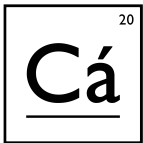


Johanna of Nigeria



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DEDICATED
TO THE MOTHER OF
JOHANNA VEENSTRA
AND
TO THE MEMORY OF
OUR BELOVED "PHEBE"



Johanna Veestra

Johanna of Nigeria

Life and Labors of
Johanna Veenstra
S. U. M.

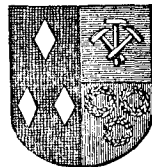
by

Dr. Henry Beets
Director of Missions
Christian Reformed Church

1937

GRAND RAPIDS PRINTING COMPANY
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S. A.

DR. HENRY BEETS has been director of missions of the Christian Reformed Church since 1920—after many years of service on its Mission Board. Born in the Netherlands, he came to the U. S. while a young man of 17. He obtained his higher education at the Theol. School of his denomination—now Calvin College and Seminary. After his ordination in 1895 he served the Chr. Ref. churches of Sioux Center, Ia., and of LaGrave Ave. and Burton Heights, Grand Rapids, up to 1920. Muskingum College of the U. P. Church in 1902 honored him with the LL.D. degree in recognition of services rendered as member of a committee of a dozen American and Canadian churches which prepared a new versification of the Psalter, still in use. In the Dutch language he wrote the life of Pres. McKinley and of Pres. Lincoln, as also a book on missions, twice printed: "Triomfen van het Kruis." Translations of his of Dutch poetical classics appeared in "Herinneringen," 1906. In the American language he wrote popular commentaries on the Compendium of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Netherlands Confession of Faith, besides "The Man of Sorrows," meditations on the Suffering of our Lord, 1935. In 1918 there appeared from his pen in Dutch and in 1923 in English, a "History of the Christian Reformed Church." For the space of 25 years he was editor-in-chief of his denomination's weekly, "The Banner," and since 1915 co-editor of "Reformed Review, Missionary Monthly," continuing "De Heidenwereld," founded in 1896. In 1934 he was knighted by the Queen of the Netherlands. (From "Who's Who in America.")



P R E F A C E

THE writer of this book became rather intimately acquainted with its heroine, Miss Johanna Veenstra, in the capacity of Director of Missions of her and his denomination. As such he traveled with her considerably, addressing various meetings of the Women's Missionary Unions of the Christian Reformed Church.

As she herself relates in the Preface of her "Pioneering for Christ in the Sudan," it was on account of his suggestion in the matter that she was led to prepare the book just named. It was also in the columns of the *MISSIONARY MONTHLY*, of which he is one of the editors, that her articles appeared regularly. When the tidings of her demise reached the homeland, he, at several places, gave *memorial addresses*, and it was the interest displayed in them, as well as in the articles just named, that led him to entertain the idea of publishing in book form the main contents of her own journalistic contributions.

The book sketches her activities to the very end of her life and in the two closing chapters it tells about the fruits of her labors as seen after her demise, and of the workers which are now trying to take her place and continue her work.

The writing of this book was a labor of love, and will, we hope, be received as such by mission friends in all English-speaking lands. The proceeds of the book, if any, will be devoted to the cause to which she gave her heart, her pen, her lips, her life. We are profoundly thankful to the publisher J. H. Kok of Kampen, Netherlands, for the courtesy and generosity displayed in allowing us to use many of the cuts shown in this book.

Coveting the blessing, above all, of the Lord of the harvest,

Yours, in his blessed service,

HENRY BEETS.

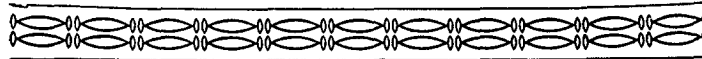
Grand Rapids, Mich.
August 17, 1937

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CHAPTER I

“GOD, THOU HAST TAUGHT ME FROM MY YOUTH.”

NIGERIA — the “land of the blacks,” crown colony and protectorate — important part of British West Africa, that was the land where a white woman from North America was to toil and to die, to win precious “black diamonds” for the diadem of her King, and to be constantly under the wings of His protecting mercy, till she entered the true “Crown Colony” of heaven.

That white woman was Johanna Veenstra, whose life and labors we propose to sketch in this volume. The United States of North America was her native land and she loved it with ardent love, though she came to love Nigeria more. Paterson, in the state of New Jersey, was the place of her birth. There, in a humble frame building she was born, Thursday, April 19, 1894, on Hopper Street, an unimportant and short thoroughfare in the Silk City, but a street which relatively speaking, produced more kingdom workers in recent decades than many a lordly avenue in other and larger towns.

Johanna’s parents were humble but God-fearing folk. The father, William Veenstra, was born in Paterson, in 1868, the son of Dutch immigrants. The

mother, Cornelia Anna De Hoop, was also of Netherland stock. Her parents, Henry De Hoop and Helena Fortuin, had come to the United States in 1869. At first they had settled in Richmond, Va., and tasted the hardships of the new colonists. Later they moved to Paterson, N. J., and there the future mother of Johanna of Nigeria met Wm. Veenstra, whom she married April 14, 1890. Of the several children she bore her husband, Johanna was the third one — fitly called by a name which signifies: “God-given.”

Veenstra was an able carpenter and builder, and, aided by his alert wife, accumulated a small fortune. But the Lord called him, with inward call, to lay aside hammer and saw, to engage in spiritual work. And so we find the Veenstra family, in 1896, moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where the Theological School, (now Calvin College and Seminary) of their denomination — the Christian Reformed Church — provided him with the necessary training to help in building a temple of living stones. Graduating from that School in 1901, he was ordained September 1 of that same year as the pastor of the Zutphen Church, a rural charge in the heart of western Michigan. In humble dependence on the Master who had called him to the work, he labored joyfully and acceptably for seven months. Then typhoid fever gripped him and terminated his life and labors, on April 5 of the year 1902. Before his death, as a patriarch of old, he admonished his beloved ones, kneeling at his

bedside. Among them Johanna. While the family was located in Grand Rapids she had attended the Oakdale Park Christian School, and then the public school near her Zutphen home. The family, grief stricken, returned to Paterson, the widow no doubt feeling something of what Naomi must have felt as she returned to Bethlehem, she and Ruth. But the widow of the Rev. Veenstra had six children to provide for, and the widow's pension which her denomination allowed, was not sufficient for the proper maintenance and education of the family.

The resourceful mother ran a general store with which a P. O. station, No. 12, was connected, to provide a living for herself and her dear ones. She saw to it that Johanna, bright girl as she was, attended one of Paterson's christian schools, till her 12th birthday when she entered Philips' Business College. She completed a course in stenography and at the age of 14 began commuting to New York City, day after day, to help her mother provide for the family. Meanwhile the Spirit of God was working in her heart, although at times resisted. The world attracted the young lassie. Sometimes she longed for the gaudy garments and jewelry and "good times" of her worldly fellow-workers in the great city. When she told the office girls with whom she associated in her labors, of her desire to enter a mission school some day, they mocked her and challenged her to be a "missionary" right there

among them. The promised promotion of becoming the private secretary of her employer, Mr. Osborne of the Osborne Lithograph Co., was something of a temptation to the ambitious girl. But higher things at times occupied her mind. She diligently read God's Love Letter from heaven. Her mother wrote us that whenever she went into her daughter's room, she would find her Bible under her pillow. She evidently was "a seeking soul."

The faithful guidance and watchfulness of her pastor at the time, the Rev. K. Van Goor, of the Second Church of Paterson, had much to do with directing her footsteps into the way of the flock. Yet not his appeal, but that of another servant of God was to be the instrument to lead her to surrender to the Lord. In company of a girl friend, Johanna on Sunday evenings at times attended the local Park Avenue Baptist church, of which organization a Rev. Price was pastor at the time. Doubtless the use of *English* in these Park Ave. services, led to the attendance of the American born girl, since in her home church all services still were in the language of the ancestral Netherlands.

At first going to these Baptist services out of curiosity, one night Johanna was being persuaded by the Holy Spirit to surrender to the Lord as her God. She walked to the front of the auditorium, knelt down, and definitely gave her heart to the Savior. Well catechised as she had been from in-

fancy, in Reformed truth, including the doctrine of infant baptism, the young convert remained loyal to the Church of her forebears and made public confession before pastor Van Goor and his consistory. She felt happy in the Lord, and no doubt her mother's heart was overflowing with praise to her covenant God, as Johanna took this step and for the first time sat down at the Lord's Table. But all of this surrender to and public avowal of her Savior, had not taken place without a terrific spiritual struggle. As she tells us in her own "*Pioneering for Christ*," "for a year I had been under constant pressure of conviction. What a load of sin! Was it too late? Had the "unpardonable sin" been committed? Others sang, "What a wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord; He taketh my burden away"—would I never know the joy of singing these words? Long into the night would I keep awake, sometimes reading the Bible, afraid to go to sleep—lest I might die. Months went by; words became fewer; and physically the strain was beginning to tell. But why all this struggle? The Holy Spirit made it clear to me. I wanted peace, but in my own way. I was very willing, more than willing, to give my heart to the Lord, *but I shrank from giving my all*. I wanted to be a child of the King, but I fought desperately against consecrating my life unto the service of that King! But who was I to withstand the power of the Almighty? He prevailed. And in the hour that I

yielded not only my heart, but my all on the altar of love to be, to do, to go, as He chose, there was a great calm. There was peace, unspeakable peace, peace hitherto unknown. Now I could sing, "He took all my burden away."

The Lord works in a very gracious manner. "On Sunday we had communion in our church. We sat quite near the front in the afternoon service, and this meant passing out of church by way of the side door. To do this we had to pass the platform. As I came to the steps of the platform, the minister came down, and laying his hand lightly on my shoulder he said, 'And, sister, when will *you* sit with us at this table of the Lord?' The elders watched, the people nearby gazed a bit too, but the minister did not mind. He knew that here was a soul undergoing a terrific struggle! He felt that he was pastor, and had to tend the lambs of the fold. Did he read on my face that I had peace in my heart? He had just announced that a special preparation class for those who wished to confess the Lord publicly would begin that week. So he said to me, 'Will you come this week to the class?' And I replied, 'Yes, domine.'

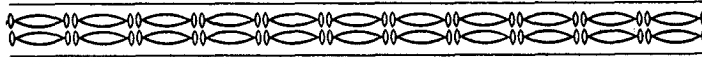
"A few months later, forty-five men and women walked down the aisle of that church following their pastor, prepared to make public confession of Jesus as their Savior. I was the youngest of that group. The church was crowded to its utmost capacity. It was a very impressive service. Some adults received

the sacrament of baptism. The forty-five who were making confession stood up and sang,

“Within His house, the house of prayer,
I dedicate myself to God;
Let all His saints His grace declare
And join to sound His praise abroad.”

whereupon the congregation responded:

“Yea, in His place of holiness
Lift up your hands the Lord to bless;
And unto you be given
The joys that Zion doth afford
The richest blessing of the Lord
Who made the earth and heaven.”



CHAPTER II

“MEET FOR THE MASTER’S USE, PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK”

ST. PAUL speaks thus, in II Tim. 2:21, of men, as vessels unto honor, and sanctified. That applies also to the woman whose history we continue in this chapter — covering her period of preparation for the task awaiting her in the “Land of the Blacks,” Nigeria. Some, by the way, identify Nigeria with “the Sudan.” But incorrectly. The term Sudan indicates a much wider section of Africa, running from the Atlantic ocean eastward to the Red Sea. “Sudan” also stands for “black,” being an Arabic word. In this book we prefer to speak of Nigeria, as being a more accurate term, and more limited geographically. And for “every good work” in that vast region of western Africa, she was trained carefully by Him who ruled her life. When, at the age of 16, Johanna Veenstra came to choose and learned to love her Redeemer, she soon engaged in mission work conducted by Mr. P. Stam, and his Star of Hope enterprise in Paterson, N. J. Especially on Saturday afternoons.

But she felt that she needed *training*, and so, after much prayer, during the middle of September, of

the year 1913, we find her on her way to Brooklyn, now part of New York City, to be enrolled as a student in the *Union Missionary Training Institute*, as it was called at that time, while located at 131 Waverly Ave. (near Myrtle). Her attention had been called to this school by the Rev. A. J. Van Lummel, then pastor of the Sixth Reformed church of Paterson, who knew about it because Miss Wilhelmina Noordyk, another Hopper Street girl, afterward missionary in India (Reformed Church), had her training in it. The Rev. Van Lummel was a kind-hearted man, ever ready to help in Kingdom matters. It was he who accompanied her to Brooklyn and to the Institute. Miss Veenstra entered that School with the purpose of becoming a *city* missionary, or a worker in the Indian field of her denomination. Strange to say, she relates how up to that time she never had read a book on foreign missions or heard an address on that subject. If that is so, we marvel at this. What is not strange, however, is that soon after she had enrolled as a student, billows of *doubt* began to roll over her soul. Satan quite often tries to dishearten the recruits of Christ's Army.

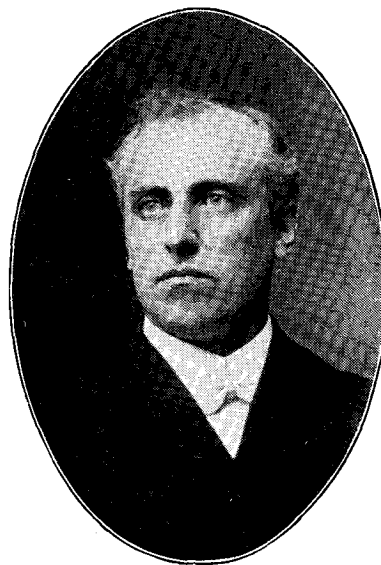
She was so beset by doubts as to her calling for the work, that for the space of three weeks she kept her trunk unpacked, uncertain as she was whether to return to her secular work or continue as a student. As she writes, she was asking herself the question: Shall I give up believing that God would



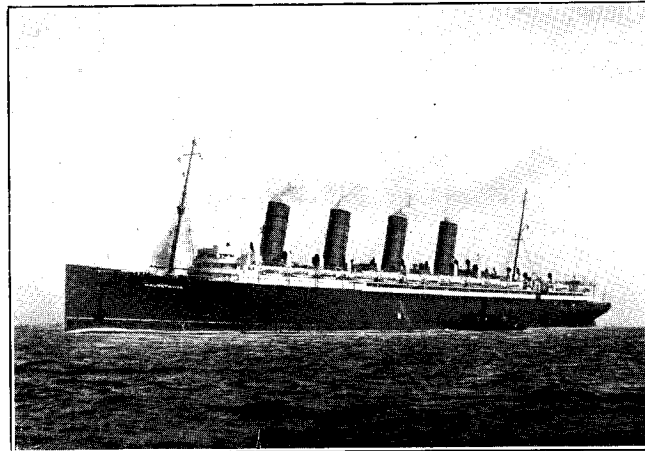
Rev. Wm. Veenstra, the father



*Rev. K. Van Goor,
her pastor in Paterson, N. J.*



*Rev. John Groen,
her pastor in Grand Rapids*



The steamship on which Miss Veenstra sailed

have me give my life for His service? Dare I ask to dream a dream or see a vision, or hear an angel's voice to confirm God's will for me? These, as she recognized herself, "were the attacks of the Enemy, who took advantage of me at the time when, as never before, I was feeling my utter unworthiness to be a messenger of the King." As we already suggested, many while in training, go through the same experiences. But Miss Veenstra remembered that no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God. And after the first three weeks that she was in that training school, there came a settled peace, and the assurance that she was in the place where God would have her be.

Three years she stayed at the Training Institute in Brooklyn. While not receiving a thorough collegiate education, it is remarkable how much knowledge she accumulated. And that not alone *book* learning, but also as pertaining to medical work. It seems what her eyes saw her hands could perform. Can we not see the hand of the Lord in this? Training her for her peculiar and particular field in the Sudan? Miss Veenstra finished her Brooklyn work in 1916 — the valedictorian of her class of 4, whose motto was: "For God and Humanity." At the commencement held May 23, 1916, in the Hanson Place M. E. church, she spoke on "The Golden Hour of

Opportunity." At the same commencement meeting Dr. H. K. Kumm gave an address.

The summer previous to her last year in school she got a *definite call* to her field of labor. It was in 1915, while she represented her school at a large Missionary Conference at Lake Geneva, Wis. There the same Dr. Kumm, a world traveller, had pictured conditions of the many tribes of *Central Africa*, including the *Sudan*, and still untouched by the gospel message. He pointed out the danger of their being won not for Christ but for Mohammed. His ideal was a *chain* of missions thrown across Africa as a Chinese wall to stay the onrush of Islam on pagan Central Africa. Johanna sat spell-bound. Not a word of Dr. Kumm's message escaped her. She was profoundly impressed and deeply moved. *She spent three days in prayer and meditation.* Up to this time she felt no desire to enter upon foreign missionary service, but now there seemed to be a clear, Macedonian call from over the sea. On the third day of her prayer, meditation, and soul-struggle, she yielded her will to the Lord of the harvest, to obey Him, to go to even some remote part of His field.

"Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being
Absolute sway!"

But she needed *patience* to go to that field and some more *training*. The American Branch of the

Sudan United Mission, which accepted her, could not sanction her actual going until she was 25 years old. That meant to be patient and wait three whole years, her birthday being as we stated in Chapter I, April 19, 1894.

But these years of patient waiting were not wasted. They were used for still more equipment, for service, for development of talent. In August of 1916 she came to Michigan to begin City Mission work under the auspices of the Eastern Ave. church of which the Rev. J. Groen was pastor. A store was rented in a given district, a Mission Sunday school begun; later a class for boys and a sewing class for girls. Each week gospel meetings were held in two factories; visiting the Tuberculosis Sanitarium; a class for training in personal work, and a short course for those who were teaching in the Mission school. At the same time she took up some courses in Reformed doctrine in Calvin College, one semester. Her standings were high — between 92 and 98. Johanna surely was diligent, energetic. She became the first woman member of the *Student Volunteer Band*, on March 3, 1915, organized at Calvin College. Her salary at that time was far less than what she had earned as stenographer, and only 15 years old.

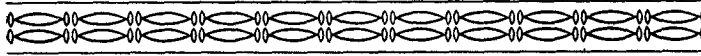
Convinced that the time had come for a man to take over this Grand Rapids work, and desiring to take up some further study, she went to Northern Michigan, presenting the needs of the different for-

eign mission fields to her Dutch people. For four months she traveled about, including speaking appointments in Chicago. At the end of the trip she had a \$150 balance which was put in a bank toward her expenses in going to Africa. Then she took some more medical work out East, graduating in midwifery at the Bellevue Maternity Hospital. For six or eight months she again engaged in City Mission work, this time in connection with the Christian Reformed Hebrew Mission at Paterson. She testified in prisons, rescue homes, hospitals, sanatoria, on New York's great white way, and in her Chinatown, in the gypsy camps, in almshouses, at street corners and mission halls, until finally the age of 25 was reached and a definite date set for her sailing from New York to Africa.

October 2, 1919, on the transatlantic liner, the "Mauretania," she was heartened by the sounds of the beautiful hymns. "Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go," and "Take the Name of Jesus with you."

The last stanza she heard from the lips of loving friends who bade her farewell, while the lone missionary stood on one of the decks at the railing, with a New Testament lifted high in her hand, was the verse:

"Precious Name, O how sweet,
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.
At the name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at His feet;
King of kings, in heaven we'll crown Him,
When our journey is complete."



CHAPTER III

ON THE WAY TO NIGERIA

"In perils of the sea."

BEFORE Johanna Veenstra had graduated from the Union Missionary Training School, she had chosen what all of us might well do: a *life-motto-text*. In her case it was the word of the LORD spoken to Joshua, Moses' successor: "Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Jos. 1:9.)

That was a fitly chosen motto, in keeping with her life-work in which something of Joshua's qualities of leadership were evident many a time.

Repeatedly she needed the encouragement of the motto, too. Already on her first trip across the Atlantic — on board the "Mauretania" on which we saw her leave Oct. 2, 1919. After three days of sailing on the way to England, the huge vessel was overtaken by a heavy storm. Johanna's cabin was an inside one — a very undesirable thing when a storm rages because of lack of proper and much needed ventilation. Moreover, she was not alone in her "hut" but shared it with two other ladies and two children besides. We can imagine the situation as the

“Mauretania” began to roll and to toss, huge vessel as it was.

The wind blew with such violence that a heavy staircase was torn loose from the upper deck. Seasickness was general, and only one who has gone through the scenes and noise and smells of such an experience in a crowded inside cabin can have an adequate idea of what such means. Many a nauseated passenger gets so disgusted, downhearted and weak that he or she cares naught, for the time being, what happens to one's self or to the boat. It is difficult in such circumstances to pray, strange as this may appear. But seasickness seems to dull the spirit, as it weakens the body. However, our brave missionary somehow got through the three dreadful days. She was able to get on deck and found what a wonderful thing fresh air is to one recovering from the seasickness affliction. It stimulates and revives in a remarkable manner. With anxious eyes she began to look toward the main land, they were approaching after some days. Then British officials came to have a look at the passengers and their papers. After a while Johanna set her foot on foreign soil, the first time of her life.

She went to the ticket office of the railway to take a special train to London. Evidently she had bought no through ticket. As an American is accustomed to do, she just asked for “ticket for London, please.” And then she heard what sounded queer to her, born

and bred in the democratic United States: "What class?"

Johanna's prompt answer was: "Third class, please."

She always was willing to save expense to the Mission, even though it meant self-denial for her. The author of this book repeatedly admired this spirit of self-denial and unselfishness in her.

Third class traveling, however, in England is not as uncomfortable as it sounds to American ears. The great majority of the public travels thus. The seats may be hard, and the compartment crowded, that's all. And soon the young traveller on her way to London was wrapt up in the sights of rural England, with its green pastures, beautifully kept hedges, neat cottages and pretty bridges. Before she realized it, London was reached — her first destination. And there she underwent one inconvenience that at times an inexperienced traveller goes through. Especially when taking third class. She had failed to wire headquarters about the time of her arrival. The porters busied themselves with the passengers of the first and second classes. Naturally, such pays best; and neglected the young American girl. But she was undismayed. In her own gritty way she hauled her luggage together, literally dragging her trunks from the baggage car, to some central spot. What next? She asked a taxi driver to take her to the Y. W. C. A. "Why, madame, every Y. W. C. A. is crowded."

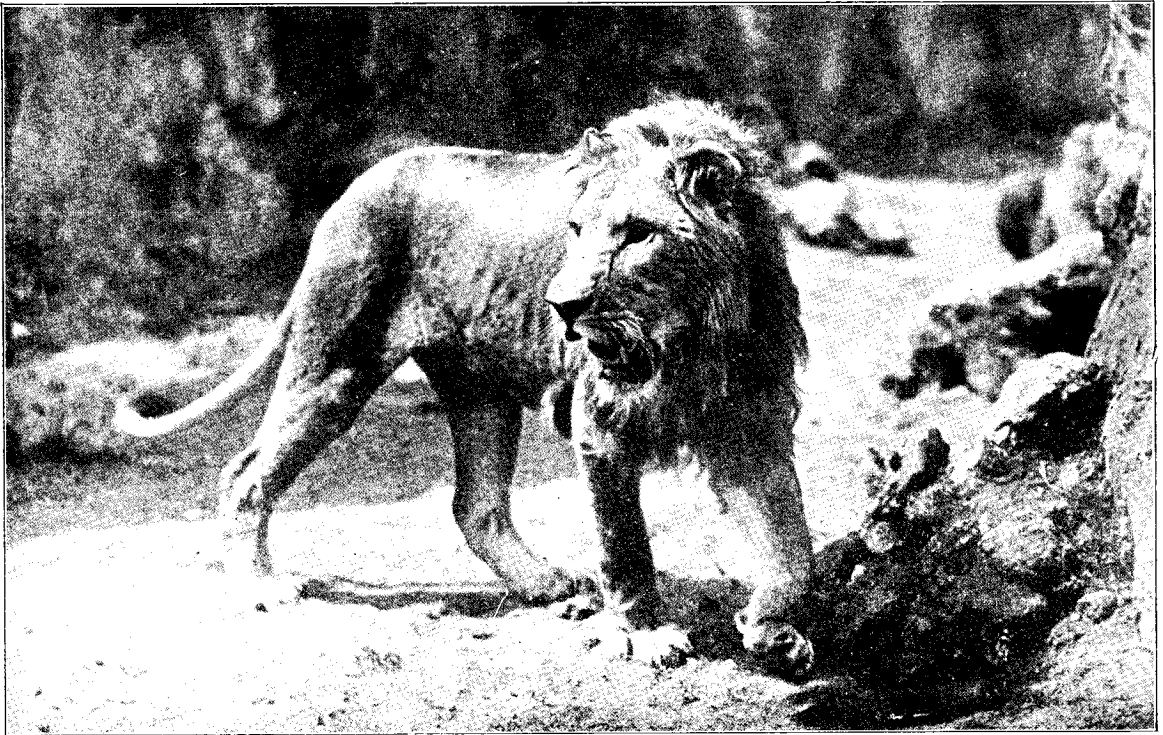
“What about hotels?” “You’ll never get into one; they have long waiting lists.”

