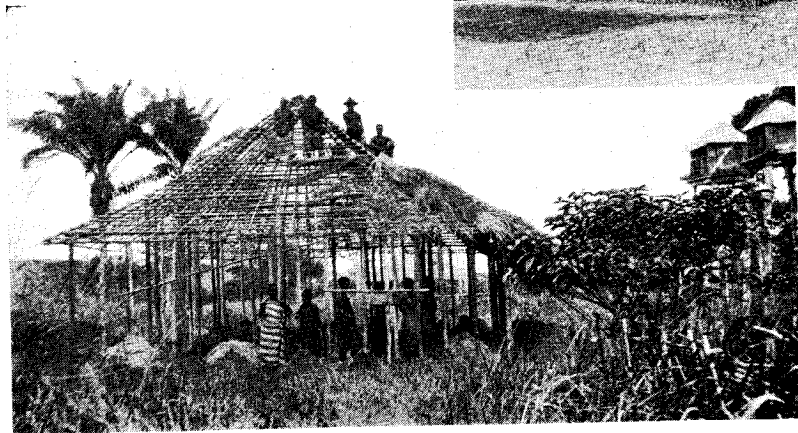
**Right:**  
The same place lev-  
elled and bridged in  
1939.

Below :

How we built our houses before using  
bricks.

Men on roof are thatching.

Women carrying clay were working for  
Bibles.



Above :

Finished house.

Mrs. H. Wilson on Verandah.

Mrs. W. H. Westcott and Children.

days, then into the Kasai, and then along the Sankuru river until they arrived at Lusambo. They were given permission to settle about 12 miles below Lusambo, at a place called INKONGO, among a branch of the great Bakuba tribe called BENA INKONGO. They reached that place on May 18th, 1897, and began to learn the language, which had never been put in writing, and as the natives knew no language but their own, one can imagine the difficulty of acquiring it. The rules of grammar were gradually puzzled out by Mr. W. H. Westcott, so that now it would be possible to learn the language before going to Africa. The translation of the Bible was commenced, blank spaces being left for words which in some cases were not discovered until long afterwards, and a few simple hymns written, while the boys and young men working on the place were given lessons in reading and writing, a thing altogether new to them.

In 1900 Mr. W. H. Westcott visited England, married Miss A. Pudney, of Port Elisabeth, South Africa, and returned with her to Inkongo. His brother then came home and married Miss Edith Anning, of Leeds, in 1902, but they had to return home next year as Mr. Upton Westcott was seriously ill and his life was only saved by an operation.

The outlook early in 1904 was not a bright one. It was doubtful if Mr. Upton Westcott would be able to return, and Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott

at Inkongo suffered severely from malaria. No natives had been baptized, though a few were undoubtedly converted, had given up their fetishes, and were seeking to follow the Lord. Among these was a young man named Selenge, who was brought to England in 1900 by Mr. W. H. Westcott and who returned with him after his marriage. Although brought up in the midst of superstition and fetishism, Selenge, Mixi (pronounced *Mee-she*) and a few others spoke of having had yearnings for the truth and for a knowledge of God, and, as in the case of Cornelius, God led to them those who could explain the way of salvation to them, and they found in the Lord Jesus Christ One who could save them, take away their fears, and satisfy their longings. All the Central Africans had a name for God, whom they acknowledged as Creator, but they thought of Him as a Being far away and as having no interest in His creatures except to send death and misfortune. The dread disease of sleep-sickness was sweeping through the country, killing people by thousands, and they called it *Kusama kwa diulu* (the disease from Heaven). Selenge died of it not long after his return from England, and Mixi, Kimpanga and many others later on.

## *Arrival of a Fifth Worker and Expansion of the Work, but the First Death*

ON the 1st April, 1904, Mr. H. Wilson, of Stratford-on-Avon, left England and arrived at Inkongo nine weeks later. Mr. and Mrs. Upton Westcott followed later in the year, and Mr. W. H. Westcott was able to give more time to language work and translation. As the new worker was an expert typist, he was able to save Mr. Westcott much time by copying for him two dictionaries of more than 500 pages each, most of the Bible as it was translated, and a hymn book. Numbers increased in school, and all the five missionaries helped in the teaching. An extract from a diary dated 4th January, 1905, reads as follows: "Mrs. Upton Westcott had a few girls to school. We hope it will be the beginning of a girls' school and much besides." A few of those girls are still alive, and many of their children, while their grandchildren are now at school at Inkongo.

