

**"INTO HIS MARVELLOUS
LIGHT"**

**A STORY OF
50 YEARS
SERVICE IN
CENTRAL AFRICA**



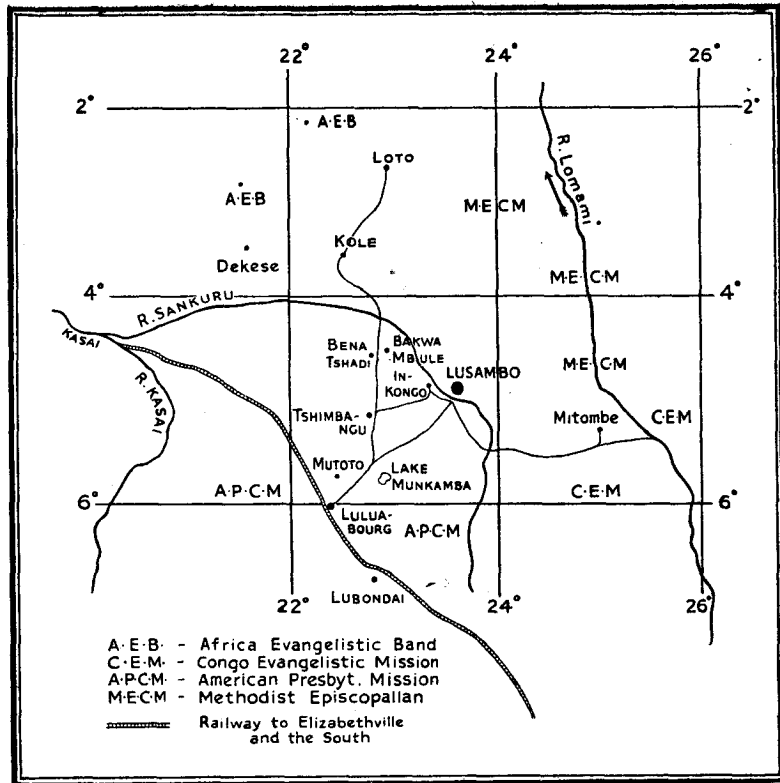
Introduction

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 :

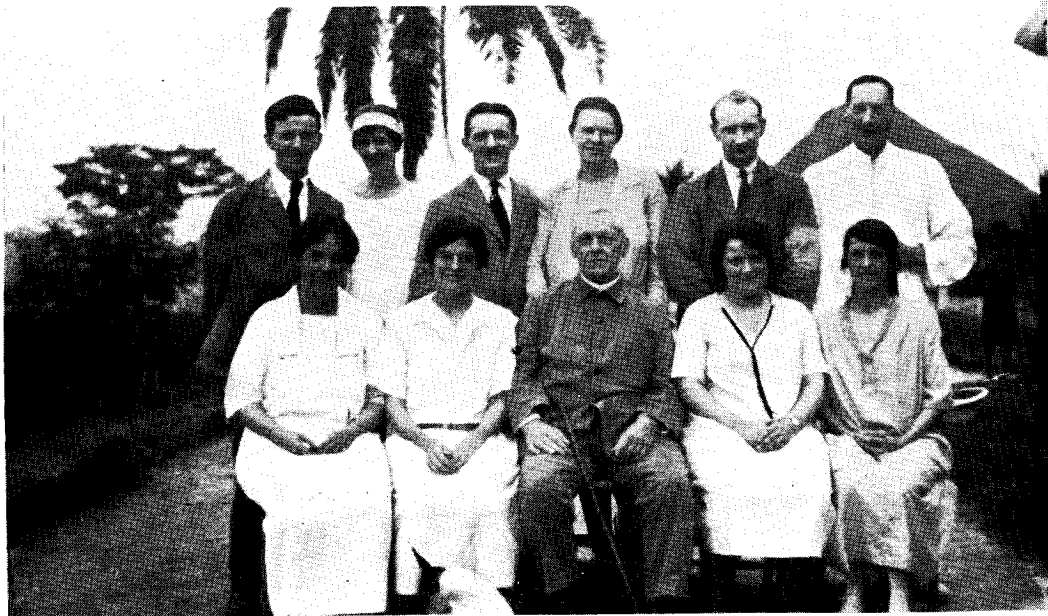
Mr. and Mrs.
W. H. Westcott
and Children.



Behind :

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.

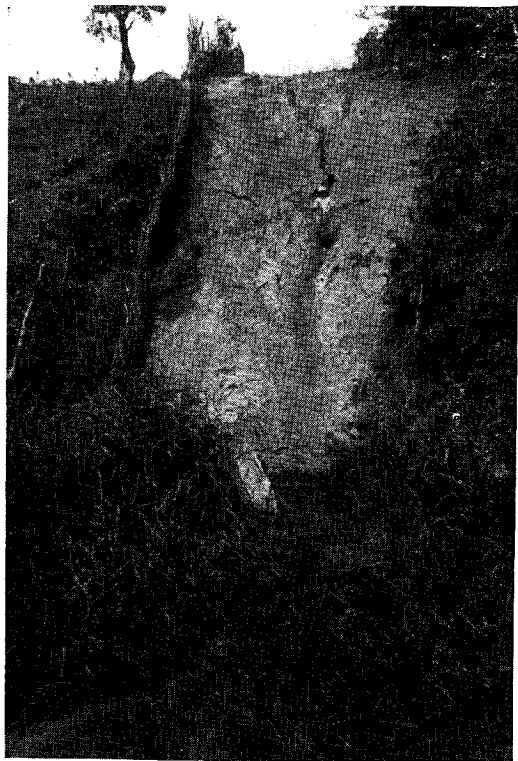
be truly satisfied. Contrast the above conditions with those prevailing today, when one can get from coast to coast without having to walk on foot for a single day's journey. On the 19,000 miles of navigable rivers fleets of steamers are plying, carrying down palm oil, cotton, timber, copper, etc., and 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).



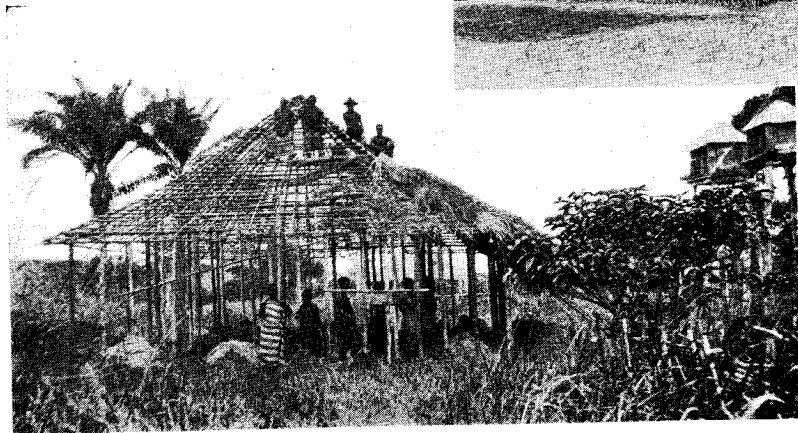
Right:
The same place lev-
elled and bridged in
1939.

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.