What disheartening experience. Then Johanna thought of the Sudan Mission headquarters at 32 Fleet Street. Finally—she walked into them, but found the secretary, Mr. Gilbert Dawson, perplexed. Fact is, he had written her to *postpone* her trip, as he could not obtain passage for her from England to West Africa. But the missive had failed to reach her—and there she was. After being welcomed heartily, Johanna was told two disheartening items of news. The first was that no steamer reservation was available till the middle or end of February. *That meant two months of waiting.* The second item, fully as disheartening, for the immediate present was the existing difficulty to get sleeping accommodations. “We are living,” Mr. Dawson said “two families in one small house. The little baby sleeps in the bureau drawer at night. Everybody is crowded, and all hotels likewise.” That was about all the new missionary seemed to be able to stand. Moreover she had not eaten a thing since early morning and by this time it was mid-afternoon. Johanna tells us in her “Pioneering”—she started to cry. Surely she needed the encouragement of her life-motto.

But things cleared up soon. A lunch in a nearby restaurant refreshed her physically. A kind American Christian woman took her into her home.



Landscape in Nigeria



Lion of Nigeria

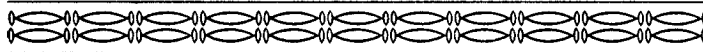
Then Miss Veenstra began to pray to the Lord to open the way for her so she might not have to stay so long in England as Mr. Dawson had mentioned. She writes: "After a few days I believed that my prayer would be answered and that by the end of the year I would be started on my next ocean trip for the west Coast of Africa." So October passed and November and the greater part of December. Everybody getting ready to celebrate Christmas. But she a stranger in a strange land.

But there is One, reader, who watches his Own as well as the sparrow. *Prayer changes things.* Three days before Christmas, Johanna got a telegram: "Passage booked for you December 31st." What a welcome message! It greatly strengthened her faith in the Lord as One who answers prayer. Someone had canceled an engaged berth.

On the last day of 1919, our young prospective missionary boarded a steamer at Liverpool to take her to Lagos, West Africa. It was a vessel much smaller than the "Mauretania." There were only nine women among the passengers, mostly government officials, miners and traders. But happily, four of those who had taken passage were missionaries. That meant company of kindred spirits such a source of comfort on long journeys.

Strange to say, however, Johanna once more had to pass through a severe storm. That was while going through the Bay of Biscay in which a heavy

sea threw the vessel and its passengers into real danger. Other vessels were in difficulties. Not less than six S. O. S. calls for help reached the vessel our friend was on. Two boats actually went down. And a large French vessel, she learned later on, was wrecked, carrying 300 passengers to a watery grave. For two days the captain was not able to turn his boat, and headed straight for America instead of for Western Africa. Our friend must have been wondering at all of this. Meanwhile, for the space of six long days and nights, since she had boarded the vessel, she was cooped up in her cabin. Then, however, the storm ceased to rage and the boat steamed in the original direction. After a brief stop at Sierra Leone, on the twentieth day of January, 1920, all the four missionaries, herself included, disembarked at Lagos. Africa was reached. The land of the Macedonian who had beckoned her while at Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. And at Lagos we shall leave her for the present to take up a description of the land she had set her foot on, and of the paganism and superstition with which she was to battle during the rest of her life.



CHAPTER IV

“THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW THEE”

WHAT was that Nigeria, the Colony and Protectorate of Great Britain in West Africa, to which the Lord evidently called Johanna Veenstra, and in which she spent her life, and poured out her heart, from January, 1920, when she disembarked at Lagos, till 1933, when on Palm Sunday she was called up higher, to walk among the numberless multitudes, wearing palms of victory?

Encyclopedias tell us that Nigeria, including the British mandated Cameroons, covers an area approximately of 372,674 miles with a population of nearly 20,000,000 people. Its capital, Lagos, alone numbers 140,000 inhabitants. The area is divided into two groups of provinces, known respectively as the Northern Provinces and the Southern Provinces of Nigeria. It was in the Province of Muri, in the southeastern part of Northern Nigeria, that she was to labor and to lay down her life. It is shaped something like a ham, with Lupwe at its shank. The area of Muri alone is nearly 20,000 square miles, with 262,000 people.

To get somewhat of an adequate conception of the size of the land, we might state that Nigeria is over six times the area of England and Wales, or over

three times of Great Britain. Pennsylvania in the United States has an area of a little over 45,000 square miles, Michigan nearly 60,000, and the Netherlands 12,582.

Nigeria lies in Western Africa between the Cameroons to the southeast and Dahomey to the west. On the south we find the well-known Gulf of Guinea. The Interland plateau stretches back 100 miles to French West Africa. It is a country of vast natural resources. The coast on the so-called Bight of Benin is level and swampy. Back of this on higher ground, is a belt of mangrove forest and oilpalms; in the interior are fertile stretches of land, in part rolling prairie, and in part all kinds of hills, some of them of considerable size. A savannah forest covers most of the Northern Provinces. The famous Niger river runs through the land in its western portion, while at its very center, at Lokoja, the large river Benue, running mostly in a western direction from the French Camerouns, empties itself into the Niger.

The town of Ibi, figuring so often in the writings of Miss Veenstra, is located on the Benue River, close to the place where the 8th degree of latitude north of the Equator, crosses the 10th degree of longitude. That last named degree, by the way, runs between Lupwe, Miss Veenstra's home for several years, and the town of Takum, also figuring frequently in her letters.

Different small streams run through the Muri Province, all of them emptying into the river Benue. The capital of Muri Province is Makurdi, at present reached by railway, running from Port Harcourt, close to the coast, to the last named place.

The Nigeria country is not alone divided into two well marked areas, the river valleys that lie along the two great water ways, and the plateau land, but it has also two well marked *seasons*, the dry and the rainy season, as is usually the case in countries within the tropics.

In Northern Nigeria the dry season lasts from October to April. During that time there is but little rainfall, in some places none at all. The great characteristic of the dry season in Northern Nigeria is what is called Hamattam, a northeasterly wind, blowing constantly from the desert to the sea, and so much laden with fine sand that it actually makes the air hazy. During that dry season even the broad Benue river becomes but a shallow stream. At the end of the dry season there is an intensely hot spell. But slowly on clouds pile up along the southeastern sky and finally, at the opening of the wet season, rain storms begin to cover the country as with a flood. At that time too, at intervals, as the wind blows furiously, there are dust storms reminding of those of our Western States that choke the breath of the wanderer, while strong winds on occasion cause the heaviest of buildings to tremble. But this lasts, as a

rule, only for a brief time, although at intervals during the wet season, showers are quite frequent, accompanied by thunder storms. In that wet season, lasting until October, there is usually a break during the latter part of July and August, a dry spell, usually of three weeks, at the end of which comes what are called the latter rains.

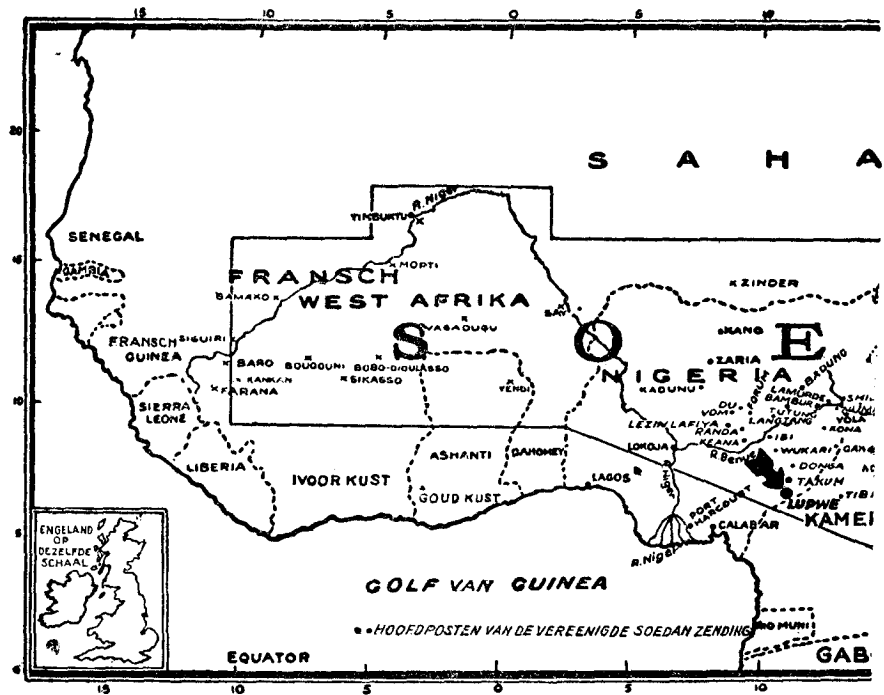
As we said a savannah forest covers most of the Northern Provinces, but it is intersected by prairie land and here and there are swamps. Grass is found everywhere, growing a couple of feet high and in the swampy places attaining a growth of from 8 to 10 feet. There is considerable game in Northern Nigeria such as antelopes, giraffes, buffaloes, wild cats, lions and even elephants. Monkeys and baboons are found in hordes, constantly preying upon the crops. Pythons and cobras are also found there. The insect life abounds, not alone flies and mosquitos, but wasps, scorpions, centipedes and all kinds of vermin. In the rivers there are plenty of fishes, but also crocodiles and hippopotami. Among the insects are also the tsetse fly, so well known in the history of the Boers in South Africa, and causing a great deal of disease among the cattle and misery among human beings.

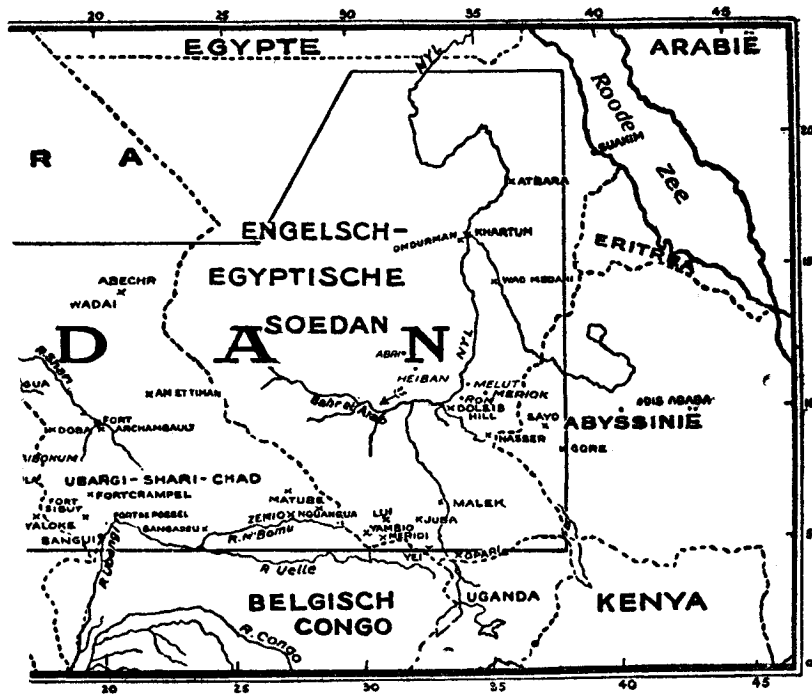
There are many birds in Nigeria, among these the beautiful pelicans, and guinea fowls, so well known in the history of the Pilgrims of New England.

But we are mostly interested in its people, of which we said there are about 20,000,000. Indeed we are told that in the lands in the southeast of the angle, formed by the Niger and Benue, the greatest density of population is to be found. In the Northern Provinces there is one large area of over 30,000 square miles in which the density of population is said to be over 100 to the square mile. These people however, do not form one tribe. Indeed, there are many of them, some of them very large. The Hausa, in Northern Nigeria, number over 3,000,000 people. Of the Munshi, among whom our South African brethren are laboring, there are 446,000 people. Of the Wurkum in the Muri Province there are 43,000 and of the Jukuns in the same Province a but little smaller number, namely 38,000.

We are told that, generally speaking, each Province has its own native tongue, although there is in some parts at least, a sort of a trade language for daily use among the tribes, in Miss Veenstra's district this being the Hausa language. The life of these tribes is organized on a basis of socialism: i. e. collective possession. The individual counts for little. Clan or tribe for everything.

Most of the people in Northern Nigeria are farmers, in a very primitive way cultivating the ground before the rainy season sets in. They remain on their farms, considered as we said, *communal* property, until the land has been exhausted and other territory





has to be looked for. The farms are usually small, ranging from one to seven acres. As to crops, yams and beans are usually alternated with millet and maize. Cotton is raised also and sweet potatoes, peanuts, and tobacco. There is some gathering of rubber, of palm oil, stock raising, dyeing, all kinds of metal work, as well as hunting and fishing. Considerable net weaving is done, while the skins of goats and snakes and antelopes provide much material for leather work, at times showing uncommon skill.

The work is mostly done by the women, but men, as well as women engage in trade and barter traffic. Someone stated that neither Greek nor Jew would make much profit in competition with them.

The people of the Northern Provinces are predominantly of the Negro type, and of the Sudanic language group, although this is not uniformly the case. There are also tribes belonging to the Hamitic people. There are but few *cities* of any considerable size in Nigeria. Nearly all the natives are living in small hamlets, close to the acres from which they derive their living. Some of their homes are but wretched hovels, made of mud and sticks and bark. Groups of these huts usually circular in form and thatched, are surrounded by compounds, walls, for safety's sake. The floors of the huts are made of beaten clay and sometimes covered with gravel. There are no windows as a rule. Inside these huts

the nights are spent, but during the day there is much outdoor life of the families. These families embrace all of the nearest relatives, or under control, usually, of its eldest male member, ruling like the patriarchs in Bible times. The Chiefs of the several communities as a rule, have a *council* of elders to guide them and without whose consent but little is undertaken.

We are told that in Nigeria there are but few if any paupers. In each district one's own family supports the indigent in every way so that he never lacks his simple meals. The main ingredient of these meals is stiff porridge made from millet meal or maize. Meat and fish are largely used only as we use our catsup, or Worcestershire sauce, the people being mainly vegetarians. There are two principal meals during the day.

Alas, the Nigerian pagan uses a good deal of beer and palm wine, the former brewed from millet or maize and the latter from the oil or bamboo palms.

The Nigerian people, as a rule, marry young, the young men usually purchasing their wives. The price having been paid, the bride is taken to her future home, we are told, in a sort of triumphal procession, sometimes on horseback. Polygamy is universal. The strange thing is that, as we are assured, the women themselves prefer polygamy, and induce their husbands to add to the number of his wives. Why? So that they may have *company* and each

other's help in the menial activities of the household which sometimes are very heavy, in preparing the food and taking care of the children. Each wife has, usually, her own separate house, and if it can be afforded, her own servants. The first wife is considered the main one, under whom other wives, married later, are taking care of their duties. The stories which Miss Veenstra tells, will occasionally bring out the terrible hardships that are suffered by the younger women, from the hands of the older and sometimes very jealous wives. Divorce is very common; morality is little thought of. Infant mortality runs very high.

Mr. Maxwell tells us in his "Nigeria": "In former days, the people in many parts of the country had a great hatred of twins; a native Christian clergyman in 1897 found in a grove at Akure no less than 333 pots, each containing the remains of twins. There were, however, many other places where twins were welcomed, and their birth was an occasion of thanksgiving. In all places the infant mortality was, and is, unduly high, and nowadays up-country there are many women with no surviving child. In some places it is said that only half the children survive.

"Witchcraft has also been the cause of multitudes of deaths, for a large proportion of all illnesses is ascribed to the malevolent influence of witches. Efforts were sometimes made to discover the persons guilty of these illnesses by divination with strings,

etc., and a person suspected would be compelled to submit to some ordeal, by poison, boiling oil or water, by being compelled to swim through water infested by crocodiles, and so on. Sometimes children were used as mediums to 'smell out' witches. Two little girls of about nine years old who had been so used were actually brought before a British official at Calabar. These two, happily, were taken in hand by a Christian doctor, and found to have been hypnotized. Upon being released from the hypnotic influence they became normal. The witches were treated as murderers, and it must be remembered that in some cases this, as far as their intentions went, was absolutely true, as they believed in their own practices, and used them with intent to kill. The fear of witchcraft has been, and still is, one of the most powerful influences in African life.

“With reference to ordeal, it should be pointed out that although the pagan forms of it are forbidden among the Moslems, yet their use of the Koran in swearing is, to all intents and purposes, an ordeal. A perjurer is believed to be punished, not on account of his perjury, but because of the power of the Koran, and a court Malam has been known to advise the British official to get a new copy, as the old one had lost its power. One of the writer's language teachers once suffered from a wasting illness, which was ascribed to his having sworn falsely on the Koran; it was said that 'the Koran had caught him.'

“The death of a person among the Mohammedans is speedily followed by his interment, usually in his compound. He is buried with his face toward the east. Before and after burial the Fatiha (the first chapter of the Koran) is recited. Sometimes there is a funeral feast, and usually at least the women wail for the dead.

“Among the pagan tribes of the south the burial ceremonies demand the utmost care in their performance. Families will sometimes impoverish themselves for years in order to discharge their duty towards one of their important members upon his death. Indeed, old people have been known to commit suicide when they thought that they had accumulated enough wealth to be properly buried. Sometimes quite a large amount of property, including wives and slaves, would be buried with a ‘big’ man. British administration has put an end to such human sacrifices, but the longing for them has not gone. One of the Census Commissioners tells of a chief who asked if he would be allowed to be buried as his predecessor had been. It appears that upon that occasion, in addition to various treasures, a number of slaves and some of his wives, after being put to death, were buried with him. Others of the wives were buried alive along with their lord. ‘Several little boys and girls were also entombed (to fetch water and to light the old man’s pipe), and the cries of these little ones were heard three or four days

after.' Poor little mites, starving to death in the darkness; one can fancy their terror and suffering. No doubt underlying these ceremonies there was the thought that the spirit-world resembled this, and that one needed provision to be made for one's comfort and well-being and honour among the shades.

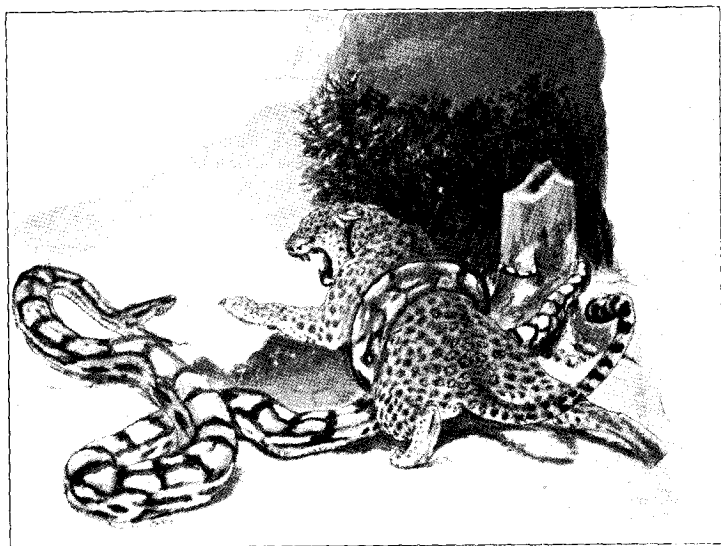
"Funeral festivals are held, sometimes for weeks, with dancing and music, and plenty of drink. About a year afterwards, some tribes hold a second festival similar to the first, but more lavish.

"Various mourning customs exist which bear most severely on the widow of the dead man. She has an unhappy lot in some places, and may be secluded for a long time, while in other places she may be forbidden to wear fine clothes, or even to wear cloth of any sort."

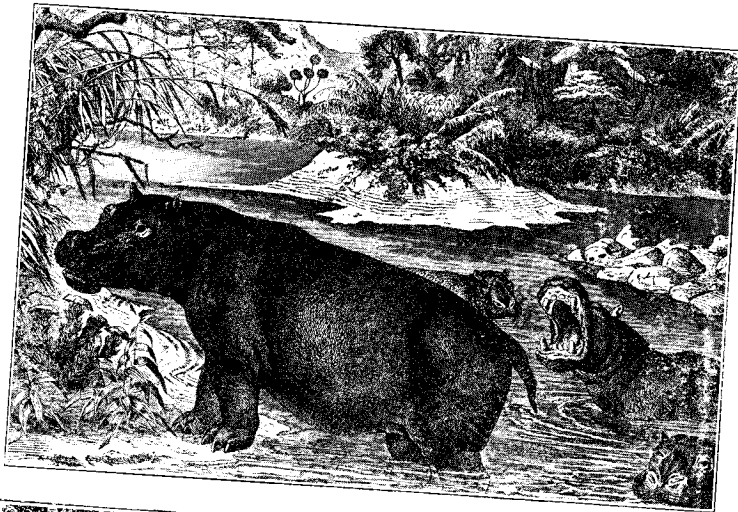
Verily, Nigeria has much moral "blackness," especially on account of its "religion" as the next chapter will show.



Pagan Woman of Nigeria and Child



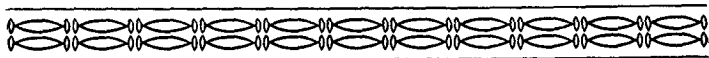
Wild Animal Life in Nigeria



Hippopotamus and Wild Cattle in Nigeria



Mohammedans holding a meeting



CHAPTER V.

PAGANISM, WITCHCRAFT AND MOHAMMEDANISM IN NIGERIA

*"They changed the glory of the
incorruptible God."*

THE purpose of true missionaries such as Miss Veenstra, is particularly to change the *religion* of the people among whom they labor, by having their hearts changed and lives redeemed by the indispensable blessing of the Lord upon their witnessing for Christ.

So, in order to understand the labors of Miss Veenstra, we should have an adequate conception of the "*religion*" of the people of Nigeria. We are much indebted for the contents of this chapter to J. Lowry Maxwell of the Sudan United Mission, who wrote a book on Nigeria, published by the World Dominion Press, so well known among our people.

In Nigeria, he tells us, 57% of the people are pagans; 39% Mohammedans and 4% christians. Especially in Northern Nigeria, Miss Veenstra's field, the bulk of the people are pagans.

Paganism in Nigeria.

What is the pagan "*religion*" of the territory? Its chief element, we are told, seems to be the acknowl-

edgement and worship of one supreme God, but also of a host of demons, or spirits, as they are usually called, and ancestor worship. The supreme God is usually connected with the sky, sometimes with the sun, as is the case, by the way, among the American Indians. In some tribes the earth-mother is recognized as the one who sends children into the world. But the object of the worship of the Nigerian pagans is especially concerned with a host of *demon beings*, who are identified with natural forces and objects, such as rain and thunder, wild beasts, trees, etc. It seems that, like the Chinese, the Nigerian pagans think that the spirits of the dead become demons. The Nigerians believe, like some of the Chinese, in the transmigration of souls, reincarnation, and oftentimes a likeness between a child and his grandfather is explained by the statement that the old man returned in the person of the child.

Much is made of *sacrifices*, in fact that is the essential part of their worship, whether ancestral spirits, demons or the supreme God are its objects. The sacrifices offered are such things as dogs, chickens, goats, or even leopards. Of these some are eaten, as a sort of a sacrament. Much sacrifice is made to the ancestral spirits. Such is called "feeding one's ancestors, giving them drink," things also reminding us of doings in the land of China.

Some of these ceremonies of worship are intricate and at times costly. In former days at least, *human*

sacrifices were offered in many places, as a propitiation to the offended deity, especially in times of epidemics and other great troubles. Frequently these human beings are literally sacrificed alive, that is, bound or buried, and left to die.

As may be inferred from what we already said, the spirit of the departed is worshipped by means of sacrifices, and sometimes consulted in prayer by the descendants. These spirits are thought capable of bestowing blessings upon their posterity, and at times of sowing and reaping *ancestral ceremonies* are held, while some tribes keep the seed in the "ancestral shrine." These shrines consist of a little raised earthen bed, moistened with votive offerings, upon which there are three little groups of earthen obelisks, about three or four inches high and called by the names of the family ancestors. Sometimes a wooden image is used, or an uncarved stick or stone, or even the skull of the departed person. We saw something of the same type among the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana.