In March of that year the first baptism took place, and a great crowd



assembled at the river as two young men, Kimpanga and Kandolo confessed their faith in Christ and their desire to be identified with Him. In July Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott left for a furlough, and both badly needed it after all the fevers and hardships they had suffered. Mrs. Westcott was indeed brave to go to Inkongo as things were in those days. No ladies had been in that district before, and conditions were such as can hardly be realized in these days. The three who remained suffered from much fever, and it seems strange now to read such entries as these: "Temperature 104, but went to school." "No salt for a long time; boiled some dirty old sacks and managed to get a little for cooking."

Mr. H. Wilson began to take journeys to villages 20 or 30 miles away where the Inkongo language was understood, and wrote his first hymn. The others also wrote a few, but most of the 145 in the present hymn book were written by Mr. W. H. Westcott.

In 1906 others were baptized, and after a very solemn meeting at the river, a young man named MWAKU, who was working as a boy to Mr. and Mrs. Upton Westcott, came to the latter in deep conviction of guilt and asked how he could be saved. He had been an uncouth and difficult boy, and several times Mr. Westcott spoke of dismissing him. Mrs. Westcott would plead for him, saying, "Give him another chance; he may get converted." Mwaku

was one of the first to go out as a preacher and teacher without any guaranteed support, and he has now gone to his rest after nearly forty years of service. He was a man of prayer, loved his Bible, was consistent in his home life, and was used for the conversion of many, of whom quite a number are now helping in the spread of the Gospel.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott returned in November, and in 1907 Mr. Upton Westcott and Mr. H. Wilson visited the Bakwa Mbule district for the first time. The following extract will show what travelling was like: "Wretched road and filthy mud; both slept badly at night on account of thousands of fleas." "To Lushikwa, where the people were very wild and frightened." "To Bakwa Mpaka, crossing many streams. Arrived half dead; Mr. Westcott's clothes were torn and he staggered like a drunken man."

Many well-populated towns were visited where the Gospel had never been heard, and later in the year another visit was planned. As Mr. H. Wilson was getting bad fevers, Mrs. Upton Westcott decided to go with her husband. She returned very tired with the hard journey, had a bad attack of malaria and then Blackwater fever or Hæmaturia, and passed away on 6th August, to the sorrow of all. She was a devoted worker, a splendid teacher and organiser, and was loved by everyone who knew her.

## *Arrival of Reinforcements*

THREE days after the death of Mrs. Westcott, Mr. H. Wilson left for a furlough, and in June, 1908, married Miss E. Knight, of Stratford-on-Avon. A week later they left for the Congo accompanied by Miss C. Visick, arriving at Inkongo early in August. Conditions were still very primitive: beds were hard, mosquitoes innumerable, and food often unsuitable. One of the early workers was asked what food they had, and the answer was, "Beans and rice one day and rice and beans the next." Such things as butter, milk, flour, sugar, etc., could only be obtained from England, and supplies often failed. There were no shops at Lusambo and it was necessary to send 800 miles for stamps for letters. An interesting item in the diaries of this period speaks of the excitement when a "household box" arrived. The late Mr. Walter Westcott, to whom all the workers were greatly indebted for his work, sent all the provisions out, and kept one large case into which were put individual parcels from the relatives of the different workers. All are grateful, too, to Mrs. Westcott for allowing a room in her house to be used for a packing room. As it took from nine months to a year and a half for cases to arrive,

it will be understood that there was great excitement when the cargo contained a "household box."

Under the difficult conditions the two new workers suffered a good deal, and Miss Visick had some bad fevers. About nine months after her arrival it was found that she had the dreaded sleep-sickness. It was known by this time that the disease was conveyed by the bite of the tse-tse fly, and a preparation of arsenic had been found useful in cases not far advanced. As a weekly journey to Lusambo would have been impossible, the doctor gave Mr. H. Wilson a lesson in giving intramuscular injections, and Miss Visick was successfully treated, but it was thought well for her to go home towards the close of 1909. As some of the Christians and many others in the district had sleep-sickness, the doctor sent a supply of medicine and permission was given to treat them. A better and less dangerous remedy has since been found involving intravenous injections, and thousands of lives have been saved at Inkongo, and the disease is now under control.

Mr. T. NIXON, senr., of Carlisle, joined the little band of workers in 1909, and Mr. Upton Westcott, accompanied by a few native Christians, went to reside permanently at Bakwa Mbule. Journeys were made in other directions by Mr. Nixon and Mr. H. Wilson, and the latter, beside doing much copying, was able to help in the translation of the Scriptures.