Each family has a shrine of its own and that family shrine is jealously guarded. Like the Zuni Indians in the United States, the people in some parts of Nigeria are organized into *secret societies*, which at times engage in dances, when masked members impersonate the departed ones.

As the Nigerian finds himself surrounded on every side by the spirit world, the natural result is that of

witchcraft, which has been called one of the *terrors* of a native's life. Indeed witchcraft is a fearful diabolic force in Nigeria. Those who are accused of being witches are actually treated as murderers. Those suspected of witchcraft are oftentimes forced to undergo an ordeal as a test to show whether they are guilty or innocent of the charge lodged against them, viz. of being witches. We will hear more about that in succeeding chapters.

But what we already have mentioned and what will be related later on, is enough to show that Nigeria is in many ways *a land of spiritual blackness*, full of shadows of death, and manifesting the activities of the great Enemy of our souls.

Added to this terrible paganism and fearful witchcraft is that of *superstition*. In "Out of Africa," by Emory Ross, published by the Friendship Press of New York, we read, page 36, a sample of this. "Not a few African tribes," says Mr. Ross, "believe that in many circumstances dire results can come from the simple act of glancing backwards. A sick child is carried to a place of healing, placed with its back toward the spot where the curative influences are invoked. When they respond, the child is carried away, the utmost precautions being taken that it shall not look back lest it see the spirit dwelling in that spot. To make sure that this calamity does not happen, the child's eyes are sometimes plastered with grease. Where evil spirits are concerned the

most formal injunctions are laid upon possible victims not to look back lest the evil one overtake them. The primitive reasoning seems to be that if evil is *not seen*, it does not exist, or that unless a person actually sees it or turns his eyes in its direction, it cannot distinguish him and he is therefore safe by being invisible.

We stated at the beginning of this chapter that besides the 57% of the twenty millions of people in Nigeria, 39% are Mohammedans. Since Johanna of Nigeria also came in contact with these people we note the following from Maxwell's "Nigeria" already named:

"Nigerian Islam.

"Seven million Nigerians are followers of Islam.

"Islam was first introduced into Nigeria from the northward, and so naturally the bulk of the Moslems are in the Northern Provinces, especially the three great provinces that lie along the desert border. A secondary area runs southwest to the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, while others stretch down south and east along the trade roads to the old ivory and rubber lands in the Cameroons.

"Islam in Nigeria is of a formal, uninstructed type. There are learned scholars who perhaps understand the religion they profess, but one has a feeling that the Hausa are not really a religious people after the Moslem fashion. A great deal of laxity exists. The women never go about veiled. The prescribed hours

of prayer are often neglected, the omission being perhaps made up at some less exacting time. Demon dances are held. The writer has heard a chief talk of beer that had been brewed for a Moslem festival! A chief may carry out hereditary pagan rites as part of his duty to the community. The Koran is, as said before, used sometimes as a sort of fetish, and mysterious power is attributed to a writing board on which the name of God has been written. Medicine is made by writing some suitable passage of the Koran on a tablet, washing the ink off, and then drinking it. This is a regular practice, and is known as drinking writing. Malams (scholars) profess to be able to divine. Amulets to protect one from all sorts of evil influences abound, and the writing by the Malams of these 'layas,' as they are called, is quite an important means of earning a livelihood.

"A praying-place is sometimes merely a clean-swept place enclosed by a line of logs, or perhaps a fence of grass-matting. In larger communities it becomes a large hut, and in considerable towns quite an ambitious building may be seen. To these mosques women are forbidden entrance, but may worship outside.

"A Moslem congregation will have its leader, the Liman, chosen by the people, and sometimes with very slender qualifications. Friday is at least partially observed; it is associated with quite a display of decorated clothing, and sometimes a gala parade of

horsemen, who perhaps race one another after their fashion, displaying their horsemanship under the eye of their chief. Occasionally an itinerant 'preacher' gathers the people in the evening, not always to their edification. One meets occasionally a man who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which gives him a useful and exploitable odour of sanctity. The two festivals of Id al Fitr and the Id al Adha are kept, and the Fast of Ramadhan. Boys do not at first keep the whole fast, but gradually increase their days of abstinence until they can keep the whole month. If keeping the whole period is inconvenient, a part is sometimes postponed, and an equal number of days kept later.

"Schools are carried on by the Malams, and in some cases girls are taught. The teaching given is very primitive. It is always in Arabic, first the words, which are learnt off by rote, and then the meaning afterwards, if at all. The children work for their Malams, and on Fridays may be seen going about with calabashes or bowls, singing and begging, presumably on their teacher's behalf. They are taught morning and evening. During the day they may be found out on the farms gathering light fuel to make a big fire in the evening. Round this fire they sit, each with his wooden tablet, reciting aloud each his own bit of Arabic which he has to memorize, in total disregard of the noise made by the others. The blaze is all the light they need. It would not be true

to say that there is no educational value in a Malam's school, but there is a great deal of time and energy wasted. Most of the scholars never get much more than an acquaintance with Arabic script, and perhaps a smattering of the language as well. An older boy may even be heard to say, when shown some books in Arabic, 'I cannot read that, I have not been taught it.' Instruction is also given in Moslem ritual, the various responses, ablutions, and so on. At the end of the pupil's course the teacher will be given a present.

"Though there are but few really literate Moslems yet there is found among them a respect for learning, and occasionally a wonderful zeal in pursuing it. Time and comfort are of but little account to them, and interruptions do not seem to annoy them as they do us. The sight of the Arabic script produces a reverence even in those who cannot read it. When preaching, using an Arabic Testament, one has heard a listener say, 'We know, it is not thy word, it is God's.' And a very great impression may be produced when they find that a Christian teacher can read the holy Arabic; and when they hear him quote it, and translate his quotation after the fashion of their own Malams, their hearts are likely to be more easily reached.

"There are two orders of Islam in Nigeria, the Kadiriya and Tijaniya. There does not appear to be much distinction between them and other Moslems.

Occasionally a number of Moslems may be seen gathered in a praying-place, round a white cloth, seeking in mystic ceremonies for some more satisfaction than can be found in the dry husks of Islam. One hears of persons, too, who have secluded themselves, sometimes being walled into a room, so as to be alone with God, or to be free from interruption for a protracted period, while they give themselves to seeking from God some blessing which they desire.

“To the bulk of the Moslems the chief of Sokoto is the local head of the Faith. Nowadays, however, this has become a much less real headship than it was in the days of the old Fula empire.

“Nigerian Moslems do not seem to be keen proselytizers. There is a saying that every Moslem is a missionary of his faith, but that is only true in a limited sense. Now and again one hears of someone, perhaps a Malam, endeavoring to win over pagans to Islam, but such occurrences are isolated incidents. There is no doubt that Islam has made vast strides during the days of peace, since the British Government put an end to the petty despotism of the local chiefs, and the continuous fighting and raiding, which all combined to make intercourse between community and community difficult. But this progress is not due to the religion of Islam, but to the superior social prestige of the Moslems. As Mr. C. K. Meek, the Census Commissioner for Northern

Nigeria, says, 'The easy-going Hausa has done more to spread Islam than the fanatical Fula. Pagans and Moslems are coming into constant contact. The pagan who leaves his village finds it convenient to adopt the Moslem garb and mode of life.' Already he believes in a Supreme God. He can carry on to some extent his pagan practices, and yet be recognized as a Moslem, if only he go through their prayers, and repeat the prescribe formulæ. The distinction between pagan and Moslem is 'salla,' the prayers. Nigerian Islam is tolerant of other things if it gets that one accepted.

"Whatever else may be charged against it, Islam has certainly been a unifying force in Nigeria, and it is largely because of its unifying and cultural effect that British Administration is able to rely to such a large extent on the native governments for the carrying out of details in the management of the country's affairs. This is conclusively shown by the contrast, in this very respect, between the Northern Provinces, where Islam is the prevailing system, and those to the south, where paganism still is the dominant factor.

"On the whole the Moslem women are better off than the pagan. Among the latter the position of women is sometimes very deplorable, and in some of the pagan communities immorality parades itself under religious sanction. Both sections of the people are polygamists, but this is legally limited under

Islam, and a woman has some protection in the native courts. From the orthodox Islamic point of view she perhaps ought not to be as free as she is in actual fact, 'Nigerian women nowadays obtain divorce in the courts for insignificant reasons. Husbands have little control over their wives, and the frequency of infidelity and divorce is one of the most striking features of the social life of the people.' Nominally, the better class Moslem women are secluded, 'locked up' as the current term means. In reality, however, they can leave their husbands if they wish to, taking their goods and chattels with them. Moslem women are not supposed to work on the farms, but this is difficult sometimes to carry out, and it is common enough to see them hoeing or helping in some way.

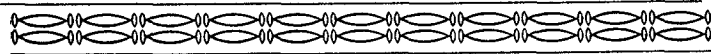
"But among the pagan tribes, a woman is much more of a chattel. In some tribes divorce is impossible. In others, even though the husband dies, the wife remains the property of his family, and becomes the wife of his younger brother, or even of one of her own step-sons. In other tribes a sort of sexual communism is practised, wives being loaned to friends. The women in most of the southern communities did, and still do, the bulk of the farming, and in addition keep the houses clean, gather firewood and prepare the food. This last is sometimes a laborious process, as there are many tribes whose staple dish is made from grain, which

has to be husked, cleaned and ground before it can be cooked, and all this is women's work. Some of the wives of an important man were frequently sacrificed at his death, and it was women who mainly suffered through the twin tabu. In addition, the masked demon-dancers were in many cases specially cruel to any women they might meet. Moslem women cannot be regarded as worse off than the pagan.

“From the missionary point of view, the primitive Moslem community, in less advanced districts, is more open to Christian propaganda than the pagan. This is clearly observable in actual work. The pagan community has defended itself against Islam, and has maintained its own system and ceremonies. It is liable to be distinctly dour, and to give a rather unfavorable reception to the preacher of Christ. The crudely Moslem type of community, however, welcomes a preacher who comes in the name of God, and can be very quickly won to give friendly attention to the Gospel message. Professedly, it reverences a Malam. There is a great and profitable field of effort for the Christian scholar among these friendly, simple-minded Moslems.”

What we have related is enough to show that Miss Veenstra undertook a tremendous task by consecrating herself to the service of the gospel in Nigeria. At the time she made the great surrender she was realizing evidently but little what a task was awaiting her, a task full of trials and temptations. But

many a time it was a comfort to her to realize that she was just obeying the great missionary command of her Redeemer, and that He, according to the promise, was standing back of her so that through Him she might be more than a conqueror.



CHAPTER VI

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NIGERIA

*"The Lord is with thee, whithersoever
thou goest."*

AT the close of Chapter III we left Miss Veenstra at Lagos, on Sunday, January 18, 1920. Lagos now is a town of over 100,000 inhabitants. In former days it was, as Maxwell relates, "a great center for the slave trade, and at length by 1850 it had the reputation of being the greatest slave depot on the coast. At that time it was ruled by a usurper named Kosoko, the rightful chief being Akitoye. In 1851 a British force captured Lagos, drove out Kosoko and put back in the chieftainship the exiled Akitoye. The latter signed a treaty with England agreeing to abolish the export of slaves, and to encourage the work of missionaries (who had already been on the coast for some time). But upon the death of Akitoye his son proved unable to check the traffic. Accordingly, in 1861, the territory which afterwards became the Colony of Lagos was ceded to the British Government, and two years later letters patent created the Settlement of Lagos, and started modern Nigeria on its way.

“From the date of the capture of Lagos, and consequent blocking of the trade in slaves, the great palm-oil trade began to grow.”

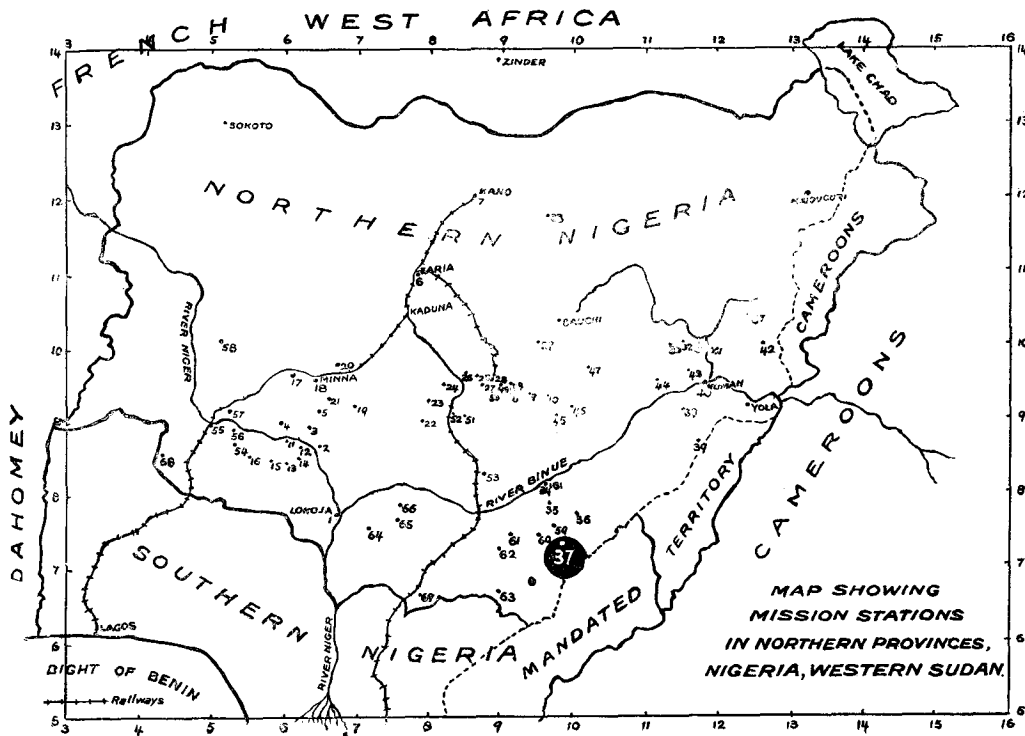
What were her first impressions of the land which the Lord had showed her?

As she wrote at the time, it was first of all the *need* of mission work. When she had stepped off the boat sitting down while her luggage was unloaded she heard a black man take the name of the Lord in vain. She found he could not understand English, but the influence of some of the white people was very bad and the natives are heard to curse and blaspheme in our tongue. “What does it mean,” she writes; “just this — that Satan is working very hard — that the heart of man everywhere is desperately wicked and the evil takes root and springs up very quickly. The soldiers of the cross are still so few here, compared to the numbers of men who do not follow Christ. Truly, the night is dark in Africa.”

Surely, she needed right away the words of encouragement spoken to Joshua, embodied in her life motto: “Be strong and be of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

After leaving the steamer *Miss Veenstra* had a thirty-hour train ride and then had to stop over for another train. It was Tuesday afternoon when she arrived at a place called Minna, and there the Saturday before, the Sudan Interior Mission had laid to

MISSION STATIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA.



Church Missionary Society.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1 Lokoja. | 6 Zaria. |
| 2 Katcha. | 7 Kano. |
| 3 Bida. | 8 Panyam. |
| 4 Kutigi. | 9 Kabwir. |
| 5 Katsaregi. | 10 Per. |

Sudan Interior Mission.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 7 Kano. | 23 Kwoi. |
| 11 Patigi. | 24 Kurmin |
| 12 Kpada. | Musa. |
| 13 Esbe. | 25 Miango. |
| 14 Isanlu. | 26 Darna |
| 15 Oro. | Kasuja. |
| 16 Agujin. | 27 Zagun. |
| 17 Wushishi. | 28 Jos. |
| 18 Minna | 29 Bununu. |
| 19 Gaeji. | 30 Kaitungo. |
| 20 Kuta. | 31 Gelengu. |
| 21 Paiko. | 32 Tula Wange. |
| 22 Karu. | 33 Katange. |

Sudan United Mission.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 34 Ibi. | 44 Bambur. |
| 35 Wukari. | 45 Langtang |
| 36 Donga. | 46 Tutung. |
| 37 Lupwe. | 47 Badung. |
| 38 Kona. | 48 Porum. |
| 39 Gandoile. | 49 Du. |
| 40 Numan. | 50 Voin. |
| 41 Shilem. | 51 Randa. |
| 42 Pella. | 52 Lezin Lafiya |
| 43 Lamurde. | 53 Keana. |

United Missionary Society.

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 54 Share. | 56 Shonga. |
| 55 Jebba. | 57 Mokwa. |
| | 58 Saika. |

Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 59 Salatu. | 61 Sevav. |
| 60 Zaki-Biam. | 62 Mkar. |
| | 63 Adikpo. |

Brethren.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 64 Aiyangba. | 65 Alkbacha. |
| | 66 Abajikolo. |

Church of the Brethren.

- | |
|-------------|
| 67 Garkida. |
|-------------|

Seventh Day Adventists.

- | |
|------------|
| 68 Ilorin. |
|------------|

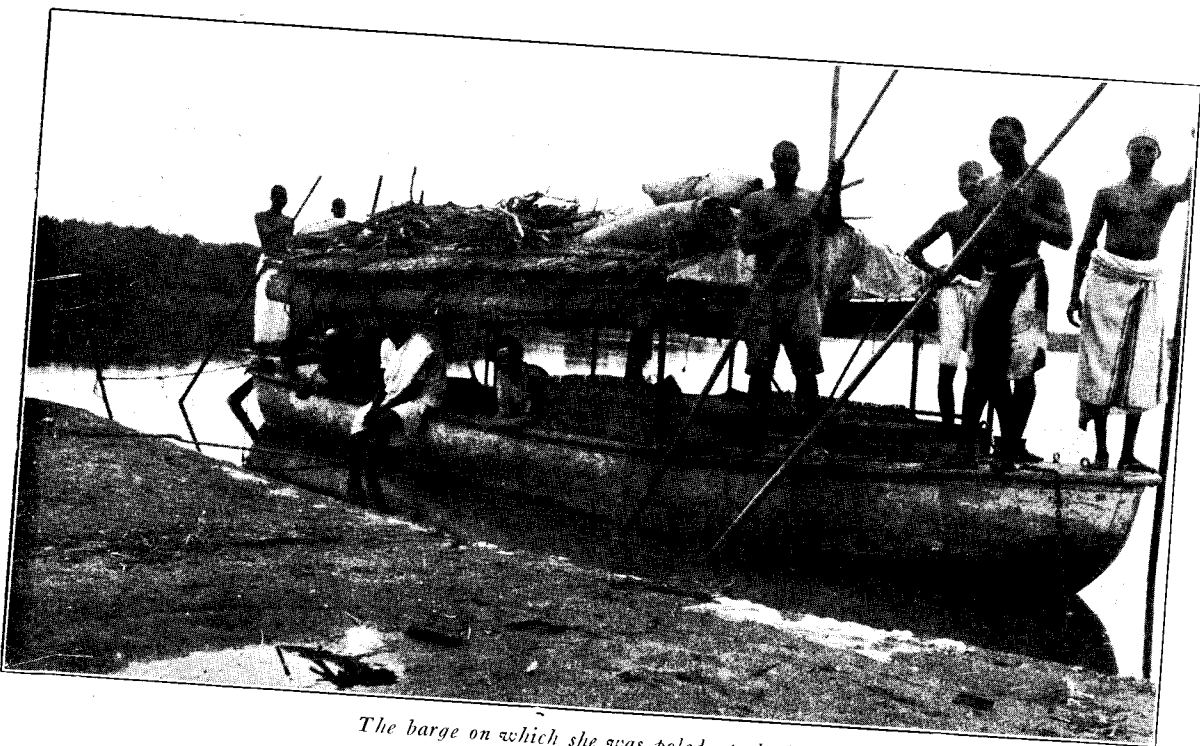
Primitive Methodist Church.

- | |
|-------------|
| 69 Ogumali. |
|-------------|



Children of Nigeria

[73]



The barge on which she was poled up the Benue



A Native of Nigeria

rest the body of a young lady missionary. It was her first term of service. She had been bitten by a very small snake and died in three days, before medical aid could be administered. The Sudan United Mission also lost a young lady worker in January. She died from double malaria, during her first term of service and just when a definite spiritual awakening had started among the natives. And so our young missionary was reminded at the very outset that the way of the Lord are sometimes very mysterious. Even shortly after her arrival, while ready to have prayers one evening, the missionaries killed a scorpion, and at the station where she was placed later, four snakes had been killed recently in the missionary compound. What need indeed of Joshua's encouraging text.

At Baro, where the railway ended at that time, Miss Veenstra had to wait five days for the arrival of a small steamer to take her to Lokoja. That meant sailing for the first time on the broad Niger River. Her destination was Ibi, 300 miles from Lokoja. She still had to continue a river journey up the Benue river which, as we related, joins the Niger at that place. But she was told, as far as the friends at Lokoja knew, there were no other missionaries coming soon, and due to the extreme heat at that place it was deemed unwise for her to remain there any longer than necessary. "Would you be afraid to make the journey alone?" she was asked.

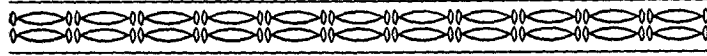
“How many days would it take me?” she inquired. “All of two weeks,” was the reply. “Do you think it would be all right for me to go on alone?” And her friends answered that as far as they knew no white woman had ever taken that journey alone. Now, as we just stated, it was about the distance of 300 miles from Lokoja (see chapter IV), to Ibi—a long trip in those days. But Johanna made up her mind to proceed, and at once began to hire a river barge, that is, a flat-bottomed steel boat, shown in one of our pictures. It was divided into four sections, having a small room over the two center sections, a place without cabin and dressing-room. And now the heroine spirit, so often admired in her later on, awoke. A crew was found to man that barge. It was composed of a head man and his wife, with twelve other men, who were to pull the boat up the river, and a young man to act as cook. Think of a lone white woman to be in the company of these black people, whose language was not understood. But after some supplies had been bought, by late afternoon Miss Veenstra was ready to go. The polers pushed hard and soon the little boat was started on its long journey up the Benue River. At sundown she became alarmed because the members of the crew began to argue among themselves. She did not understand a word of what they were talking about, but later on she learned that some wanted to stop and anchor for the night at a certain nearby sand-

bank, while others wanted to push on some more before they stopped. Johanna saw one of the black men pull a native knife from his leather girdle. It was a long pointed knife, over an inch wide, and for once she became afraid. "Would they dare to kill me?" she asked herself, "throw my body into the river, and steal my baggage?" Anyone who has traveled alone in a foreign land will understand something of the fear that arose in her heart. But it proved to be needless.

At last the boat was stopped — the men jumped from the barge to the sandbank, fastened the boat, unrolled their sleeping mats, made a little fire and sat around to do some talking and still more reading. Miss Veenstra stayed in the barge and managed to get her camp-bed put up, but for a long while she tossed and tossed, still thinking of that ugly knife. The Lord, however, kept her, and early the next morning they pushed off again. And so it went day after day, until the sixth day, when another trial awaited her.

Six days after leaving Lokoja Miss Veenstra was not able to rise in the morning. She felt dizzy and faint. Perhaps she thought of the Canadian and Danish workers who had laid down their lives so unexpectedly for Africa. But toward noon of the sixth day she felt some better. They stopped over night at a large town in which a white man had charge of a trading center. He told her that her

dizziness was due to the reflection of the sun on the water and that she should be very careful to wear her helmet, as it was a very bad thing to get an attack of sun in Africa. Finally, on the fifteenth day, Johanna arrived at Ibi, her destination, Ibi, a station of the Sudan United Mission, in the province of Muri, see chapter IV. It is described somewhat in chapter VIII.



CHAPTER VII

THE SUDAN UNITED MISSION; ITS CREED. "STATIONS" DEFINED. SOUTH AFRICANDERS IN NIGERIA.

"We are laborers together with God."

THE "World Missionary Atlas" informs us that missionary work at Ibi, Miss Veenstra's first place of labor, was begun in 1907. It was the Sudan United Mission which had opened the station. Since Miss Veenstra all the years of her missionary labors was connected with that organization, it seems fitting that we tell something about it, at this place.

This interdenominational missionary society was organized in the year 1904 when what was called the Sudan attracted the attention of the christian world, especially of the British people. Many pagan tribes of that immense territory were reported to be in danger of being won over to Mohammedanism. Christians in England, upon whose hearts the burden of this field had been laid, sought to arouse the churches to undertake mission work in the Sudan. June 15, 1904, the "Sudan United Mission" came into being, with the one purpose of providing this needy field with christian workers. It was started as what is called a "faith mission," viz., supported by vol-

untary offerings of a willing people. Being interdenominational, its creed was very simple, it being that of the well-known Evangelical Alliance. We are told: "It believes in the integrity and authority of the Holy Scriptures, in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming; in the Personality of the Holy Spirit, in the total depravity of men, and in God's provision for their regeneration and cleansing through the atoning work of the Cross."

Under its auspices, July 23, 1904, the first party of missionaries, three in number, sailed for Nigeria. After having located the first station in the province of Muri, on the Benue river, some 200 miles eastward from its confluence with the Niger, Dr. H. K. W. Kumm, already named in chapter II, who had accompanied the party, after his return to the homeland, stirred the British Isles with his appeal. In 1906 a branch of the Mission was formed in the United States, and four workers were sent to the field. In 1907 South Africa joined in the effort. In 1911 Australia and New Zealand took up the work. In 1912 a Danish Branch was formed. In 1922 a branch was established in Norway, under the Norwegian Missionary Society; and in 1924 a Canadian Branch. The various branches of the mission are autonomous — appointing, supporting, and controlling their own missionaries, and occupying separate spheres of operation on the field; unity of

action being secured by a common Field Council. In 1935 it was reported that the work carried on by these various organizations, in so far as Nigeria is concerned, included gospel work at 28 stations, besides 31 out-stations, and 22 preaching centers. Since in this book such terms are mentioned time and again, it seems proper that we here give their definitions.

In the Sudan work a "*main station*" is a station intended to be staffed by Europeans, for which the Mission holds a Certificate of Occupancy.

An Out-Station is a station intended to be staffed by Africans, for which the Mission holds a Certificate of Occupancy, or at which there is a school registered under the Education Ordinance.

A Preaching-Center is a site for which the Mission holds no Certificate of Occupancy, where regular Christian instruction is given, usually by voluntary African workers, directed by a European.

The missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa who, as just stated, joined the work in 1907, are commonly known as "Boers." Living in adjoining provinces and understanding the Dutch language, as Miss Veenstra did, and moreover being of the same Reformed creed, there were many seasons of sweet christian fellowshiping of the workers, so close akin as to ancestral national origin. On such occasions Johanna took special delight in singing the beautiful Dutch Psalter version together. At

our request she wrote us in 1932 that several years ago some of the Boer leaders, already busy in Nyasaland and other districts in South Africa, saw the great need of the Sudan. We read:

“Two of their men came out and worked with our Sudan United Mission, and later on our Mission turned over to their church, i.e., the Reformed Church of South Africa, the Munchi tribe, one of the largest tribes in Nigeria, numbering about half a million people.

“The Munchi tribe has this great advantage that it has not accepted Mohammedanism. I have never seen a Munchi bow down to the earth and perform the Mohammedan oblations. Nor have I ever heard of a single Munchi turning from the way of their fathers to the still darker way of the False Prophet. They are a most conservative people as regards their religion. They are a splendid strong tribe with some outstanding qualities, and the Government is paying much attention to the development of this Munchi people. But just as resolutely as they refuse to “put on” Mohammedanism, so almost afraid are they to “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ. So far very few of them have turned unto the Lord. But our missionary friends there are not discouraged. They are sowing the seed beside all waters, and believing that a sure harvest will come in God’s good time.

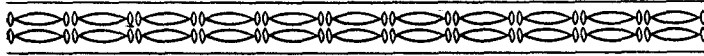
“Another great advantage that falls to the lot of our Reformed missionary friends among the Munchi

is that they all work in the same language. This enables them to help one another in their language findings and especially in translation work. They are very busy translating primers and readers for their school work, and have also a few books of the Bible in print, plus manuscripts of others ready to go home for printing after the final revision."

At Mkar, we learn from W. B. Redmayne's "*Across Africa in a Lorry*," the Boers now have a fine set of mission buildings—a church, school with separate classrooms, a hospital, a dispensary, and, nearby, a leper colony.

Makurdi is another one of their stations. There a fine bridge, about half a mile long, now spans the river Benue. The railway from the coast now passes over it. Now many of the people of the Munchi tribe are Christians. Makurdi as we already mentioned elsewhere is a railroad town.

The annual report for 1935 names 7 stations as occupied by our Boer friends. It also mentions the publication of the New Testament in Tiv, (Munchi).



CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNING OF HER TASK IN NIGERIA

"In journeyings often, in perils."

AFTER the interlude of the preceding chapter we must return to Ibi where she arrived after a river journey of 300 miles, requiring a fifteen days' trip. At Ibi the field secretary of the Sudan United Mission met her and told her that she was to go to Takum where a new station was to be opened. Among people known to have been cannibals. Not a very pleasing prospect for a new comer. But Miss Veenstra was not dismayed or alarmed.

Since Ibi is mentioned several times in this book, and that our readers may visualize the place better, we insert here a description of the place as given by Eva Stuart Watt in her *"Thirsting for God"*:

"That was Ibi. I remember so well the afternoon I walked up its long main street to the mission station. It was about the hottest time of day. Under an awning of palm-ribs we had sheltered our narrow, native dug-out, while we crossed the river Benue. Scarcely a movement ruffled the dull grey-green surface of its oily waters. Not a sound disturbed the midday quiet till we had landed on its sandy banks beside the rice fields, and turned the corner into the

center of its commercial life. Here, in a dazzling glare of tropical sunshine, was a cosmopolitan crowd of Moslems, mainly Jukun and Hausa, but representing probably dozens of tribes along the river-banks nearer the coast and up into the interior. A typical Hausa settlement with round and square mud dwellings, enclosed in fences of plaited matting. The long, white robe and turban were very much in evidence, and gaily dressed women with scarlet finger and toe nails; all outwardly gracious and excessively polite, but withal cold and insincere at heart, for Islam makes them so. There they sat, both men and women, thickly lining the street for a quarter of a mile, under any bit of scanty shade that an odd tree or overhanging eave might offer, selling their miscellaneous wares; rice and millet, bananas and mangoes, peppers and curries, yams and sweet potatoes. Some women cooked fish and fried vegetables on the open street in tiny pans for hungry pedestrians, while others lolled on their shady verandahs spinning thread from the raw cotton.

“Above the fish market, in a commanding position and enclosed in high brick walls, is the old British Government residence in good condition, but now the habitation of owls and bats. Opposite to it are the former military barracks, now guarded by hundreds of bare-necked vultures which roost in the palm trees at night. In between these and the mission station in the open bush are a number of graves.

Some of our missionaries — Mrs. Hosking and Mrs. Bierenga — have been laid to rest here, a few of our soldier lads and one or two of our native converts, until the resurrection morning.”

“Wukari, Donga and Takum have been our three centers in the Jukun tribe. No one will ever know the prayers that have gone up from here to the throne to wrestle for the souls made captive by pagan witchcraft and Satanic Islam. Alas! Alas! that the Mohammedans got here first, for believe me, reader, it is a thousand times easier to win to the Saviour a raw savage, than a religious Moslem — just as the publicans and sinners welcomed Him on earth, while the religious pharisees said, ‘He is mad and hath a devil, why hear ye Him?’

“When we occupied Wukari, the British Government by force of arms had already stopped the Islamic traffic in the bodies of men and women. Indeed, there beside the town was the site of the ‘Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves’ Home,’ (removed from Umaisha), where our missionaries had cared for boys and girls, loosed from their forked sticks and iron chains. Miss Haigh, who is still in harness, could tell us harrassing stories as she heard them from those little lips.”

But let us return to Miss Veenstra’s story.

Already the next day she went to Wukari, a distance of 25 miles. A bicycle was placed at her disposal, and accompanied by a gentleman of the

mission, the two went off at dawn the following morning. They pushed and pushed, and found it very hard work, unaccustomed as she was to riding on a bicycle, something she had not done since the days of girlhood. The work was the harder, because as the day wore away the sun grew hot. The trip was up hill, down hill, and every hill she came to she would get off and walk. But at last toward noon, she came to Wukari, and she certainly was a thirsty missionary. She drank not less than seven cups of hot tea. After another week she was to go on to Donga, another twenty-five miles, where she would be stationed for some months for language study, etc. Donga was 25 miles southeast of Wukari and here she stayed for seven months and then she returned again to the last named place. If her first bicycle trip from Ibi to Wukari was hard as we just related, she wrote later on that she would never forget her second trip in Africa. She refers undoubtedly to her going from Wukari to Donga. As we stated — a ride of 25 miles.

The missionary and her companion started very early in the morning and at first Miss Veenstra was very nervous. Her companion was a doctor and he said she was to ride first so as to set the pace, and also that in case she should fall he would be near. We read: "It was still dusk, and I prayed constantly to be able to see the path. After we got out five miles the sun began to rise and one had no difficulty in

seeing the way. But now the path became more rugged and in places very narrow, with a kind of ditch on every side, and I found myself sighing — ‘Oh Lord help me to keep on the path.’ About ten o’clock we saw in the bush a herd of very large deer with great long horns — such beautiful creatures. The doctor having a rifle with him suggested we stop and he would try to shoot one. Leaving our wheels at a tree we began to step softly into the bush so as to get nearer the deer. He fired a few shots and struck one of them, but it was not a fatal shot and hence he felt duty bound to trace the blood of the deer and try to shoot at him again. It would be unkind to leave a wounded animal to suffer. Well, this hunting expedition took over an hour of time. Meanwhile the sun grew hotter and we still had several miles to push the pedals. Just coming from a cold climate I felt the heat very much and not being used to the wheel as yet my whole body seemed weak and sore. It was after lunch when we came to our destination and I threw myself down to rest, wondering how many more days like this I might have in Africa.”

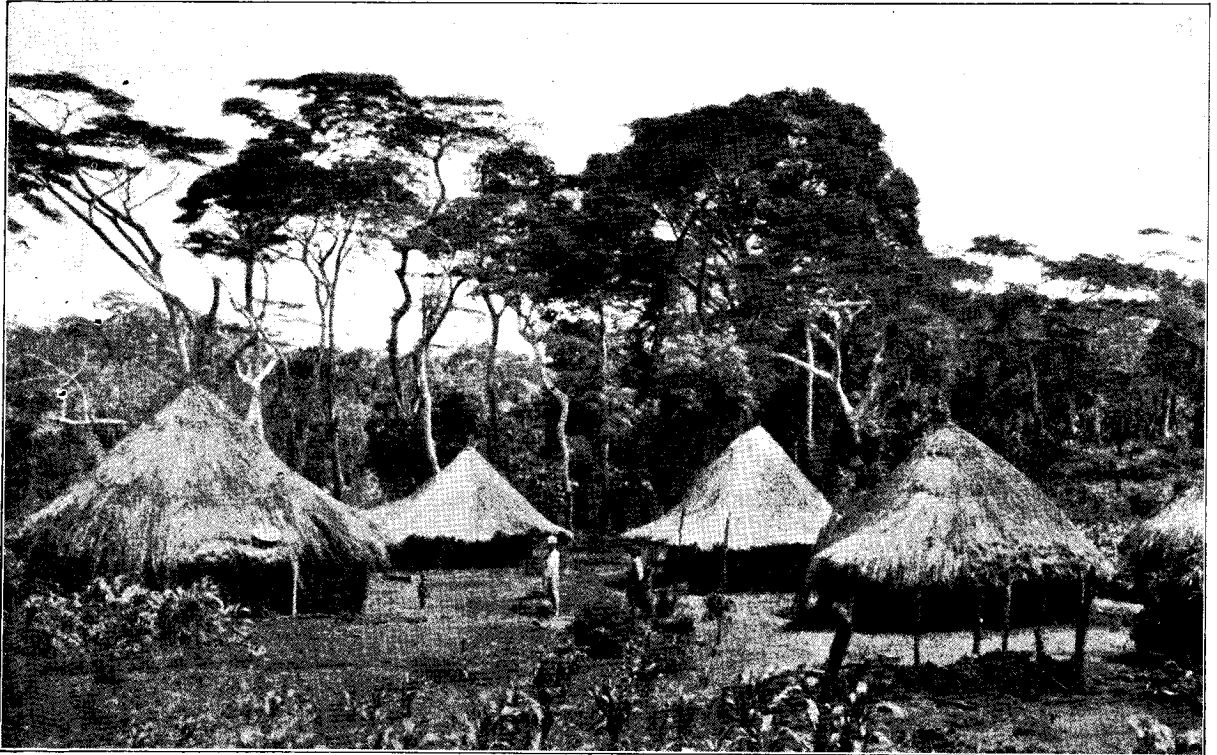
During the early months of her sojourn in Africa, Miss Veenstra busied herself with learning the Hausa language which, as stated in chapter IV, is the trade language of Northern Nigeria. The entire New Testament and some books of the Old have been translated into it. By the end of the first year she

had a working knowledge of this language and was able to begin a little direct missionary work.

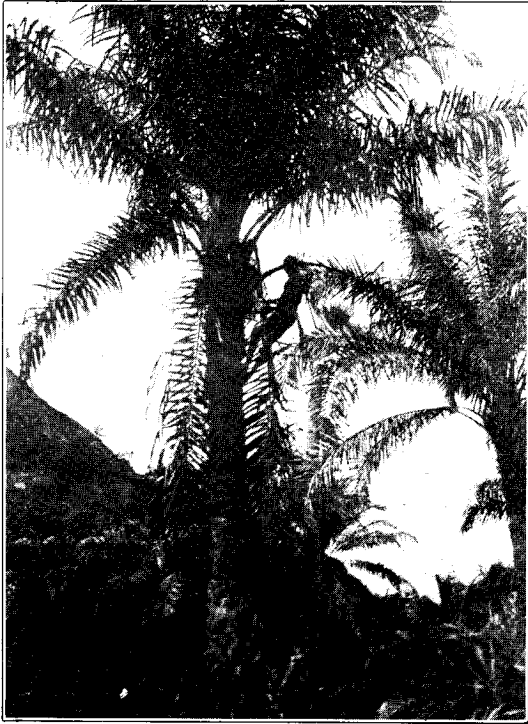
It brought her busy days, from the very start. There were so many duties awaiting her that, as she wrote us at the time, it occasionally interfered with her morning devotions. "Oh, how often," she stated, "must I rebuke myself for being so foolish as to neglect to take time enough for fellowshipping with my Lord. For, in the secret of His presence my soul delights to dwell."

During April, 1920, she wrote us: "We cannot as yet have a definite routine and work accordingly. Some days are more strenuous than others. But let me take you through one strenuous day this week.

"The dry season is ended and the rains have begun. On this day there had been a rain which drove from the grass roof all the insects that had lived in it for months. Most of these insects were large white ants (I am told), each having four wings, and at this season they shed their wings. The wings alone range from one-half to an inch long. Light draws them like a magnet. When having my evening meal, here were those creatures, in swarms, sticking fast to the spoon in hand, dropping in the food — and I concluded a plague was upon us. There was no 'shutting' them out because in these native huts we have no ceiling. The next morning the floor and table were covered with wings, and outside, where a lantern had stood on a table, we swept the wings off



Village in Nigeria



Landscape in Nigeria



Baboons in Nigeria



Burden bearers



Mohammedan at Prayer



Mr. Gilbert Dawson, Gen. Sec'y S. U. M.



Men winnowing grain

with a broom. That same evening the missionary here (for we are three at the station — a married couple and myself), went into the village to hold a meeting and returned with a snake over a yard long. Having a lantern, the missionary saw it in the path and gave it a 'death blow.' But it still had life. We called a native, and he said it was a very deadly one, and he was quite frightened.

"We had our evening worship, and I went to my hut and retired, only to be awakened by a rat gnawing at a door three feet away from my head! And it was not the first time this creature had announced its presence. The next morning there came in to be treated a woman with a large sore on her hand. She brought her little boy, whose tiny body is breaking out in several places in large offensive sores, showing the child to be full of disease. The percentage of venereal diseases in this particular village is about 100 per cent, and there were patients of whom, for your sake, I will not go into detail.

"We have a small dispensary at this station, of which I have been given charge, as there is no doctor at present within 50 miles reach. We soon hope to have a doctor again at a station 25 miles from here. Can you imagine what such days mean for the nervous system? Surrounded by insects of many descriptions, the necessity of always looking out for snakes, the eyes beholding all day long a deep misery? *It is night here.* All around are the works

of darkness, idolatry, superstition, witchcraft, leprosy, and other incurable diseases. We look out upon these crowds of heathen, and see them bound in the coils of Satan — and they have been bound for centuries! We look in and we see Christ, and oh, what a privilege, by grace to be able to say, ‘I love the Lord!’ With all our soul we pray: ‘Father, may the day soon dawn when they shall exclaim, ‘I love the Lord!’”

That her days were so busy in the Sudan was in part due to the great interest she took in the babies of Nigeria. On account of the deplorable conditions in which she found them, her heart went out to these little bits of humanity. In 1920 she wrote us: “Very many babies in Africa die in infancy, before they are 5 years old. The fact that many are born with disease accounts for a large percentage of the mortality. The treatments given by the witch-doctor also rushes many into death. The late chief of this town, who, when he died, left nearly one hundred wives, left only about ninety children. No doubt there were more dead than living children.

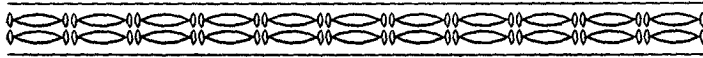
“But, coming through this country for the first time, our heart was touched to see the suffering of the children. Here was a mother with a babe fastened to her back at mid-day, when the sun was scorching hot, and the little head exposed to this heat. Here was another woman with a child tied to her back, chopping wood. With every throw of the

axe the baby got a jerk, and the head was bounded upon the mother's spine. A common sight is a child of 4 or 5 years carrying a young child on its back.

"You come closer to the child and on its face are deep grooves — tribal marks — on the cheeks, or forehead, or nose, and in several places. I was told by a white man who had spent years in Africa that these marks are cut into the flesh with a knife, first when the child is about six months, again when it is about eighteen months, and a last time when it is about six years old.

"I see other children, less than a year, with their body all tattooed. The whole abdomen carefully embroidered with a beautiful design that will never wear or wash off.

"Ah, friends, think of the tears shed by this cruelty. Think of all the heathen, and if you can, hear the wail that day and night goes up from these little lives! Do you think our Lord Jesus is mindful of these cries? Do you think He still means for us to 'suffer the little children to come unto Him?' You who are parents, O pray for these children. You young people, in the face of this intense heathendom, I cannot help but urge you to ask, 'Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?'"



CHAPTER IX

AMONG THE CANNIBAL DZOMPERE: LUPWE

*"The dark places of the earth are full of
the habitations of cruelty."*

WHAT we related in previous chapters covers the first year of Miss Veenstra's work in Nigeria. At its end it was decided that Johanna was to accompany the Rev. C. L. Whitman, who had already spent some years in the Sudan, in order that they together might open another new station, also in the Takum district, in its southern part — in what we called the shank of the ham-like province of the Province of Muri. That new station was called LUPWE, a name that will figure time and again in this book.

She arrived at the place on the first day of February, 1921. February in Nigeria is as a rule the hottest month of the year and that at that time she had to cover thirty miles on a bicycle must have been quite a task. It brought her considerable sunburn — a far from pleasant experience. A number of native carriers had brought her belongings to her new station. Each one had to carry some sixty pounds, a distance of 55 miles, and it was a great relief to Miss Veenstra to see the last load brought to her new home.

And it surely was a "humble" one. Lupwe was a new station with only a few huts, most of them unfinished. Dishes were put on the dirt floor for yet there were no beaten floors in the huts, and of course there was no such luxury as a cupboard. A rope was tied from one end of that to the other in order that she might hang up some of her extra clothes. But all of this did not in the least seem like an inconvenience. To her it was to be her "home" and for a whole year she had been looking forward to arriving at that place. There was no village or town at this place because for various reasons the British government had made a law that the white people were to live a certain number of yards away from the native village.

Why, we ask, was Lupwe chosen and not Takum, the largest town in the district with a population of 3,000, and the home of the biggest "chief" in the region? Miss Veenstra gave as the main reason that it is best for a boarding school such as she planned, see Chapter XI, to have the children of such an institution free from the influences of a town like Takum. Another reason was the problem of drinking water. We read:

"There are not many streams in Takum. One would have to experiment with digging wells, as toward the end of the dry season the water gets very low and naturally then it is also very dirty. When one stops to think of all the native feet stepping into

a little standing pool of water every day of the week, of dogs—stepping in to quench their thirst, it is not a pleasure for the missionary to drink that very water, even though it has been properly boiled.

“With the little experience we have up to now, we believe this station was built in just the right place when one stops to consider the district.”

There was one thing near the Lupwe station that was a source of great comfort to Miss Veenstra. It was a natural spring. Large tins were used to carry the water to the compound. And in order to have that water used for drinking purposes, it was boiled and filtered.

Lupwe is beautifully situated in the midst of many hills, the foothills of the Cameroon Mountain Range. When Miss Veenstra first came to that place, many of the people lived on top of these mountains. In this way they felt protected against enemies. This protection enabled them to survive many years of bitter tribal wars, wars in which thousands oftentimes were killed. But there were enemies that were worse than inimical tribes. Smallpox, influenza and other epidemics at times suddenly and heavily decreased the population of the district. One might well imagine, she writes, that the death rate of such a people would be high, there being no doctor or hospital, and no knowledge of the laws of sanitation and isolation. And it was not to be wondered at that half of the children born among these people died

before the age of five years. The name of the tribe in the Takum district is Dzompere. Not a very encouraging name to be sure if one understands that "pere" means a man, and "dzom" means "to eat." Consequently the name signifies "to eat a man." In other words these people were cannibals. On account of that the government had been very slow to grant permission to missionaries to be stationed among them. But after much prayer from the side of these Christian workers permission was granted and they went out to declare to these people, who so long walked in midnight darkness, the gospel of our Lord and that He is the Light of the world.

The Dzompere Miss Veenstra describes as being a very primitive people. Naturally they, never having seen white folks, were afraid of her and her fellow worker at first. The people of the Takum district wear very little or no clothing. The women generally wear great bunches of leaves tied to a string of beads about the waist line. The men wear a loin cloth or skin of some animal they killed in the bush. The children go about without any clothes until they reach the age of ten or twelve years. The homes they live in are small round clay huts with thatched roofs. One man may have a whole cluster of these tiny huts. Having several wives, each of these requires a hut for herself and her own children. Moreover these places are used as the homes of chickens, goats, sheep and of course for serving as a

storehouse for food. The Dzomperes are a farming people, all their farming being done by hand with small native implements. They raise corn, guinea corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts, pumpkins, beans and a few native vegetables. There are many oil palm trees in the district and this oil is used very freely in their food preparations.

The Dzomperes love to hunt, with large nets and spears and bows and arrows. Leopards are frequently caught in traps. Their meat is eaten eagerly. Any kind of meat seems to be acceptable to the natives. Miss Veenstra writes that rats and ants are roasted and eaten. Lizzards, large non-poisonous snakes, monkeys, dogs, lions, yea, buffaloes and hippopotami are not despised, but considered a rare treat. Would they also be hungry for the bread of life? Not right away. These people were living in great spiritual darkness.

The Word had not been sown yet among them, and sowing precedes reaping. Often the churches at home are unreasonable in looking for a report of "conversions" within a short time after gospel work has been started. And that work in Nigeria was to meet *many* obstacles, especially because of its prevalent idolatry, witchcraft, superstition, and fear that the giving up of the old "religion" would bring dire punishment. And there certainly was much of that idolatry of ancient animism.

At one time Miss Veenstra walked over to a high rocky place where stood a very large tree. To the natives the ground on which she stood was a sacred spot, because the big tree was a "spirit tree." And upon the rocks below it human lives had been sacrificed. As a sample of what that meant she tells of an incident which happened there. A terrible calamity had overtaken the people living on the hill where she stood. The question arose: "who is to blame for this evil?" The witchdoctor accused two women. They were brought to this place of sacrifice. A group of men formed a circle around them. The women were commanded to dance. As they danced, hot irons or hot spears touched their naked bodies to brand them. Exhausted by pain and terror as well as by dancing, the poor women at last fell to the ground. That was a "proof" of their guilt. They were now tied to a palmtree and — speared to death! But even this was not enough punishment. Lest the evil spirit in them should escape, or be transferred to a leopard, should such a beast at night come and devour the corpse, the bodies were burned to ashes. Women were the usual victims. But occasionally *men* were condemned for witchcraft. But they were first made drunk with beer, to deaden the pain, "But a woman must endure the full measure of pain," so Miss Veenstra was told. Such is heathenism, readers.