*Issue of the New Testament in Luna Inkongo  
and arrival of New Workers*

IN 1910 Mr. W. H. Westcott, with Mrs. Westcott and two children, went home, and the following year the New Testament was printed. The workers are greatly indebted to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the first and subsequent issues which they published. No praise could be too high for Mr. Westcott's skill as a translator. Mr. H. Wilson visited a number of Baluba towns south of Lusambo and saw Lake Munkamba for the first time.

In 1912 Miss C. Hutchinson arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott went out again, leaving their two children at home. Mr. Charles Althorp arrived and went to Bakwa Mbule to help Mr. Upton Westcott. When the war started in 1914 Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilson were on furlough, but they returned to the Congo in 1915 with their little son. In 1916 Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Westcott returned to England with Miss Hutchinson. Mr. Westcott

stayed at home to complete the Old Testament, and neither he nor Mrs. Westcott went to the Congo again.

By this time others had been baptised at Inkongo, and some of these belonged to a town of Basonge called Bekalebwe, who had been sent to Inkongo by the Government to cut firewood for the river steamers. These Basonge Christians pressed Mr. Wilson to visit their parent towns, which he did, making a journey on foot of 350 miles and going as far as the river Lomami. In 1917, when visiting villages between Inkongo and Bakwa Mbule, Mr. Wilson was charged by a buffalo he had wounded, and sustained a compound fracture of the arm and a broken wrist.

In 1918 Miss Hutchinson went out again to the Congo accompanied by Miss C. Shorey. The latter never reached Inkongo, as she was taken ill with a virulent type of fever and died at Leopoldville. Two years later Miss Hutchinson left Inkongo and married Mr. Willett, of H.C.B. (Huileries du Congo Belge), but for years she did a good work among the Baluba women who had gone to live in the industrial districts of Leopoldville and Kinshasa. Miss Visick went out again to Inkongo and was married to Mr. Upton Westcott, who by this time had become totally blind.

*Important additions to the Congo Band, and  
Extension of the Work in spite of losses*

IN 1921 Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilson returned from a furlough accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Althorp, formerly Miss E. Purdie, of Glasgow. With them were Miss E. Dunn, Miss D. Isaac, Miss Mercy McCandless, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Alec McTavish. In 1922 Mr. Amies, of U.S.A., arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Upton Westcott left for a furlough.

In 1923 Mr. Westcott returned to Bakwa Mbule, leaving Mrs. Westcott at home unwell, and that year Mr. H. Moyes arrived, and also Miss M. Chalmers and Miss G. Desborough. The latter went to help at Bakwa Mbule, where Mr. and Mrs. Althorp, Miss M. McCandless and Mr. Amies were already working.

In 1924 Mr. Nixon, senr., and Mr. H. Moyes took a number of journeys among a tribe allied to the Bena Inkongo called Bakwa Mputu. They also visited Tshimbangu, where the Baluba language is spoken, and where there

were some teachers working who had gone out from Inkongo. The two made long treks over bad roads and often suffered from fever. Indeed, during the year most of the workers had bad attacks of malaria. Mr. and Mrs. Althorp left Bakwa Mbule for a furlough, and towards the end of the year Miss Mercy McCandless, who had been having frequent attacks of malaria, developed the dread Blackwater fever, and in spite of every care given by Miss Desborough and others, passed away. She was a splendid worker, loved by all, and her death was a great shock to all. She is still remembered with much affection by the natives, and a little orphan she saved from being buried alive when a baby, because its mother died, is now a fine Christian woman and is married to a teacher. Miss Chalmers took Mercy's place at Bakwa Mbule.

In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Althorp returned from a furlough ; also Mr. Alec. McTavish and others, Miss Dunn now being Mrs. McTavish. Miss Thomas, who is a trained nurse, arrived for the first time. Early in the year Mr. H. Wilson made another journey into the Basonge country, and an important chief named Piani Kyungu invited him to establish a station in his district, at a place called Mitombe.

In 1926 Mr. Upton Westcott, who had suffered a great deal, had to go to England for an operation, Mr. H. Moyes travelling with him. Miss Desborough also had suffered much from malaria and returned home. She had



a good knowledge of the native language and was a great help in the work at Bakwa Mbule.