And, not alone the women of the *poorer* class were maltreated. Miss Veenstra tells the story of one of

the wives of the "big chief" living at Takum, 4 miles from Lupwe. Of his many wives one was a Christian, before long there was at Lupwe a little flock of believers gathered around the Great Shepherd who always honors his Word if presented plainly and lovingly as Miss Veenstra did. These people were not yet baptized at the time. They were to be tested as to sincerity. And, more than once they *stood* the test. Let us show this by an example. At one time the Christian wife of the chief just named, came to Miss Veenstra after a Sunday morning service, looking sad and being very nervous. She had been accused of causing the sickness that had afflicted the chief for the space of two months. Being a confessing Christian she refused the test usually applied to bring out the "guilt" of a suspected person. This refusal was taken as a proof that she had given the sickness to her husband. This thoroughly frightened the poor woman. She had finally given in and taken the test. The chief did not get better. A second test was demanded. And again she went through the heathen ceremony. Against her conscience.

Having passed through this all, she came to Miss Veenstra on the Sunday alluded to. "I have committed a great sin," she said — meaning by going through these heathen tests. "My heart has lost all peace. Through fear I denied Jesus, and now He is angry with me. I want to confess my sin publicly. Maybe the Lord will forgive and accept me, and give

me peace once again." Big tears fell from her cheeks on the grass mat on which the poor woman sat. Miss Veenstra spoke softly to her of the One who is ready to forgive if we confess our transgression to Him. Then she kissed the poor woman, who during that same Sunday afternoon came to the front in the little mission chapel and pleaded with the other Christians and the missionaries to pray for her. Yes — some of the Dzomperes began to show hunger. Hunger after righteousness, such as Christ named in one of his beatitudes. And, readers: *notice that kiss* given to the broken hearted woman. Some time ago I read of a woman going to a city missionary and saying she wanted to be of service in God's kingdom. "I am willing to do anything in my power," she said, "but I can't *talk* to the people." But she could and did sit down with the hardened and desperate and won them through the sympathizing *tears*. Miss Veenstra was that kind of a missionary. And an eloquent speaker besides. Small wonder God blessed her labors of love to win the "man-eaters." More of that in our next chapter.



CHAPTER X

FIRST FRUITS AMONG THE DZOMPERES AND OTHER TRIBES. THE FIRST ELDERS

"One soweth and another reapeth."

WHO was the first convert of the Dzompere tribe with its terrible darkness, to come to the light, of Him who is called "the Light of the world"? It was a young man with a remarkable story, showing how God works in a sovereign way His wonders to perform, and that the saying is as true today as it was in the days when our Lord uttered what is quoted above. Here is the story.

Some years before Miss Veenstra came to Lupwe, on one of the hills near the place, a boy and a girl became orphans. We do not know the history of the girl except that she was sold to a man on another hill. The boy drew the attention of the big Chief who happened to visit the above named hill several years before Miss Veenstra and the other missionaries went into that district. He was to become the "son" of the big Chief. But not so. He gave the lad a *slave* name, Nasamu, that means practically a foundling and he put him in charge of a horse. Now in the Sudan, at least in the early days, a horse was considered more valuable than a woman, and so he tried to take good

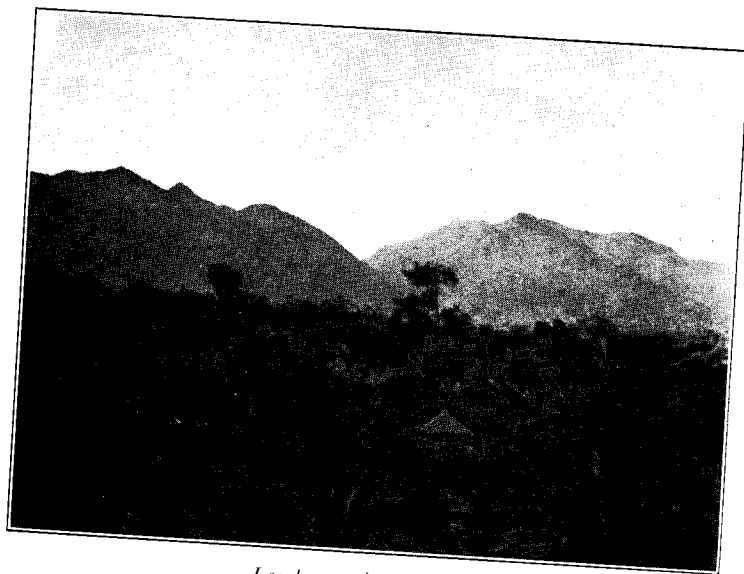
care of the horse. In the course of time Nasamu heard that in the town of Takum a school had been opened by a Christian teacher to instruct the people about God. Somehow, and herein we think we see the workings of the Holy Spirit in His sovereign freedom, the boy felt a desire to go to that school to hear about the God who made him. And one day he found the courage to ask the big Chief, "May I go to Takum to learn about the Book and the God who made us?" The answer was, "No, your work is to care for the horse." Heart-broken, Nasamu returned to the hut where he slept together with several others.

But as Miss Veenstra relates, day after day he still longed to go to school, and after some time he asked the Chief anew for permission. And what reply did he give? The Chief said, "Nasamu, look at me; see the wives I have; see the large compound I have; see the power I have. And I do not know about the Book! Why do you want to learn about things that I do not know about? Nasamu, I will give you a wife and you can settle down and rest your mind about school." But the Holy Spirit left the boy without peace in his heart, even though a little later the Chief gave him a young Dzompere girl to be his wife. And so Nasamu was made to be bold and fearless and once more he faced the Chief with his petition. "Even if you cut my body in pieces," he said, "I must go to school

and learn about the Book and about God." This time he succeeded. "Nasamu," said the Chief, "I will let you go, but you must do your full share of the work just the same. You are not to stay at the school overnight; you are to come here and sleep." Nasamu was very happy and so was the Christian teacher who was more than glad to help him. He only knew his native tongue, the Dzompere, besides a little Jakun, but he readily learned the Hausa language, understood by thousands in Africa. Miss Veenstra writes: how wonderful is the providence of God. When the missionaries came to the district, here was Nasamu, a Dzompere, but with a knowledge of the Hausa language, for it was in that language that all the instruction was given, though Nasamu at first did not know anything about it. But in this way he was very useful as interpreter. The missionaries knew Hausa but the Dzompere language was still untouched. They surely needed an interpreter to preach to the Dzomperes, and preferably a converted one. Because, unless the interpreter is a follower of the Lord Jesus, one is never sure if he interprets faithfully and gets the real message across. But here was a *Christian* interpreter. And such indeed he was. For Nasamu had not gone long to the mission school when he felt led to give up all the worship of his ancestors and declare himself to be on the Lord's side. Moreover when the missionaries came to the district a friendly relationship was

established between the big Chief and themselves. The Chief was asked whether he would set Nasamu at liberty to work for the missionaries, to help with the language, interpreting, etc. This request was readily granted and Nasamu, his wife and their baby, moved their home from Takum to Lupwe, to be on Miss Veenstra's mission compound. After he had become thoroughly tested as to the sincerity of his profession (as is the laudable custom in the Sudan mission), and with continued instruction, he was finally baptized as *the first convert* from the Dzompere tribe. He dropped his slave name and became known as Daniel or Danyelu. His wife also made confession of faith. When Miss Veenstra and her co-workers decided upon three married baptized men to be given the position of *elders* in the little flock, it was this Daniel who was chosen to be one of the three. Later on, since there was no resident evangelist at Takum, he was asked to act as caretaker there, and also to buy the food at the native market for the boarding school which meanwhile had been opened and to bring this out to Lupwe. Who were the other elders referred to? They were Filibbus and Istifanus. Of Filibbus we show a picture

Filibbus came from Wukari, where he was converted and baptized, together with his wife Astira. They were married shortly after Miss Veenstra came to Africa. Istifanus was from the Jukun tribe, which, as we related numbers about 38,000 people. He was

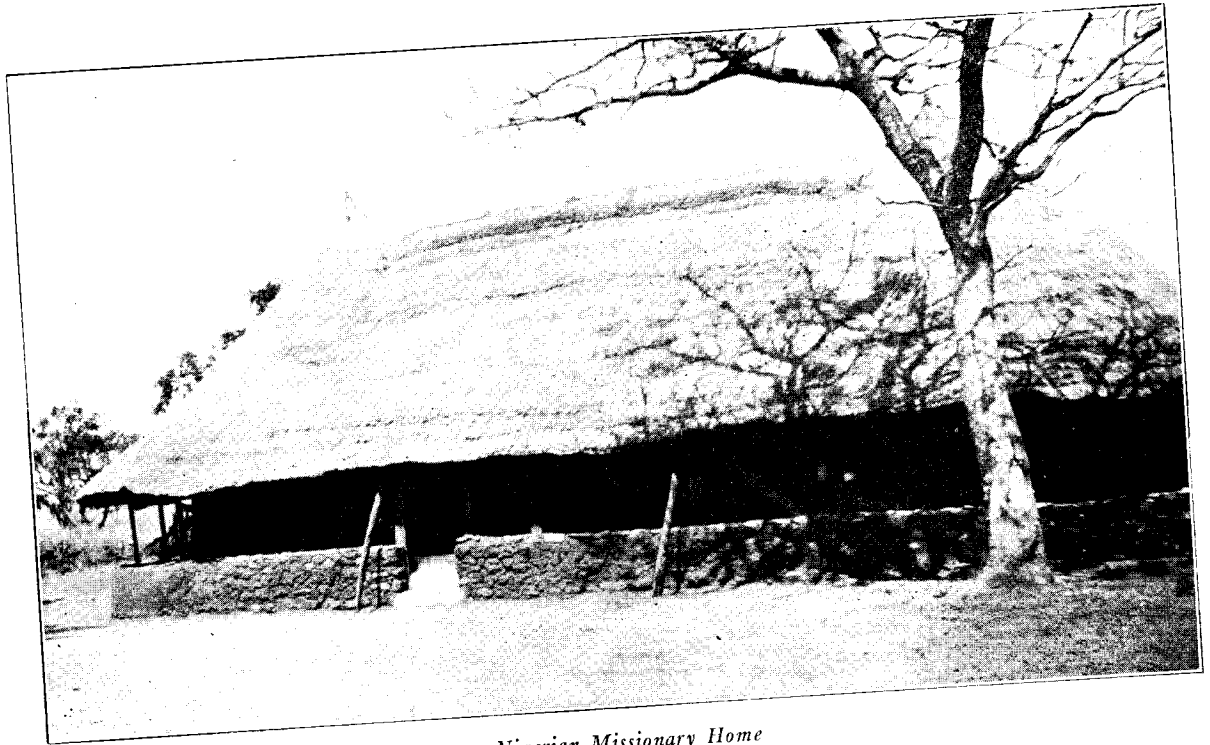


Landscape in Nigeria



Women burden bearers

[112]



Nigerian Missionary Home



Bridge in Nigeria



Miss Veenstra always took faithful Christians along on her treks



An audience of heathen



A little stranger arrived at Lupece

described by Miss Veenstra as faithful in attending all services, and in matters of discipline is great help to the missionaries. Honest in his convictions he is sympathetic in dealing with sinners. We shall hear more about him and his wife in Chapter XII. But meanwhile we shall relate here the story of his life as he told it to E. S. Watt. Turning to Istifanus she said:

“‘Now I want you to tell me all about your life and what made you become a Christian.’ I can still see his animated features and glistening white teeth in the glare of that motor lamp. In their new home in Takum, he said, they were expecting their first-born, when he was recruited for the East African Campaign of 1914. Then one day at Dar-es-Salam, during a sharp encounter with the enemy, he had charge of one hundred and fifty soldiers and found himself under heavy fire. Before long every man around him had fallen and his last cartridge was gone. He dropped flat on his face; move, he dare not. For three days the fighting continued, and for three days he lay there without food or water, expecting at any moment to be captured by the Germans.

“At this crisis, faint with hunger, numb with shock and mad with thirst, the enemy withdrew, and he got across to the British lines. This was to Istifanus the first proof in his life that God really cared, but it was not the last.

“Another day, later on, after long-continued fighting he crawled into his tiny tent and slept like a log. In the morning he waked with a feeling as if a stone had got into his boot, ‘but when I looked,’ he said, ‘I found it was a bullet stuck in the sole of my boot, yet my foot was uninjured. Surely God was in the tent and I didn’t know it.’

“Out of forty who left Takum for service in East Africa, only six returned, after serving for a time on the Palestinian front; and Istifanus returned a more thoughtful man.

“So it happened that when one day in Takum a native evangelist, Agbu, spoke to him of his need of a Saviour, he did not turn away. ‘I saw,’ he said, ‘that I had no Saviour in Islam, and when I looked back on the way God had spared my life, I couldn’t refuse His Son Jesus. I fell at his feet. I wanted to be His only. Having prayed four times a day to Mohammed, I did not do less to Jesus.’

“He worked on his farm during the day and at night learned from Agbu to read the Bible. As he read of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, places he had seen with his own eyes, he said the Bible story grew increasingly real and increasingly precious, and fired his determination to live and fight for its truths. Prayer became a vital force. For eight years he prayed for his wife’s conversion and for eight years bore with her obstinacy and coldness, hoping against hope to see a change. ‘At times,’ he said, ‘I wanted

to divorce her and get a Christian wife, but I always saw in the Book that this was bad. So I kept on reading and praying till I felt the Lord standing behind me. Then I would close the Book and tell Him all about it and just leave it in His hands.’”

While these “first fruits” were gathered in, Feb., 1923 had arrived and it was time for Miss Veenstra to take a much needed furlough. Shortly after her return she opened a boarding school about which we write in the next chapter.



CHAPTER XI

THE BOARDING SCHOOL AT LUPWE. MEDICAL AND EVANGELISTIC WORK

*"I will teach you the fear of the Lord."
"Heal the sick." "Preach the Word in
season."*

ALREADY during Miss Veenstra's first year of service, she felt the need of a boarding school at Lupwe. But that was quite an undertaking, even though it was started on a small scale. It meant the erection within the mission compound which already existed, of more huts for the pupils; obtaining their food and clothing, and continual oversight as well as daily teaching.

Miss Veenstra gave *two reasons* for assuming this great responsibility. *First*, there were some fine young men at Takum who were prepared to make public confession of their faith in the Lord, ready to say farewell to spirit worship, and eager to receive training in the Christian religion. They were at that time not able to read or write. And so she asked the unmarried converts to come for one year to the Lupwe School. Miss Veenstra found it amazing how much such earnest-minded lads could learn in one year. "To them," we read, "it means sacrifice, as they receive no financial remuneration, and are

obliged to buy their own books — New Testament, hymn-book and catechism.” “But several expressed their desire to have such a year of training and this was the first reason for establishing a boarding school on the mission compound.”

And what was the *second* reason? Miss Veenstra found that she could reach certain villages of her district only once or twice in a whole year. She asked herself the question: “When will these people be able to intelligently understand and accept the message of salvation? They can only take in a little bit of the truth during one visit a year, and they forget so soon.” “Then the thought came to me that if we could gather some of the boys from different villages, bring them to a boarding school on the mission compound, and pray that they might be converted, surely God would call from among them some one who would become teachers and evangelists. They could then return to their home town and village and lead their people to a knowledge of the Savior. Here then is our second reason for establishing such a school.”

Shortly after her return from her first furlough it was opened and the Lord blessed the plan as outlined. During the first two and a half years the total enrollment would number between forty and fifty. Some came for one year and then went back to their work. Others could stay only six months. Miss Veenstra’s time and strength compelled her to keep

the number limited to twenty-five. And what were the results? They came without having seen the alphabet. They left, able to read the New Testament. The hymns were learned. Even the physical form and facial expression was changed. "Many of our pupils have returned to their villages and stood up to tell forth the wonderful story of redemption."

Miss Veenstra always considered the witnessing for Christ through preaching as the chief task of the true missionary. And as we shall see presently, engaged in it as much as her labors at Lupwe permitted. But she also felt the need of *medical* work in a country such as she labored in. And so we find her taking up that part of the missionary program. While she was not an M.D., she had some training in medical work. Besides that she had taken a year of special maternity training in a New York hospital. Especially this last named fact she found to be a wonderful asset in her work. It permitted her not alone to help the Christian women in their supreme hours, and prevent many deaths, but it opened to her several doors of the heads of various Sudan villages.

Some patients came to her from places many miles away. To take care of them she built six huts at one end of her Lupwe compound. One of these she used as a dispensary; and others were for resident patients. Practical woman as she was, she made it a rule not to take such patients unless some one

of their respective families came along to take care of them, providing them with food, drinking water, and firewood.

Many people suffered from tropical ulcers. Others had diseases of the eyes. There were cases of leprosy and sleeping sickness. Some days as many as thirty came to seek relief. We wonder how she found time and strength to attend to all this, besides her school-work at Lupwe. But she found it worth while because it furnished, as she wrote, "glorious opportunity to bring a gospel message." And that was always in her mind, and on her heart.

This medical work Miss Veenstra also engaged in while "on trek" when she stressed evangelism, always the delight of her heart. Witnessing for her beloved Lord. In order to do this she undertook several tours to cover her district which was at least eighty miles from the northern to the southern boundary lines. These tours were undertaken during the eight months of the dry season, since during the rainy season, lasting four months of the year, it was quite impossible, especially for a woman to undertake this. The paths were muddy then, many of the bridges washed away; she would have to wade through long, deep, swampy places. And crossing rivers with swift currents was something the natives were not willing to undertake. But even during the dry season it was not easy to undertake a tour, or as Miss Veenstra calls it, a "trek." Sometimes she

went for five days and nights; sometimes for ten or fifteen days. The longest trek she ever made lasted twenty-three days. One of her fellow-workers of course remained on the mission compound which could not be left unattended. All kinds of material had to accompany the trekking missionaries. Camp-bed, bedding, chair, folding table, lantern, kerosene, cooking utensils, dishes, clothes, a few books, writing materials, some native foods, a box of tin foods—all had to be taken along, and the only way to take these things on a trek was of course to have them carried on the backs of native carriers. As a rule there were about ten that formed such a trekking party: seven carriers, a Christian to help with the preaching, a personal boy and then the missionary. She used a bicycle on most tours.

She had learned the wisdom of acquainting the respective chiefs of the villages she expected to visit, beforehand.

Suppose we accompany her on a trip to a village whose chief had been informed of her coming. Miss Veenstra and her Christian helper and her personal boy are a few hours ahead of her carriers. The chief who has been looking for her comes out to meet her in true oriental fashion. He begins by saying: Welcome, welcome, welcome, several times in succession. Miss Veenstra repeatedly replies: Thank you, thank you, thank you. "Have you come well?" "Yes," two or three times over: "I have come well," she

answers each time. "And is your tiredness well?" "My tiredness is with ease." "Have you left all your people at your compound well?" "They are well, thank you." Then she asks the chief several questions as to his health, his household, his work, etc., and asks him whether he is willing to gather his people to hear the message of God she is about to bring. The chief promises to send her firewood and water at once and promises that a little later he will call his people together. In course of time the carriers come along, the personal boy makes Miss Veenstra a cup of hot tea, and a hut is made ready for her at the command of the Chief. Sometimes such a hut is within and sometimes without the compound. In that, her few belongings are placed and toward night, after the ordinary work is done by the men and women, at the command of the Chief they gather around the missionary's hut, or at some other place which has been cleared and swept to receive the welcome visitor.

What does she tell those who have never heard the message? Shall she quote John 3:16: "For God so loved the world?" But they do not know who God is. Shall she proclaim, "All have sinned?" But they do not know what sin is. Shall she plead: "Repent and believe?" But these things too mean next to nothing to her audience. And so Miss Veenstra found the best way was to begin her story of how God created the world and how He made the human

race and how they sinned by listening to the voice of an evil spirit (and the heathen think they know all about evil spirits). This was leading up to the story of the Righteous One who suffered on the Cross. Miss Veenstra writes (and it is worth while that we tell this): "It is very unwise to present to the people a one-sided truth—I mean to tell them only of a God of love. They are constantly in bondage of fear because of the evil spirits, and a God of love does not make a strong appeal. They are far more attracted to such truths as the power and greatness of God, the absolute justice of Jehovah and His wrath toward sin. The story of the flood—God punishing the sinner—makes a tremendous appeal to these primitive people."

The next day another village is visited. After a tour of about eight days she would come to the far-off boundary of her district, 50 miles away from home. Here a broad river is to be crossed. The same river in which two missionaries of the Dutch Church were killed some years ago by a hippopotamus. The canoe taking her across the river is manned by two men and a small boy. The men to do the paddling while the boy dips out the water of the leaking canoe. Usually Miss Veenstra knelt on the flat bottom of the boat and held on to the two sides with her hands. Her wheel is brought in and laid across the sides of the little vessel. Such a trip was by no means a joy-ride, but she tells us how she would sit

quietly and pray all the way over and felt very thankful when she could step out on the other side. Coming to that other side a great crowd of people would be standing to greet the white lady. Among the crowd would be the chief in his full dress, together with the big men of the town who would escort her to the place where she was to camp and then she would again go through the long greetings "palaver," as such conversation is called. And here too at nightfall the people were gathered round about the fire and she would tell the story of creation, of the fall, and of the coming of the Great Redeemer.

Now, it was not easy, all this trekking, and she did not always meet with a hearty welcome. At times there would be quarreling among her carriers. At one time when she planned to stay over Sunday in a certain village she found that they were not welcome. They were unwilling to provide food for the carriers, and the others who were with her, so they suffered a good deal of hunger. They even hindered the people coming to the meeting. At one time she sat at the hut door with an umbrella to keep dry while the people were huddled together inside the hut about the fire. One Sunday afternoon a heavy thunderstorm arose, the rain came down in torrents. The hut in which she camped was a grass-walled one, and the rain came rushing in until the whole place was flooded. Miss Veenstra sat on a chair with

her feet on a big stone while camp-bed, table and boxes, etc., were surrounded with water. For three hours thunderbolts crashed about, while the lightning lightened up all the bushes around. She could have no meeting on that occasion. After the water soaked in she had a little supper and went to bed. We can only guess what her feelings must have been at such times, but we read: "Early the next morning we started out for a long walk, for another hill." And so she continued the work, week after week, month after month, successive year after successive year, just telling the story of Jesus and His love and praying to God that He might, through His Holy Spirit, transform the hearts of the black people of the district that in course of time there might arise in the Sudan a self-supporting, a self-governing and a self-propagating African Church. Indeed, Miss Veenstra was a heroine, a real pioneer, laying the foundation deep and well. But oh, what heart-ache! Oh, what weariness! Oh, what toil! Oh, what disappointments! We wonder how she could endure it all.

There is, of course, only one way of accounting for it — the grace of God in her heart. But at the same time we admire her Dutch pluck and Calvinistic perseverance. What a great missionary this woman was, constantly reminding of the well-known Mary Slessor of Calabar, the pioneer missionary, about

whom W. P. Livingston wrote such a wonderful biography.

What was in Miss Veenstra's heart during the time covered by this chapter we learn from a report she sent dated July 13, 1925. She wrote:

“Beyond the corners of our own compound, and the work of the out-station, Takum, stretches miles of territory, to which we always refer as ‘our district’. To the peoples scattered over these hills and valleys we must bring the glad message of the Savior. And the very thought of these thousands of people makes us look up and cry unto the Lord, ‘Where are the reapers?’ We are so few, they are so many. There are so many, many calls; school-bells and school routine, sick people calling at the doors and calling us to their huts, our own household affairs, the care of the compound which includes supervising farm work and building work, morning worship, Sunday services, special Bible classes and catechism, all of which demands hours of preparation. And besides this we must spend hours in personal work, encouraging and helping those who are being drawn to the Savior; probing, admonishing, disciplining those who have made confession, but fallen into the snare of the devil and bringing shame upon the precious Name. And all must be done in the spirit of the Lord Jesus, in *love*, with patience, never saying, ‘I must hurry — do be

quick — the time is limited,' never losing his or her temper. This positively demands that the missionary keep in constant touch and communion with his Sender, and that means the 'quiet hour' must be kept whatever else is left undone. There must be time for personal Bible study and prayer, for listening to the voice of the Lord. No, beloved friends, I am not complaining. The Lord has more than verified unto me the truth of His Word. 'As thy day, so shalt thy strength be' — 'My grace is sufficient' — 'Only be strong and of a good courage, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.' And my soul responds, 'Bless the Lord, and all that is within me bless His Holy name.' There has never been a single regret that I left the 'bright lights and gay life' of New York City, and came to this very dark corner of his vineyard. There has been no sacrifice, because the Lord Jesus Himself is my constant companion. I have only tried to give you a little glimpse of real life here in one of the Mission stations of the great Sudan."



A welcome little boy



— and the people to welcome him



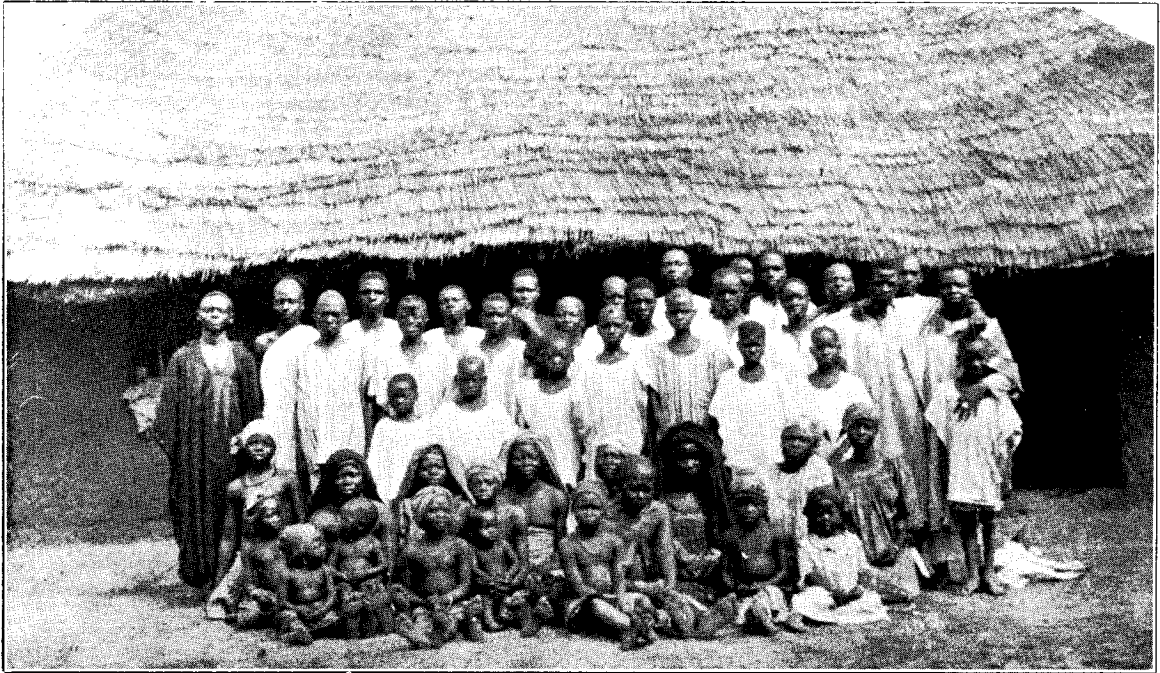
Interested in religion



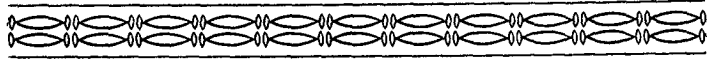
Boys helping in the work



Miss Breen and Miss Veestra



Congregation of seekers after Christ



CHAPTER XII

EVENTS DURING 1926. RETURN TO NIGERIA IN 1927. SADNESS AND GLADNESS MIXED. A SOUL STRUGGLING TOWARD THE LIGHT.

*"Coming again with joy, bringing his
his sheaves with him."*

WE have now come, in the life and labors of Miss Veenstra, to the year 1926. At that time she took her second furlough. She remained on the field till the month of February of that year. On March 19 she wrote us that she had arrived in England, just six weeks after leaving her station in the Sudan. She attended the annual meeting, in London, of the Sudan United Mission, held on April 29, and soon thereafter arrived in the Homeland. She was much in demand as a speaker. But during that summer she found time to write her *Pioneering in the Sudan*, on which we have drawn considerably in this book. It numbers 232 pages. Four thousand copies were sold within a short time and a new edition was ready during January, 1927. It was translated into the Dutch language under the striking title: *Een Blanke Vrouw Onder de Kannibalen*, (A White Lady Among the Cannibals) and created a great deal of interest among the Christians in the Netherlands in Miss

Veenstra and her work. At the time she was in America she advertised for a teacher to be with her at her Lupwe station in the Takum district. She was desirous to continue the work of the boarding school at the station as well as to begin training some of the young men converts to become teachers and evangelists. In answer to her appeal Miss Nelle Breen went to Africa to prove to be a valued co-worker. Oct. 10, 1934, she married Mr. E. H. Smith, already in the work of the British branch. See Chapter XX about their work.

After a busy, too busy season, of speaking and writing, Miss Veenstra's second furlough came to a close. January 22, 1927, she left New York per steamship "Andania." In England, her first destination, she was to undergo a physical examination. But, practical woman as she was, she also was to seek time to learn to ride a motorcycle, and how to repair it in case it might fail to work while she used it in the Sudan. She wrote us as to her plans:

"On February 23, 1927, I expect to leave Liverpool for Port Harcourt, African West Coast, three days travel eastward from Lagos where I formerly landed. At Port Harcourt I am to take a train to go into the heart of Northern Nigeria, British West Africa. Leaving the train at Makurdi, I proceed by river barge to Ibi, the headquarters station of the Sudan United Mission, where we have an organized native

church, a splendid school, an industrial work, and a staff of four missionaries for the present year.

“From Ibi, I go a journey of 75 miles to my own field of labor—the Takum District—and where this journey has formerly always been made on a bicycle, taking 3 days, I hope that now I may do it on the motorcycle—provided I get the doctor’s permission—in a single day.

“Words fail me to adequately express my thanks and sincere appreciation for all the kindness, for the abounding love, shown to me on this furlough by you all. I can truly thank our Father and ask Him to reward you with the riches of His grace and love in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

While on the way to her beloved Africa the news reached her of the death of elder Danyelu, mentioned in Chapter X. He had died in the Lord and was laid to rest by his fellow-christians. That brought much sadness to Miss Veenstra. But when, after 23 days’ sailing from Liverpool to Port Harcourt, and after a two days’ railway trip to Makurdi, her heart was gladdened to have the “mission boys” await her with a barge. Again she ascended the Benue river and arrived at Ibi, joyfully welcomed by the mission force there. Eagerly Miss Veenstra mounted her new motorcycle, on her way to Lupwe. She made the first 25 miles without any mishap. And the next day, too, on her way to Takum, the first 12

miles were covered in a satisfactory manner. But after that she struck sand, heavy sand, and before she realized what was happening, her motorcycle threw Miss Veenstra. One of her arms was hurt rather badly and she was unable to use the machine.

Happily, one of the missionaries, Mr. Maxwell, had a motorcycle with a side-car. Her "boy," Bitemu, crossed the river, and after three hours' waiting, Mr. Maxwell arrived and brought her to Donga. There she had to stay five days. Her arm was swollen up and stiff, and at the end of this period the side-car was to transport her to her home. Her troubles, however, were not yet ended. Near Takum the motorcycle and side-car struck a ditch and Miss Veenstra as well as Mr. Maxwell and a nurse, landed in it. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and the missionary team landed safely at Takum.

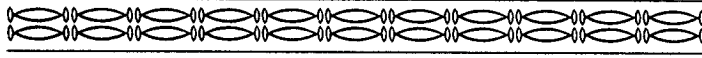
Four more miles were covered next. And then — there was Lupwe — and — *home*.

Miss Veenstra wrote at the time that words failed her to describe her joy because she finally was in her own "home." Her arm was still stiff. Happily it was her left arm. And while it kept her from using her bicycle, she was able to unpack her luggage and write us about her safe arrival — on April 5, 1927.

Soon afterward her joy was increased by learning about a plain answer to prayer in the case of elder

Istifanus, mentioned in Chapter X. Some seven years ago when he had been drawn to the Lord he began praying for the conversion of his wife, Anima. But her heart remained cold. Istifanus unburdened his heart to Miss Veenstra. Naturally, she encouraged him to pray earnestly for her conversion. And the Lord heard the pleading. Miss Veenstra wrote: "I would not have believed it possible for a man to be so exercised about the soul-welfare of his wife in this land where women are not much more than 'human tools' in the hands of the menfolks. Yes, but it is the same Holy Spirit who works conversion among blacks as well as among whites. In Africa as well as in Great Britain or North America. This is evident also as we read of the soul-struggle of the awakened Anima. Istifanus told Miss Veenstra how at times at night after he himself had enjoyed a few hours of sleep, his wife would awaken him. She wished to tell him something that was upon her heart. When he assured her that he would be glad to listen to her, she would break forth: 'I cannot bear it any longer! If my parents forsake me, then they forsake me! I must find in my heart the peace that I know Jesus alone can give me! I will not any longer war in my heart against Him! Will you ask whether they will let me confess the Lord publicly next Sunday?' " And so, Miss Veenstra concluded on the subject: "Friends, rejoice, for the Lord hath

found his sheep. And let our faith be strengthened to continue fervent in prayer for others. In order that they too might be brought in so that 'His House may be full.' ”



CHAPTER XIII

A DAY'S WORK IN KWAMBAI AND THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY GIRL

*"Abounding in the work of the Lord."
"Sorrowful, but always rejoicing."*

WE have now come to July 27, 1928, at which time Miss Veenstra wrote about her daily work at Kwambai, where she had been staying four weeks. "Just as dawn began I had a nice cup of tea at Lupwe. After a short time of devotion I went to the village of Kwambai. One of the Christians with me rang the handbell and we gathered in the little chapel room crowded to capacity. Men, women and children, and a lot of babies, all squeezed together on the floor made of soft dirt. I am glad it is loose sand as the people are very unsanitary as yet. They just spit on the floor, and push a little sand over it. First we sang a song, and they all took part in it, very heartily. No books are used, as none of the people are able to read. Then we teach them a text from Scripture in their own tongue. We are teaching from 'Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life;' 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' Then I give a short message, explaining the words, and after this we have prayer in their own

language. Then I greet them all and they file out. Yes, the fresh air is welcome to me after such a crowd, as they sit right on my feet at times, and I have no room to move any more than they. But O, how happy I am that they are not afraid of me, and that they come thus to the "sunrise meeting" to worship the Lord.

I go on down the path, smiling and greeting the folk to my right and to my left, and when I arrive at my hut there are several who have followed me, and who want medicine. Then I have clinic for an hour or a little more. We try our best for each one, and if the case is helpless for me I tell them so and try to persuade them to go to the doctor at Ibi. But to them Ibi is the end of the world, and very few would dare to venture such a journey of about eighty miles.

After this Dispensary work I have my breakfast, and am usually quite ready for it, though the early cup of tea helps a lot to keep me going until breakfast. After this I have an hour for quiet reading and prayer, and always finish with singing one or two hymns by myself. To sing a song of praise helps to keep one cheerful. I close the door and tell the folk who are with me that they are not to disturb me till I open the door. By this time it is usually ten o'clock or a little later and I do some writing until lunch.

My only place of abode here is one small hut, about 14 feet in diameter, and the confinement is at

times quite monotonous. The roof is not high, and has not sufficient grass for the sun. I have a big canvas up inside for the rain and for the sun, but even then I feel the sun on my head and have to wear a felt hat with two layers of "turkey red" inside the crown. The sun beats against the walls which are not protected by a verandah like my hut on the station, and the little hut can be like an oven at noon.

After lunch we have a noon-rest. Then another cup of tea and some work until dark. We have school in the late afternoon here as all the boys have to go to the farms and they leave early in the morning and do not return until late afternoon. It is moonlight now and they are here till about 8 o'clock. We teach them a little reading and writing, but after sunset we give them some memory work, and then a few games. So the day goes, and sandwiched here and there in between the various duties I try to have a quiet personal talk with those who come to greet me. Sometimes I get called to the village to see some sick person. On Sundays there is no clinic nor school. We have two services on the Lord's day."

But at times this life was interrupted by unexpected callers. As a sample of this we here give what Miss Veenstra called the story of a runaway girl. Incidentally it will illustrate what a hard lot young

women have — a result of sin in general, of terrible customs, and of polygamy in particular.

Soon after Miss Veenstra's return to Lupwe, in 1927, she found a strange little girl on her compound. One of the young men at the place came to our missionary and said: "White lady, there is a little girl here and she wants to speak to you." Miss Veenstra sent for the young girl and found her to be about 12 years of age. But she had a heart-stirring story to tell. And as she poured out her heart to the white lady, she spoke in a voice trembling with fear. In her story she told that she was a "runaway." And that was a daring thing for her to be. What had happened? In the Sudan a big chief has an enormous household. He has a number of "slave wives," besides his own regular wives. He also has a number of children of his own as a rule. But besides these he takes a number of boys and girls taken from different parts of the district and whom he "claims" as his own. The boys he has trained to be his "helpers." They are not more than slaves. And what about the girls? Well, they are carefully guarded. And now and then, as they reach a certain age (14 years) and are pleasing in his sight, he simply claims them and makes them his additional "wives." If he does not care for this one or that one — what does he do? He will present such to one of his "friends" to be his wife. A Sudan chief, when his

predecessor dies, simply steps into the household of the deceased chief and claims the whole household for himself.

Such is heathenism, dear readers. Human beings are mere chattels. Well, during 1926 the Chief of Takum died. Early the next year his elder brother was installed to be ruler of that district.

According to native custom, all the boys in training as "helpers" became his. And likewise, all the "girls in waiting." They simply belonged to him by tribal custom and none was at liberty to refuse his authority. The particular girl about whom we are writing here was one of these "virgins in waiting." She became aware of her woeful condition. She realized, young as she was—only 12 years, as we said, that she was bound, yes, bound, and that before many months, to become the child-wife of a much older man, about 50 or 60 years old, and one who already had several wives. Poor girl. On several occasions she had already been beaten, cruelly as they noticed her prospect displeased her. After one such beating the girl fled from the compound. Before dawn she broke away. "I did not know what road to take," she confessed to Miss Veenstra, "but I found the road to your place and came to you." And as her tears fell upon the cement floor of our missionary's home, she pleaded: "Won't you help me?"

What did Miss Veenstra do, we wonder? And we read: "I kept her here until the Sunday when I would go into town. And then the Chief came to me to see about the matter." The upshot was that she had to return the runaway to the Chief. She simply could not do otherwise. She had to consider the orders of the British government in such cases, as well as tribal custom. Nor did she want the leaders of the tribe to become enemies to the missionary and to the gospel before they had sufficient opportunity to accept the message of salvation. All she could do was to tell the girl to abide patiently, and when a little older she would be able to plead her cause before the proper officials. She told her also to come and greet her from time to time as Miss Veenstra was at Kwambai. Sorrowful—but always rejoicing. Abounding in the Lord's work.

But still greater gladness was in our worker's soul when, at Kwambai there came into existence — what Miss Veenstra called "the beginning of the Church Visible." Two elders from Takum had come to assist the missionary in examining candidates for membership. While they were engaged in this work, Miss Veenstra's heart was filled with joy as she noticed how these men were developing, and she gave glory to the blessed Holy Spirit for enabling them to render the services to which they had been called. It ever was her ideal to have in Nigeria a church: self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating.

Here she saw something of that ideal realized. The elders spent a long time with the inquirers and when they reported to "Bathuria" as she was called as a rule, (white lady), their faces were radiant with joy. After eight years of seed-sowing a harvest sprung in sight.

On Sunday morning, the next day, an open air service was held. Filibbus, one of the elders serving at the time, called upon the eleven inquirers who had been approved of as candidates for baptism, to arise and to answer the five questions to be put to them. They were not easy ones. Miss Veenstra always insisted on building on a good and solid foundation. She herself as we saw, had been well catechised in her youth, and was thoroughly posted on the great fundamentals of true religion as it is experienced by the heart of the regenerated and not simply something learned as a lesson. Here is a free translation of the questions:

1. Do you believe that the Holy Bible is God's revelation to us, and that there is no other way of salvation outside of his Son, Jesus Christ?
2. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is your personal Savior from your sins?
3. Do you promise, with the help of God, to walk in obedience to all that God requireth in His Holy Word, seeking to dwell in such a way as to fulfill the Lord's desire for you?

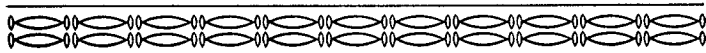
4. Do you promise, with the help of God, to separate yourself entirely from every practice of other religions?

5. Do you promise, with the help of God, to zealously seek, with all your heart, to increase in the knowledge of the Lord, and to witness for Him before others?

Together with another worker, Miss Veenstra formulated the questions at a time when she found the matter of accepting Inquirers to be very confusing and unsatisfactory. With this method she wrote: "We need to wait until the convert has received sufficient instructions to know what he or she is answering, but in every way we find it very helpful. The Christians themselves are much pleased with this method.

After the eleven candidates answered these questions, we all knelt in prayer and they were specially committed to the Great Shepherd of the sheep Who will never fail to watch over His own.

"These are the first-fruits — gathered after many years of prayerful, regular seed-sowing. May it be only a small beginning of a plentiful harvest to be gathered in from that village, and through these may all the Dzompere tribe come to the knowledge of Jesus, and to acceptance of Him as Savior and Lord!"



CHAPTER XIV

TRIALS AND VICTORIES IN 1928 AND 1929 A DUTCH MARY SLESSOR

“Plead the cause of the poor and needy.”

THE year 1928 was not without its trials for Miss Veenstra. She had been gladdened by the arrival of Mr. P. Bierenga and his wife. But — Sept. of that year, Mrs. Bierenga died — a victim of fever. Miss Veenstra wrote us at the time that the fever had consumed her red blood cells and soon wasted away with pernicious anemia, leaving her blood with insufficient oxygen to take care of her heart action. She speaks of the departed one as a devoted missionary whose constant cheerfulness won the love of the native Christians.

“On September 5 she calmly passed away. At sunset of the day she died we followed the coffin — borne on the shoulders of six black men — to a little cemetery in the heart of Africa.” Little did she think when she wrote this, that during April, 1933, her own coffin would be carried in the same way . . .

At the end of 1928 Miss Veenstra went to England for a short, too short, holiday — as vacation is called in England. But already on the 23rd of February,

1929, she returned to Africa and was welcomed with great joy. Scarcely had her feet touched African soil when a huge package of letters was handed to her, fifteen of them from the Christians of the Takum district. They were words of loving welcome, and of grateful acknowledgement of the mercies of our God. Arriving nearer her Lupwe home more messages came, and some who could not write, sent verbal greetings. When still ten miles off the head chief who ruled at the time over some 20,000 people, in Miss Veenstra's district, came himself to welcome and to meet her. He was a very busy man, not a confessing Christian, but a real friend to her and she appreciated his coming ten miles along the way, to meet the "mother" of his people, as he called her.

There was soon a meeting in the little chapel at Lupwe and handshaking became the order of the day. Just how the news of her arrival circulated we do not know, but before she was 24 hours in the place, a runaway wife with a child at each hand, came to her with a cry of distress. While she was talking with her, the husband, following her closely, entered the compound, and sent one of the boys to tell Miss Veenstra he was there. She gave the woman a letter to the chief of the district so that he might hear her case and so that was disposed of. But the next day two men came from a village a little distance from Lupwe. They had a grievance against



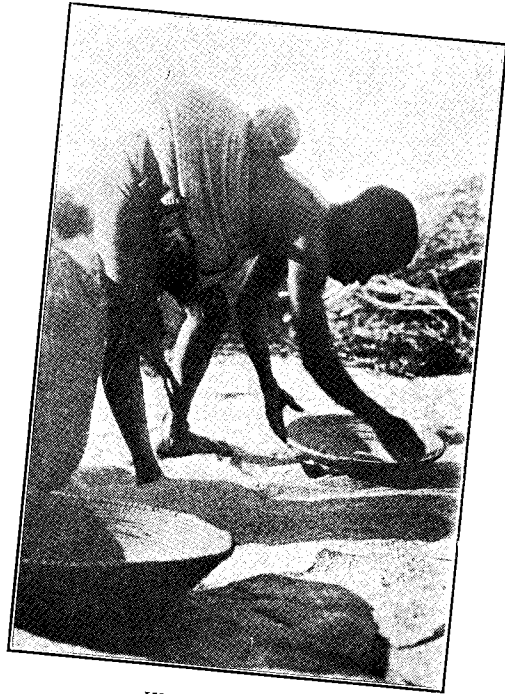
Mr. P. Bierenga



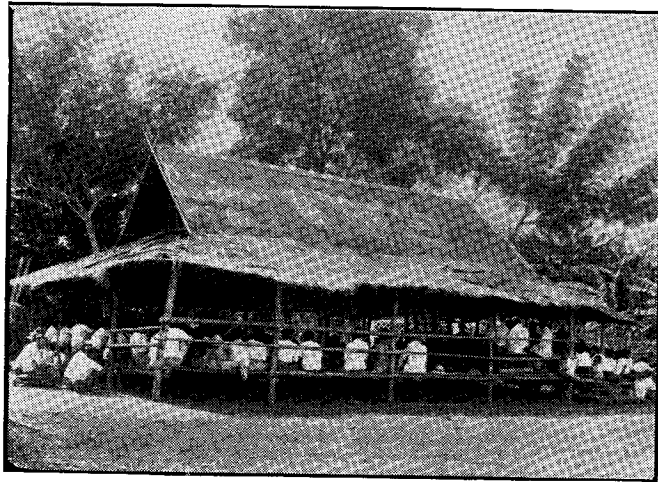
*Family visitation of the workers
"Op huisbezoek"*



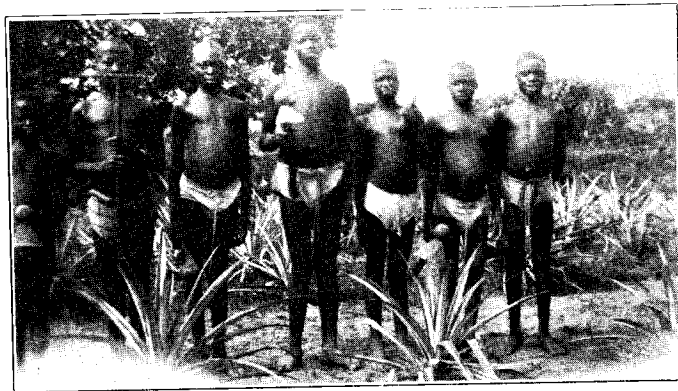
Mohammedans studying the Book of books?



Woman at work



An attentive audience



Fruits of Dongaland

the chief, who according to them, had cast a brother in prison without any reason. Well, Miss Veenstra promised to speak for them to the chief and told them to call again. Another party came presently — a woman with a grieved heart. She was sent to the chief.

Miss Veenstra, in all of these cases, reminds as we already stated, so much of Mary Slessor, formerly a Scotch factory lassie, later a missionary, incidentally a valued helper of the British government as country magistrate at Calabar, in southern Nigeria. In fact, Johanna mentions that similarity herself in a letter, although she felt in her heart that it was not wise for a missionary to meddle too much in all controversies between natives. "But," she said, "wherever there is a case of known cruelty and injustice, I try to speak for the offended party, and since we have a new chief who is friendly, I can talk freely to him of these matters." No doubt she also took these things to the Friend of all friends, who gives wisdom to those who in simplicity of heart and in faith ask it of Him and who does not rebuke.

Easter Sunday services 1929, were held at Takum, and it was mentioned that at the morning worship there were *seventy* in the congregation. Most of them were Christians or at least interested in the gospel. It was a happy Easter Day and the greatest joy was

that four people confessed the Lord openly, one of them a daughter of elder Filibus, Chapter X.

In a letter from Ibi she wrote to her home folk, January 13, 1929:

“Here we are on trek — nearly 50 miles from home. We had Sunday here and hope to leave this afternoon to cross the river and get an early start tomorrow morning when we set off on foot through the hills. This is our twelfth day of the trek and we have enjoyed it all so far. We hope to be away about 25 days in all. Last week we gave the gospel in 4 places where we had never been before. The people heard for the very first time. But it was such a hard trail — narrow bumpy path, grass, stones, deep sand, farms, and so many big holes with streams — one forest after another and both Mrs. Forbes and I were nearly knocked out one day. But that is all forgotten now and we feel so refreshed and rested after our quiet Sunday and today. The mail-man will meet us tonight or tomorrow so we are scribing as hard as we can to get our mail done and have it off with him. I have such a pile of Christmas letters to answer, and unless I score a good number off on trek, I will get too much work when I get home.