In August of this year Mr. and Mrs. McTavish went to live at Mitombe, taking with them two of the Christians from the Bekalebwe village at Inkongo; Disashi and Kamanyi. Mitombe is more than 150 miles from Inkongo, so the two pioneers were much isolated from the other workers, for there were no motor roads in those days. The language is quite different from that spoken at Inkongo, but Mr. H. Wilson had commenced a grammar, and with the help of the native Basonge Christians living at Inkongo had translated the Gospel of Luke. Mr. and Mrs. McTavish soon acquired the new language, perfected the grammar, and were before long able to revise the early translation and do more parts of the Scriptures, besides a few school books and a hymn book.

*The events of 1927 and 1928, both adverse  
and favourable*

THESE two years were filled with incidents. A crocodile appeared which killed or maimed a great number of people. Before this a man-killer had caused havoc among the natives from time to time, but this one took people from canoes, or upset the canoe and took a native when swimming or struggling in the water. The missionaries at Inkongo had some terrible wounds to dress of the few who managed to escape. One man was so badly torn that he had to be treated for seven months before being able to return home. The crocodile was eventually shot by Mr. Wilson, and in the stomach were found 27 bracelets of iron and copper, most of which had belonged to Inkongo schoolgirls.

A wounded leopard which was being tracked by Mr. Wilson and a native Christian hunter suddenly sprang on the latter, and man and leopard fell to the ground with the man's lower jaw locked in the leopard's mouth.

Fortunately a bullet through the beast's heart was in time to save the man's life, and his broken jaw healed after two or three weeks.

Several people in the district went mad and attacked others with knives. A fight took place between the Bena Inkongo and the Bekalebwe. An epidemic of influenza caused many deaths, and Kumwamba, the medalled chief of the Bena Inkongo died. The worst thunderstorm known was experienced, 20 terrific explosions occurring in rapid succession. Among the happier events were: the return of Mr. Upton Westcott and Mr. Moyes, the latter having married Miss McTavish of Edinburgh, who accompanied them; the return of Mr. Amies, also with a wife; the entry of Miss Jean Flett, of Findochty, and Mr. T. Nixon, junr., into the work; the birth of Eunice McTavish; and the baptism of 80 people at Tshimbangu. This district, which was worked from Inkongo, was left to the native Christians a great deal, but Mr. Nixon, senr., spent much time there and in the neighbouring towns. When "Tshimbangu" is spoken of, a district is referred to, not merely one town, just as there is a town of Inkongo and a district of Inkongo.

## *Occupation of the Lusambo Station and commencement of the North Sankuru Mission*

THE American Presbyterian Mission had opened a station at Lusambo in 1912 to care for the Baluba population there. Eventually they decided to concentrate further south and nearer to their base on the Kasai, and opened a station at Mutoto. They offered to hand over the temporary buildings at Lusambo, and in January, 1928, Mr. and Mrs. Moyes went there to live.

By this time Lusambo had become an important centre, having a post office, a bank, a good hospital, and numerous shops or stores (usually spoken of as "magazines"). It has a large native population, chiefly Baluba, though many of other tribes go there to work. Having a station there fills up a gap and completes a line of stations from Bakwa Mbule and Inkongo on the west to Mitombe on the east. Roads have been improved, and a bus runs twice every week to the railway station (Lulua-gare) at Luluabourg, 135 miles away.

## REGISTRATION OF " THE WESTCOTT MISSION "

The Government requires each mission to choose a definite name, and it was decided to register as " The Westcott Mission." One member of each mission had to be named as legal representative, so that any enquiries from the Government for statistics, etc., might be sent to one person. Every new missionary had thereafter to be attached to a definite body, who would be responsible for his or her conduct, and a person wishing to enter Belgian Congo as a free-lance or unattached would be refused admittance. This does not restrict the liberty of the missionaries in any way, nor does it imply that they view themselves simply as members of " a mission." All the workers recognise that they are members of Christ, and wish to work in harmony with others who love the Lord, and not to compete with them because they bear a different name. This leads to the mention of

## " THE NORTH SANKURU MISSION "

It has been shown how the work at Inkongo extended first to Bakwa Mbule. After paying each individual missionary a certain sum for living expenses from gifts received at home and sent out each quarter by the Home Treasurer, the remainder was divided, Inkongo and Bakwa Mbule getting equal shares.



Brick dwellings at Inkongo. Left to right: Houses of Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilson, Miss Isaac, one for visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Downs. Other buildings hidden by trees. The long grass is used for thatching.