“The chief here has been very good to us. Being on a river he has sent us fresh fish each day — and it is such a nice treat. At every place we go we get one or two wee chickens dashed to us, but one gets

tired of these every day — so the fish was a nice change.

“Today we are sending our wheels home as we are crossing the river this evening and tomorrow morning, all being well, we strike off to go through the hills, and we can’t use the cycles on these mountain trails.

“We are very well received wherever we go — and are having fine meetings. All the boys are so helpful and it makes trekking so pleasant. Istifanus is with us, and he is such a good preacher, and such a fine man that everybody respects him.

“The chief came to see me, so I had to stop this. Now we are over the river and getting settled for the night. The hut is just big enough for our two beds, so we will eat outside. It is lovely moonlight and even to sleep out is nice, only in the morning there is a dew, and if the bedding gets wet it is so heavy to carry.

“Saturday evening and again last evening we had big moonlight meetings with over a hundred people at each meeting. When we begin to sing the people come from every quarter to gather before us. It is so inspiring and so interesting.

“The Chief of Kwambai told me they were going to build a new big chapel, so all the men and women could worship together. Also two small huts for Agyo — one of our married Christians who may go

to help them for a part of this year. And they are also going to build a big hut for me to stay in when I visit them. The Lord is marching on to victory in that place, and I marvel at His glorious grace.

“At Beti the people are going to build a Prayer Hut for worship. This too is advance. All this work is unpaid service—voluntary on the part of the people whose hearts are made willing by God’s Spirit.

“Now I must close. We want to go for a wee stroll to get our limbs a little in practice. Tomorrow we have a walk of about 8 miles, but hope to start at dawn—and ‘make hay *before* the sun shines.’

“With much love to you all, and having you in daily remembrance in prayer and longing.”

There were gospel victories awaiting her during 1929. One of them was the transformation of Amuda, the wife of a chief, while during the summer of 1929 promising work was undertaken at Lissam, a hill situated about two miles from Lupwe. And what we a while ago said about her similarity to Mary Slessor was brought out in an incident which occurred during the spring of that year. We read:

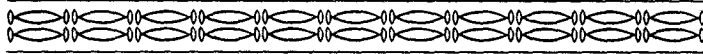
“Possibly during April, 1929, two men came to her to enlist her aid in what appeared an honest case. It was about a woman who had been traded in. In exchange her owner was to get a girl. But the woman was supposed to be possessed by a devil, and so the

party of the first part wanted to get rid of his bargain and keep the girl who had been promised in exchange. Terrible conditions, but we just relate facts.

“An attempt to bribe the big chief of Takum had been made. But he refused to be bribed and put one of the buyers of the first-named woman in jail. Relatives of the man appeared before Miss Veenstra. Would she please write the British Government how the Takum chief had maltreated perfectly innocent people? No, she wouldn't. A good thing, too, she refused to do so, for when she questioned the Takum chief about it, she discovered that the repenting wife-traders had lied to her. In true African fashion. But after some days the complainants returned to Miss Veenstra repeating their request for a letter to a Government official. Again she refused. On principle. She felt it unwise to interfere with matters belonging to a native court. That showed her good common sense. In fact, she taught the converts specifically to render to Caesar what was due him — as the Bible speaks about this matter.

“Maybe our readers, especially our lady readers, are anxious to know what became of the woman in the case. The poor woman accused and suspected of devil possession. Well, she was finally accepted as a bad bargain and became the wife of one of the original buyers. After some time death took one of the men — who had been in the deal we write about.

A witch-doctor solemnly stated that his death was due to the "strange" woman that had been bought. Promptly she was returned to her original owner. He gave the poor creature a terrible beating. He was afraid to shelter her in his compound. Since he was owing some money anyway, to a man living on another hill, he drove the poor woman off to this man and told her to become his wife, in payment for the debt he owed. There was only one way open to the poor miserable creature — to submit. Ladies, who read this, suppose *you* were the woman in this case? Sold as a chattel. Bartered away as a slave. You owe it to God's mercy that you are in a Christian land, infinitely better off. *But what meanwhile of the countless millions of your sisters in heathen lands?"*



CHAPTER XV

HAPPENINGS IN A.D. 1930. THE STORY OF A TREK, OF A TORNADO AND OF THE ARRIVAL OF A WELCOME HELPER

SCARCELY had the year of grace 1930 swung open its portals, or, as the season was propitious, our Johanna went out on another "Trek." This time with Mrs. Forbes, a beloved associate in the work. This chapter will tell that weather conditions in northern Nigeria are not always in keeping with the wishes and expectations of those who choose that part of the year for evangelistic campaigns.

Already before sunrise on that second day of the first month of 1930 we find the two intrepid campaigners for Christ, beginning a tour which, they had planned, was to last 24 days. They had sent their carriers ahead with the necessary food, bedding, etc. Campbed, tables, chairs and kitchen utensils made up several loads. Kwambai was the first stop—a distance of 13 miles from Lupwe. Miss Veenstra reported about this trek as follows:

"We arrived at Kwambai in good time, had breakfast, a chat with the chief, several visitors to greet, etc., etc., until the quiet evening time, when we had a large gospel meeting. The men who accompanied

us as carriers were Christians or school boys, and helped us a great deal with the singing. At the sound of the hymns, the village folks came hurrying along from every quarter. Women with leaves swaying back and forth on their bodies — their only covering; some with wee naked babies in their arms or on their back; men with a loin-cloth of skin or some other scant garment; some with fine strong bodies and others tottering with age or disease; and the usual crowd of boys and girls. All sat before us, and all joined in with the singing which was in their own tongue and composed to a native tune. After the singing we gave them a message from the Word. They listened well, and are now advanced to that place where concentration is not difficult and they are able to take in and understand a good amount of teaching.

“Day after day we pushed along trying not to skip a single village en route. Some days we had very comfortable quarters to camp in, and other days we were almost ‘baked’ in some wee mud hut with low roof of only a few layers of grass.

“The first fifty miles of our trek was not really hard. It was a pleasure. The people being used to us on that road, we lacked nothing, and had a good reception everywhere. But after this we decided to send back our wheels, and strike off on the narrow trail through the remote part of our district. This

part of our journey we found much more strenuous; yea, a few times we nearly fainted with exhaustion and sun. Not because we were unduly careless, but because we were forced to tramp from dawn until nearly midday without a rest, there being no village to stop at. It was our first visit at some of these places and the people were frightened of us. Evil reports were started and spread like wildfire. At one place they said it had been told them that the purpose of our coming was to cut everybody's arms off up to the elbow. By many of the people it was verily believed that we had the power to bewitch whomsoever we would.

“This second half of our trek was right along the slope of some mountain. This was rather dangerous going, as a slip would have meant a fall several feet down into some hole or on some rocks. We climbed over not less than four steep mountain passes. Then again we just smiled, sat down and let our bodies slide down some steep hole, too deep to step or jump. At the other side one of the men would pull us up by hand.

“Home was sweeter than ever when we arrived there after 24 days of gypsy wanderings. We gave a message in nearly fifty different villages — reaching a little over 2,000 people.”

But even in that home, or rather close to it Kwambai where she loved to tarry so often, Miss Veenstra

experienced that weather conditions are not always ideal. Witness what she went through at that place during June 1930 — a tornado.

One night, during what with us in Britain and North America is the “month of roses,” a tornado raged, taking down two small trees, each within a hundred feet of her hut, and during the dark hours of the night, with a fierce storm outside, one can imagine what she might have felt. But as she wrote, “One clings hard to Him who is our ‘Shelter in the time of storm’” — and “He draws very near to His own in seasons of need and stress.”

The next morning, June 19, 1930, the ground was so damp from the night’s storm that Miss Veenstra hardly expected any to come to service in response to the ringing of the 6 o’clock bell which summoned the people of Kwambai, where she was at the time, to morning worship.

But our missionary was surprised when she saw people hurrying from every quarter of the village until about 100 people were sitting before her. Many of the women attendants wore only leaves or a little piece of cloth on their body. And more men with only a loin cloth. Some men had their sleeping wraps, but they were few indeed. Most of the people sleep in a small hut with a fire. This log fire serves two purposes; it keeps them warm, and the smoke of it keeps away the mosquitoes. Only because of

real desire can so many leave the warm hut, to come and sit in the chill of the early morning, on a damp ground, to worship the Lord. Miss Veenstra wrote: "Surely you and I know that He is worthy of this little effort, but how it cheered my heart to see that so many of Kwambai's people also were to believe that He is worthy. Yes, to at least some of them He has become 'the fairest of ten thousand' — the 'One altogether lovely.'

"At the end of the morning worship, I announced that I would hold dispensary for those who needed medicine. The box of bottles, cups, and bandages was set on a chair beside a small table, and soon I was surrounded with 'patients.' My personal boy, who has been with me now for six years, and himself belonging to this tribe, helped me. We grouped the patients according to their ailments, directing the 'eye cases' to one corner, and the 'ulcer cases' to another, while the rest waited for more careful questioning. I was glad to have with me some cod liver oil, as there are some weak-looking children who could do well with this remedy. Two mothers brought their babies with dysentery, and I marvel there is not more of it, considering the amount of dirty sand the children eat — and the unboiled water they drink. Recently, in speaking to one of our Christians about children *eating sand*, he said: 'Why, White Lady, we are all taught by our parents and

elders that if babies do not eat sand, they will never have strong knees!"

Miss Veenstra in her letter on the subject made this statement a text to call attention to the follies of our own "civilization" with the strings of "Job's tears" tied around the neck of our children—in America at least—to promote the teething of our babies and the piercing of the ears of our young ladies to enhance their beauty.

But some months after that devastating storm her heart was gladdened by another type of young lady—coming from the "States"—Miss Nelle Breen, of Holland, Mich., who reached Ibi October 9, 1930. She was the more welcome since Mr. Bierenga, whose wife had laid down her life in Africa, Chapter XIV, had been compelled to return to the United States, already in 1929, while during 1930 other valued workers, Mr. and Mrs. Forbes, were forced, also by reasons of health, to discontinue the work. Miss Veenstra in the interim had been compelled on alone, and even close her beloved boarding school, see Chapter XI. She found in the new arrival a beloved and valuable fellow-worker—and did not dream at the time, we suppose—that within two years she would have to take up the torch that would drop from her hand on Palm Sunday of the year 1933.



CHAPTER XVI

DAYS OF GLADNESS AT KWAMBAI

"Come before His presence with singing."

THE above words were quoted by Miss Veenstra in an article in "The Light Bearer" of the Sudan United Mission — its number for Aug.-Sept., 1931.

"Sunday, May 10th, to us out here was 'a day of joy and gladness.' On Saturday before, at dawn, Miss Haight, Miss Breen and I left Lupwe on our bicycles, but because of the bad condition of the path, to cover the twelve miles to Kwambai it took us two and a half hours. Word had been sent to the chief that we were coming, and on Friday he had sent six strong men to carry through our camp-beds and other loads. The large round hut which the people voluntarily erected for us last year was swept and ready, and all about it was clean and in order. The chief and his people were ready and waiting for us. As soon as we were in sight they came to meet us, and we were given a very hearty welcome. While all the greetings were going on a kettle was put on the fire, and soon a refreshing cup of hot tea was ready. The camp furniture was next set up, and our little abode made ready for the week-end visit.

“The chief brought us a ‘welcome’ gift of two small fowls, and we knew we were among those who truly appreciated our coming.

Just at sunset a procession of twenty men and women (only three or four of the latter) filed past our hut toward the chief’s compound. We needed not to ask, ‘Who are these, and from whence have they come?’ A few Fiku men had come to the Mission station that week for medicine, and I had sent word back with them about the ‘big, special doings’ to be held at Kwambai on the Sunday, bidding them: ‘Tell your chief, and say that it would be nice if a few of his people would go to Kwambai on the Saturday to witness the special services there.’ So here they filed by, twenty of them, leaving their farm work early, and walking some twelve or fourteen miles in response to our request.”

In the same “Light Bearer” Miss Veenstra writes about the building and dedication of a church at Kwambai. The people there had begun to build such an edifice during her stay among them November, 1930.

She had suggested the building of a rectangular house of worship to seat more people — whereas, as we related elsewhere, round huts are the rule. Old and young, fathers, mothers and children, joyfully prepared what in the Southwest of the United States are called “adobes,” mud shaped as bricks, to be

dried in the sun. When the walls were completed the people looked down on their efforts with satisfaction. Their next united work was to go to places where the grass grew tall. They cut it and daily the pile of bundles grew larger. All this grass had to be woven in strips. For this they must make rope of soft green grass. Then bamboo poles had to be cut and hauled in, all carried by head-loads. But these poles alone would not be strong enough for such a big roof-frame. Heavy "fan-palm" trees needed to be cut down and split into thick beams. These would act as standards. That was the hardest work of all, and absolutely new to these primitive bush folk. But they persevered, and brought it all home safely. Some of these beams were so heavy that it required ten or twenty men to carry a single one of them.

At this stage the poor folk got "stuck." They were quite sure they could not build the frame of the roof. So the chief sent me word of their distress. I could give them advice about it and claim a little knowledge of building by the fact that I was the daughter of a builder (this being my father's trade before he studied for the ministry), but more than this would be required to put up that big, heavy roof-frame. Mr. Hood would gladly have aided them — but he was in America. I said to the chief: "Filibbus is clever with building, and here we have another young man who helped Mr. Hood with this

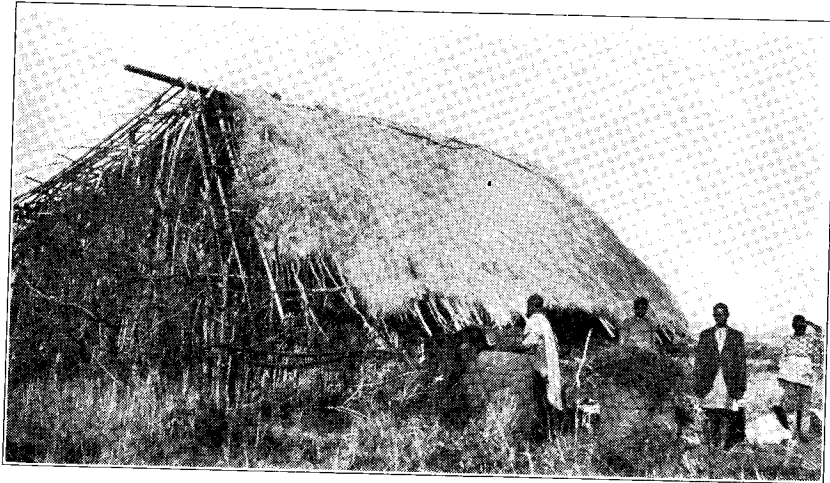
sort of work — I'll send them to help you." And so it came to pass, that after a lot of sweating and hard, laborious effort, another stage was completed. The thatching was not hard for them, and soon the building looked quite complete. The interior was plastered with soft mud, clay benches put in, and the floor beaten hard.

It would be impossible to explain to you with what joy the people viewed their finished task. And all their own. They paid me for the few bolts and heavy nails needed for the roof-frame; and may they never leave it.

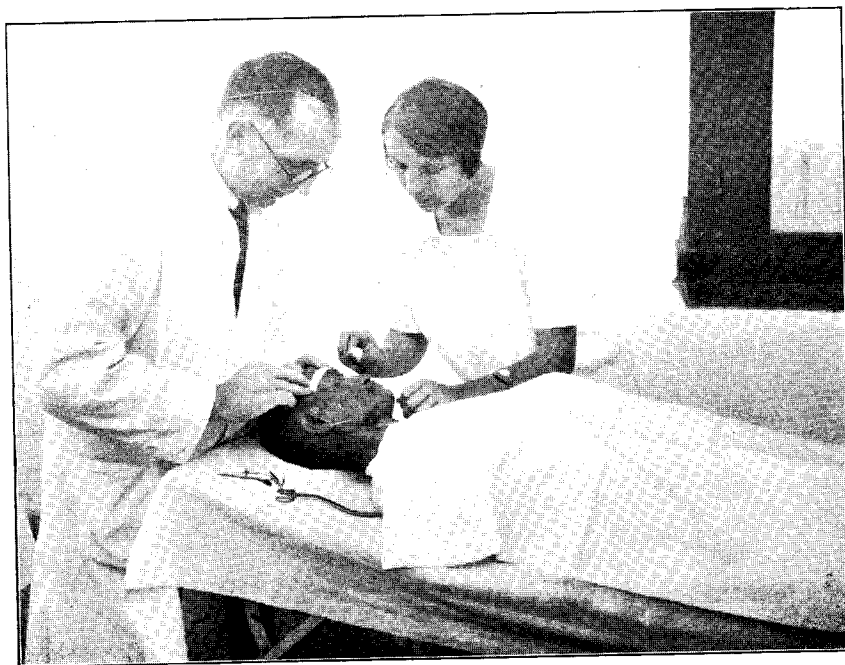
So on the Sunday I am telling you of we dedicated this new house of worship. We did not have an elaborate service.

We did not want them to think that the building was of itself holy. But God Who dwells in us, and Whom we worship here on His own day, is *Holy!* There were two prayers, one by Filibbus and the other by one of the first of the Kwambai men to confess Christ.

After this part of our worship followed a most inspiring sight. Twenty-four men and women had in recent days come to say they wished to confess the Lord publicly. All had been examined early that morning, and permitted to be enrolled as inquirers. And now they were called to the front to answer the questions that would be put to them and to declare



Builders at work



Glimpses of work in a mission hospital



Government inspector on the job



On the Mission Compound — Bodily Exercise

their faith in Jesus Christ, the only and eternal Son of God, as their Redeemer and Lord.

Among the twenty-four was the chief himself. From the beginning he has been interested, but he seemed to hold back until he had fully counted the cost. Now — by grace — he yielded! I say “by grace” because it is seldom heard of that an African chief publicly confesses Christ. Only grace can make it possible.

This part of the worship over, Istifanus preached a sermon that was listened to with fullest attention.

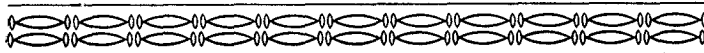
Considering the number of babies in arms, and the crush, the order was wonderful. The chapel will seat one hundred and eighty, but two hundred and fifty squeezed in somehow, some sitting in the aisle, others between the seats, and in some cases they sat in a double row — back to back — on the seats.

We not only “*entered into* His gates with thanksgiving,” but we *came out* in that same spirit. The people were so happy! How radiant were their faces! The elders said to me, “Our hearts are pumping with happiness.” We missionaries wept a few tears through our smiles, and lifted our hearts so many times in praise to our Triune God.

In the afternoon we again gathered. I sought to explain to them how God desires us to worship Him, and the behaviour He would have us maintain in His

house during worship. There were fully two hundred at the afternoon meeting.

The day ended, but the joy and gladness in our heart still abides. It is also for you, praying friends, to share and enjoy.



CHAPTER XVII

A HEARTENING CONFERENCE AT DONGA. HER FURLOUGH IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE HOMELAND. JOYFUL RETURN TO NIGERIA

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them."

MISS VEENSTRA saw but a small beginning of the harvest among the people of the Dzompere tribe. The "News Letter" for July, 1931, contained reports signed by Miss Veenstra and Miss Breen. Since we have hitherto refrained from giving statistics we place them here to give a bird's eye view of the work. For the month of January there was a total attendance at morning worship at Takum, Lupwe and Kwambai of 2,531 persons. The enquirers' class was given at 212. Sunday School, 67. Prayer meeting, 234. Day school pupils on rolls, 827. Medical patients, 87. That month over 50 villages were reached with the gospel message in the Takum district. The dispensary had been a busy place. Filibus and Istifanus spent the whole month itinerating.

For March it was reported: Average at Sunday morning service, Kwambai, 140; Takum, 50; Fikyu, 100; Lupwe, 12.

At three other Dzompere villages, there have been public declarations of desire to leave the spirit wor-

ship and follow Christ. The Lord is definitely showing where we are to carry the line of advance.

That same "News Letter" stated: "Miss Veenstra is coming to America on furlough this summer. Many hundreds of her friends will greet her with joy. She is a hard worker and a successful missionary. God has used her in a wonderful way. We wish that all readers of "News Letter" would provide themselves with a copy of her two books, one is "Pioneering in Africa," the other "Black Diamonds." Both of these are very interesting and give Christians the information they need about missionary operations in that great continent.

Before she left Africa she attended a conference of native christians at Donga, one of the stations on the field. She wrote us:

"There were delegates from Kwambai, Lupwe, Takum, Wukari and Ibi, and it was lovely to see the harmony and fellowship between them. Most of the meetings were left entirely in charge of the leading Africans, and it was good to watch their ability. There is no doubt that most of them were endowed with power from on high, and as they conducted the services we were conscious that God's Spirit was in our midst. We had some lovely surprises in that many proved a measure of ability far beyond our expectations.

"On Sunday afternoon we sat together — a goodly number — about the table of our Lord to partake of the Sacrament that commemorates His atoning death

for us. For us — and for *many of Africa's sons and daughters*.

In the evening we had the last service, and what a lot of cordial “farewells” after it.

On one of the days of Conference, I gathered the leaders from the different churches and explained to them the meaning and purpose of a “Classical meeting.” I told them this was the first of such for them, and, as far as I was aware of, the first in our Mission. Then I set in order the matters of discipline, etc., which they were to discuss, asked if they understood, and took my departure. They deliberated for nearly two hours, and in the evening came to report. On each matter they had unanimously agreed — and now we hope that these conferences with a “Classical” meeting will henceforth be held each year.

This marks another step forward in the ideal we have before us of establishing a “self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating” African Church.”

That Sunday at Donga was perhaps the high water mark of Miss Veenstra's experiences in Nigeria. Or, as she expressed it, “a mountain peak of joy.” She never could forget its impressions.

She arrived in England, June 22, 1931, and in August crossed over to her beloved homeland where she held audiences enthralled especially at the meetings of the various Woman's Missionary Unions of

her Church, in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, that same fall, and during January of 1932 in New Jersey.

It was a great pleasure to the author of this book to be together with Miss Veenstra and the Rev. A. H. Smit, a China worker, at the Foreign Mission Conference session held at Atlantic City, N. J., during the opening days of 1932. A precious reminder of these happy and useful days is a picture we had taken of our trio, on the famous boardwalk of this town, and we are glad to present it to our readers among the many pictures in this book. During those January days we never thought of the possibility that they would be the last ones we would spend in her company here below.

She sailed for England on April 9th, 1932, on the S.S. Adriatic. Her parting message to friends in the United States was:

“This little word of farewell comes from a heart almost too full with joy and praise for expression in words. Truly, there have been poured upon us ‘showers of blessing’ from the presence of the Lord.

“On this furlough I addressed more gatherings than on any previous furlough, and everywhere we were assured, by large numbers of friends, of constant and definite intercession for the work in the Sudan.

“In every place homes were open with kindly hospitality; cars were offered to make travel easy and speedy; and the fellowship with ‘kindred spirits’ was pleasant and profitable beyond all my expectation.

Very humbly, and very sincerely, in the name of our faithful Jehovah, I want to thank you all, praying that He who said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me,' may Himself reward you with the promised blessings.

"You will rejoice with me that Miss Jennie Stielstra a fully qualified teacher, will sail a month later from New York, and proceed with me from England to the Sudan. Miss Bertha Zagers (chapter XX) also came along at the same time.

"And now 'may the Lord watch between us while we are absent one from the other,' under every circumstance causing His grace to overshadow us and His love to possess us."

Interesting is the "Log" of her ocean trip to England, as he placed it in the *Missionary Monthly* of August, 1932. It was headed: "Miss Veenstra's *Log on Board S. S. Adriatic From New York to Old Ireland.*"

"Saturday, April 9th—Today, for the fourth time, the visible 'ties that bind' one to country, church, home and friends, are again severed. Joy and sorrow mingle in one's heart. I feel the support of prayer. And this is so precious and helpful. No, friends, it is not in vain that you intercede for us! We are not unmindful, but exceedingly grateful!

"A large group of friends came to see the steamer slide out of port. A very impressive service was conducted — Rev. Beebe taking charge and Rev. Hoog-

stra assisting. Rev. Spoelhof and Mr. Apol, missionary at Hoboken, were also present. To all these friends I express a very hearty and loving word of gratitude. How much it means to have this support when we 'press on'—singing: 'I would not ask to see the distant scene, One step enough for me. Lead Thou me on!'

"And to the many friends who could not be present, but who sent letters of cheer and help, and who very specially remembered us at the throne of all grace — my deep thanks. Thinking of you we pray:

Holy Father, in Thy mercy,
Hear our anxious prayer,
Keep our loved ones, now far absent,
'Neath Thy care.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
God the One in Three,
Bless them, guide them, save them, keep them,
Near to Thee. Amen.

"Sunday, April 10th—At 9:00 A. M. the Roman Catholics had a mass, there being a priest on board.

"At 11 A. M. there was a short quiet service for all Protestants who wished to attend. The Captain of the ship conducted it, there being no minister aboard. The service consisted of hymns, prayers from the Church of England Prayer Book, and several Scripture portions were read. There was no sermon. A collection was taken, as is the usual custom, for seamen's widows and orphans. To me it was an hour of blessing.

“We spent the afternoon reading and resting. In the evening a small group gathered in the Library for some hymn singing. There was a nurse aboard — with whom I made friends for the journey — and she sang several beautiful solos. I said a few things about Africa in a little informal talk.

“So the day went by and we were again very conscious that many friends in the Homeland — as yet near by — were thinking of us and praying for us. And we remembered you.

“Monday, April 11th—Upon awakening this morning we found the ship fastened to the wharf at Halifax, Nova Scotia. As we remained here all morning, we went and took a walk through the town. Halifax is not a large town, there being only one main street. At 2 P. M. we again ‘let loose’ and by sunset were out of sight of land and into the open Atlantic.

“Tuesday, April 12th—The weather being cold and the sea a little rough, it sent me to my cabin — seasick!

“Wednesday, April 13th—Arose early, but forced by the motion of the boat to have a ‘lazy’ day.

“Thursday, April 14th—A beautiful bright day — warmer and calmer. We walked the deck, and played some outdoor games. In the evening there was a ‘fancy dress’ parade.

“Friday, April 15th—Another beautiful day. Some more outdoor life. And the treat of each day read-

ing six or seven steamer letters. How much they remind me of the love that goes out to those of us who are privileged to labor for Christ in distant lands.

“Saturday, April 16th—Ditto to Friday, plus a concert in the evening.

Sunday, April 17th—Again we had a quiet service like that of the Sunday before.

“For the first time since leaving New York I had to put up a real struggle to drive away the pangs of loneliness and longing. Missionaries are not angels—but ordinary human beings, ‘subject to like passions as ye all.’

“Then I thought much today of all your love to me this furlough. Kindnesses beyond number were shown me! Such gracious hospitality, and such true fellowship! Everything possible was done to make ‘hard work’ as easy as could be. And besides the heavy deputation work, there were hours and days of pleasure and relaxation provided by thoughtful friends. I dare not even try to thank you all! He, Who knoweth the heart, sees the glad refrain: ‘Praise God from Whom *all* blessings flow.’

“Monday, April 18th—Arrived in Ireland at 3 A. M. A stranger in a strange land on a cold morning, cherishing anew the promise: ‘Lo, I am with you always!’

"I shall be delayed a little in going to the field. The reason? Need of a little quiet rest.

"Be all at rest, my soul! Oh, blessed secret
Of the true life that glorifies thy Lord;
Not always doth the *busiest* soul best serve Him,
But he who resteth on His faithful word."

"Feeling keenly the need of this quiet soul-refreshing rest before entering anew upon the task in Africa. I agreed to obey the wishes of 'the powers that be' and postpone sailing from here until mid-June.

"Be all at rest, for rest is highest service;
To the still heart God doth His secrets tell;
Thus shalt thou learn to wait, and watch, and labor,
Strengthened to bear, since Christ in thee doth dwell."

She enjoyed her visit to Ireland. While in England she among several other gatherings, addressed the annual meeting of the Sudan United Mission in London, and we are told "those who heard her pleading for her Sudan" are not likely to forget that moving experience, when the Holy Spirit was present in power. In her earnestness and her desire to help forward the work, she overtaxed her strength, not securing the needed rest while on furlough, and toiling strenuously while in the Field; and undoubtedly it was this sacrifice of herself that lessened her power to rally under the illness which has cut her off in her prime.

Yet with all her earnestness, she had a saving sense of humor, and a generosity and large-hearted-

ness which, combined with a genius for friendship, won for her the affection and esteem of her colleagues and of all who had to do with her, especially of those who had the privilege of entertaining her as a guest and enjoying intimate fellowship with her.

The party of missionaries sailed from England June, 1932, and on July 14 following, Miss Veenstra wrote an interesting letter "on a barge on the Benue river, Nigeria. It was one expressing joyful appreciation since her Sender had made everything well with her and her fellow-travellers.

The next day she expected to land at Ibi and from there Mr. Forbes was to take them to their station in his motorcycle and side-car. They arrived duly at Lupwe, and six weeks later, Sept. 9th a cheerful letter was penned there telling the news of a hearty reception. Delegations from the outstations came, and among those who uttered messages of welcome was a large group from her beloved Kwambai about whose first fruits we wrote in Chapter XVI. Miss Veenstra wrote in what may have been her last report, dated April, 1933:

"At Kwambai the work is strengthening. Most of the adults in the village have now publicly confessed faith in Christ. The Church is developing splendidly and we see evidences of growth in knowledge and good works. This year the tithes of farm produce and money have increased considerably. Eleven men were chosen to form the first class in preparation for baptism.

“At both the Jenuwa villages and at Fikyu there is encouraging progress. At each of these three places a house of worship has been built. Not being content with their first attempt, the Fikyu Christians are erecting a bigger and a better place this dry season. The spirit in which the Jenuwa Christians have accepted and tolerated the persecution from their heathen neighbors at Acha is worthy of mention. They have indeed learned to pray for their enemies. The Kwambai Christians shoulder the biggest responsibility for taking charge of the Sunday worship at these three places.

“We find the most effective method of spreading the Gospel is that of a prolonged visit, at least a month, every year at each out-station. During such a time definite Bible study is given, all matters of discipline are dealt with, the leaders are guided and helped in church matters, and many hours of personal work engaged in. Where it is impossible to give so much time, a shorter visit is made, with the same detail of work, but this is never as satisfactory as the longer visit. However, it is better than just an over-night stop. Recently we spent three nights at each of the three newest centers, and with much pleasure and blessing.

“Adult baptisms, total number — Donga, male 14, female 6; Wukari, male 2, female 2; Takum, male 11, female 13.

“Dedication of infants, total number — Donga, male, 8, female 12; Wukari, male 1, female 2; Takum, male 9, female 14.

“Enquirers on Roll, total number — Donga, male 19, female 6; Wukari, male 6, female 2; Takum, male 18, female 13; Kwambai, male 55, female 71.

“In January the Lupwe Boarding School began with boarders coming from several towns in our district. Iliya, the Wukari evangelist, and Yohanatan, the Kwambai evangelist, have come as pupil-teachers. Seven new huts have been built to accommodate the growing enrollment. Also a fine new three room dispensary has been added, since the old one room hut was far too small for the expanding medical work.

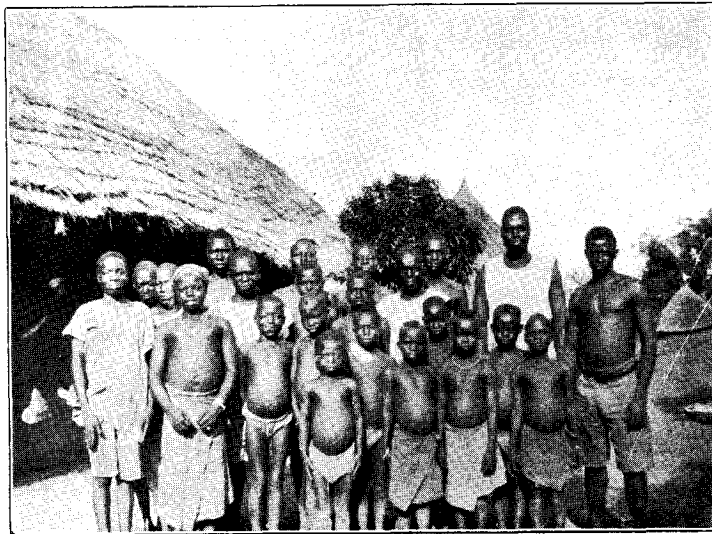
“We spent the first ten days of the month visiting the three newest out-stations: Fikyu, Jenuwa na Kogi and Jenuwa na Bayan Dutse. In each of these three places we lodged three nights. The group of Christians in every place received us well, begged of us to stay longer, and to return to them very soon with a much longer visit. At one place, where the persecution has been very bitter, the heathen held their annual fetish festival while we were there. They had heard of our coming and planned their beer to be ready at that time. For one night and a day the people were very wild. The Christians expressed fear for us and for themselves. Much prayer was offered, and their new chapel, such a nice, neat little building, was constantly guarded. Later on our

prayer was turned to praise because our Father made us all to 'dwell in safety by Him,' and not a hair of our heads was touched. These Christians also built us a new hut that we might dwell among them at any time in a measure of comfort.

"The visit was in every way very encouraging. We returned full of joy for the tokens of Grace poured upon these Dzompere people."



Ready to witness

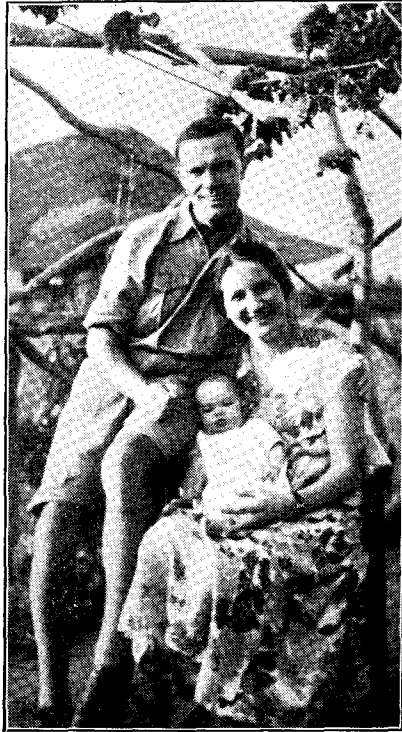


Candidates for School



*Miss Veenstra, Rev. A. H. Smit and the Director of Missions
on Atlantic City's famous boardwalk, Jan., 1932*

[193]



The Smith family



Faithful to the end — Filibbus

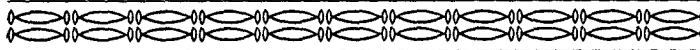
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Miss Jennie Stielstra



Miss Bertha Zagers, R. N.



CHAPTER XVIII

SUNSET AT MIDDAY PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1933

*"Her sun is gone down while it was
yet day."*

DURING January, 1933, Johanna of Nigeria wrote us "Today it is thirteen years ago since I first set foot on African soil. As one looks back over the varying experiences, some of them mountain peaks of joy, and others valleys of depression and disappointments, one is led to humble gratitude to Him who all the way leadeth His children. My heart is full of joy at the remembrance of all His love."

And well she needed such cheerfulness, for her task was very onerous at the beginning of the fourteenth year of service in the land of the Blacks. In a letter to her mother, written Jan. 11, 1933, she recounted what a busy week she had just gone through. There had been several obstetrical cases. Seven new huts had been built and roofing was just then going on. Moreover, she had at the time just started building a new dispensary. "I have 40 workmen on the place," she wrote, "and I feel often that we have too much to do."

Evidently she was feeling the strain of her work, and continued: "At the end of March I am going to

the Plateau to have my vacation in April." We have wondered at times if Miss Veenstra had any forebodings of the coming end of her labors. Often the Lord in some way sends them to His dear ones before their translation. But we presume she did not fully realize at the time how her journey to the Plateau would be her stepping stone to the Celestial City.

A Field Council meeting held at Forum, March 31, was attended by her. Then, in company of Dr. Barnden of the Vom hospital of the Sudan United Mission, she went to Vom — on the Bauchi Plateau, some 4,000 or 5,000 feet above sea level — with a climate meaning quite a change compared to that of the Benue river district.

Vom is the important hospital station of the Sudan United Mission, just like Gindiri, also on the Plateau, is the Bible Training College. The latter is a more recent enterprise, while Vom is an old and an established work, as Eva Stuart Watt wrote in her "Thirsting for God." She informs us that the present Vom hospital is extensive. Since 1923 different buildings have been added, one by one. All the roofs are corrugated iron, painted green, which looks nice and fresh against the straw colored veldt all around.

Vom itself is a town of over 7,000 inhabitants, covering an area of about 7 square miles. The patients gathering in the hospital day by day, repre-

sent people from any and every tribe in Nigeria almost, north, south, east and west.

Soon Miss Veenstra was to be one of them. In a letter written by Mrs. Barnden, the wife of the doctor of the Vom hospital, we read the following interesting detailed statement of what happened at Vom during the last days and hours of the heroine of this book.

“Miss Veenstra told Dr. Barnden that occasionally she had a little pain in her side, which suggested appendicitis, but the pain came and went, so did not worry her at all. After examination the doctor felt it would be best to remove the appendix, and Miss Veenstra readily agreed, having come prepared for an operation if necessary.

“We operated on her on Tuesday morning, April 4th, and she stood the operation well, taking the anaesthetic splendidly. The appendix was found to contain faecal matter and concretions, which had it not been removed would have given serious trouble later on.

“She was a little nervous about the operation, but the Lord gave her the message that morning: ‘My peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled.’ This was a great comfort to her and she told me that she just kept on repeating it while going under the anaesthetic. She was as comfortable as could be expected after coming round, and during the first night, and part of the next day she vomited a good deal, and there was flatulence. She was a little rest-

less towards evening and Dr. gave her a sleeping draught.

“She had a good night on Wednesday and felt much better on Thursday morning and was very bright. She seemed unable to get over the vomiting and retching, and beyond water was only able to take a little tea and calves’ foot jelly, and just a glass of milk.

“In spite of a sleeping draught on Thursday she had very little sleep, and felt rather worn out on Friday. Part of Thursday and Friday she was troubled with diarrhoea, and this distressed her, and the ‘gas’ in her stomach, she said, gave her a good deal of pain.

“She really had a bad day on Friday, and Saturday morning was feeling easier. (Fortunately, we were able to get ice for her a few miles away.)

“She was fairly comfortable on Saturday but her pulse was not quite so good. She longed to get a good sleep. After tea Dr. and I fixed her up and made her quite comfortable, and she thought she might manage a little sleep. We left her and she lay very quiet without any retching. We thought she might be asleep and I stole into the room to see. She was not asleep but feeling restful. I gave her a drink and an hour or so later I again stole into the room but think she was dozing so did not disturb her.

“About 9 P. M. she rang her bell and on answering it she said ‘I’m sinking.’ We then found her pulse

had become very rapid which indicated that the heart was failing. My husband and Dr. and Mrs. Turner who were in the house came at once. From then on we did not leave her. Dr. and I stayed with her until 1:30 A. M., when Dr. and Mrs. Turner relieved us, but they called us at 4:20 A. M.

“She told us on Saturday evening that the Lord had given her such assurance that day that she would be better tomorrow.

“When we went to her at 9 P. M. my husband prayed with her and spoke a few words to her and she repeated ‘He’s altogether lovely.’ (This she repeated two or three times) ‘My portion.’ Later on she said ‘Thrown into the presence of the Lord.’

“She asked me to do one or two things for her, including ‘Send a detailed cable to Mr. Dawson for my mother.’ About midnight she said, ‘Tell my mother to be all at rest, to have no memorial apologies.’ ‘I’m all unworthy, only a sinner saved by Grace,’ and as she said this her face lit up with a beautiful smile. A few minutes later she said ‘Tell my brothers and sisters I want them *all* to meet me in heaven.’ (It was a little more difficult for her to speak now). Again as she said ‘Meet me in heaven,’ her face was radiant.

“Soon after 12:30 A. M. she asked if it was Sunday, I told her it was and asked why she asked and her reply was, ‘It is so nice to go Home on the Rest Day.’ Then she said twice ‘I’m not sorry I let Dr. Barnden look after me, it is all in the Will of God.’

“Whilst Dr. and Mrs. Turner were with her she said, ‘Lord give me patience,’ ‘Lord, deliver me,’ ‘Jesus, Victor over death.’

“When we went back to her at 4:30 we could see the end would not be long. At 4:45 she said, ‘Thank you, Lord,’ and at 5 o’clock ‘My name, did you say?’ After that she wandered a little and we could not catch what she said but she looked years younger, and her face, was lighted up, she mentioned many names and we heard ‘1906.’ Then her breathing became labored and she passed peacefully into the presence of her Lord at 5:40 A. M.

“We sent a messenger off to Mr. Suffill who was at Miango to ask if he would come and conduct the funeral service.

“Mr. Smith and Mr. Hopkins accompanied him. They went into Jos before coming on to Vom and were able to procure a coffin. The Sudan Interior Mission friends in Jos were very, very sorry to hear the news of Miss Veenstra’s Homecall. Twelve of them came out the twenty-two miles to show their respect and esteem.

“We held the first part of the service in the church and the hymn ‘Jesus Triumphant’ was sung.

“There were nineteen Europeans present and a number of natives — some who had been at Lupwe with Miss Veenstra but are now working for us.

“We then gathered round the graveside in our little cemetery (Miss Veenstra is the first European to be laid there), where the remainder of the service

was held. It was impressive, and as one looked in the open grave one could only think of dear Miss Veenstra rejoicing in the presence of her Lord, receiving her 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"The service was closed with a Hausa hymn, and Dr. Stirrett offered prayer in Hausa, just what Miss Veenstra would have liked, I'm sure.

"The cemetery, is nearly half a mile away from the Station in a very quiet spot among the hills and rocks, surrounded with very pretty country and all is so peaceful. [See accompanying cut. The grave with small cement cross on it, marks Miss Veenstra's resting place. "Till the Day dawns." H. B.]

"Am sure all present must have felt it a time for reconsecration, and I personally prayed that I might be as ready to go when the time comes as Miss Veenstra was.

"For her we rejoice, but for you we mourn her loss we deeply sympathize and you were commended to the Lord both in English and Hausa at the graveside, and many prayers are ascending out here on the Field that the Lord will comfort your hearts.

"We have known Miss Veenstra since May, 1920, and had the greatest admiration for her. It was always a joy to be with her on the few occasions when circumstances have permitted. She has done a wonderful work for God out here in Nigeria and was held in the highest esteem by all who knew her.

"All feel she could be ill spared from the work and it will be difficult for others to carry on, but we

know He doeth all things well, and maketh no mistakes.

“With our prayerful, deepest sympathy,

“Yours in His Royal Service,

P. W. and DORA BARNDEN.”

From the British Resident of the Benue Province came a message, about our Mary Slessor, reading as follows:

“It is with great regret that I have learned of the death of Miss Veenstra and I wish to offer you and the members of the Sudan United Mission my sincere sympathy in the loss which the Mission has sustained.

I have served in this province for little more than three years and have visited Lupwe only once, but I have fully appreciated the self-sacrificing work which Miss Veenstra has been quietly carrying on for years among the primitive Dzompere in Takum District. I feel that these people have lost a true friend and that the administration has lost a valuable colleague in the work of civilization in this backward area.

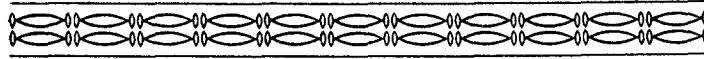
“I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(signed) E. W. PEMBLETON.”

In Great Britain, at various places, and particularly in the homeland, Memorial services were held to commemorate the life and labor and triumphant

home going, of our beloved worker. And the fact that this departure took place on Palm Sunday of the year of grace, 1933, was pointed out — as a most appropriate date for Miss Veenstra, to join the innumerable throng of those who, as sketched in the book of Revelation, through free grace, are standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.



CHAPTER XIX

FRUITS REAPED AFTER THE SOWER WENT HOME. FROM A MUDHUT TO A MANSION ON HIGH. FRUITS IN DONGALAND

THE Bible tells us about Abel, that “he being dead yet speaketh.” After Miss Veenstra herself had been translated from the Vom hospital to Gloryland, we received a letter from her under the striking title, “From a Mudhut to a Mansion on High.” We think our readers will be glad to read it, also because the lines written above it, apply so strikingly to her own transition. She wrote as follows:

“To many of you the name of our elder sister in the church of *Takum* is not unfamiliar — the name of the first woman baptised in this district — Pa’ana, or “*The Daughter of Prayer.*” She has departed and gone to be with Him Whom her soul loved.

“She was not ill for long, but a heavy attack of malaria took hold of her, and one evening I found her almost unconscious. We gave her medicine, and she got over this attack. On Tuesday when I went into *Takum* she was sitting outside enjoying the cool of the day. I had a little friendly chat with her then, and she said, ‘I cried with strong crying to the Lord to take me to Himself; He did not do it. Then I got angry and my mouth spoke many harsh words. You

know the kind, such as we old women speak. I sinned much against my Lord.' I asked her, if she felt thus convicted, had she told the Savior about it. Then she said, with broken voice, 'I have wept tears and confessed it all, and asked Him to forgive me.' I further questioned, 'Are you now willing to stay and abide His good time to take you?' And she said, 'Yes, I want to will His will.' I tried to comfort and admonish her, and after we had prayer together I left.

"On the Saturday she was again outside, and when one of the Christian women brought her some food, she partook of it. At night she went to rest. In the morning her body was found quiet and breathless. Her spirit had departed. The Lord had kindly taken her to Himself. As His day of rest (Sunday) commenced, He bade her spirit enter the eternal rest that remaineth for the children of God. When her heart was willing to await His time, He took her gently and without struggle or pain to be with Himself.

"When I came into town that Sunday morning I found the women Christians gathered and performing the necessary preparations for burial upon the body of their elder sister, and the menfolk were out digging the grave. The latter task was a most difficult one. No rain for months made the ground very hard, the sun was scorching hot, and with much effort they labored till noon before their task was completed. Just at noon, we all filed along the road

and laid to rest the remains of one we truly loved. The funeral was conducted by Filibbus and Istifanus.

Personally I felt more like singing a psalm than like weeping. I knew how eagerly she wanted to depart this life. She was getting old and was so lonely. She had no children to care for her or visit her. Her close relatives forsook her when she refused to worship the spirits together with them. Her frequent infirmities made it impossible for her to 'go in and out' as she would like, and many a Sunday she was kept from church by poor health.

"All that day I pondered over the tremendous surprise that must be the portion of these Christians who live their life in a wee clay dwelling, who sleep always on the hard floor, who know not a single one of the comforts of life which we so lavishly enjoy, who go through one illness after another without ever once knowing the touch of a physician upon their body. What a contrast! From such a primitive state of imperfection to the 'house of many mansions,' prepared by the perfect Master-Builder, Who is Himself the Host!

"'The Daughter of Prayer' prays for us no more. She has passed on. Many of the prayers she offered will yet be answered. Neither need you pray for her any longer, for where she is one hath no need of our prayers. Let us rather rejoice in the grace of God our Savior, which grace redeemed her and us, which

grace flowed from her life, and will, as we yield to will His will, flow through us also.

JOHANNA VEENSTRA."

But we read of other fruit harvested after the Sower had been promoted to higher service. At the time Miss Nelle Breen, now Mrs. E. H. Smith, see next chapter, wrote us under the heading "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." (Isaiah 59:1), as follows:

"In October, 1932, Miss Veenstra visited Donga, an out-station of Lupwe, for a month. While there she wrote an article using verses from the beautiful hymn, 'At Even ere the sun was set' to depict the condition of the different Christians there. Since that time the 'fever chart' has again taken on another curve.

"The man whom she feared would 'lose the love he had' has made a clean breast of all his sins, even revealing many no one had any idea he had committed. At the native conference this year he spoke on 'The Prodigal Son' and used his own story as a warning to all gathered. We praise the Lord who has made of this son of Donga a humble witness to His power.

There are others however who have not heeded the wooing of the Spirit. Our readers will remember him a little more than two years ago, one of the baptized Christians was made chief of Donga. We

all cried unto the Lord to save Sambo from the temptations which we knew would be his in this new position. But alas! Soon news came that he was compromising with the Mohammedans and heathen with whispers of negotiations for another wife as well. Miss Veenstra spent hours with him pleading for his soul.

“Last October when we again visited Donga we too were given an opportunity to speak to him. He usually came to greet us attended by his courtiers but one evening he came without his attendants and dressed simply as an ordinary citizen. It was not long before the conversation led to spiritual matters. Over and over were we reminded of king Saul and we told him so.

“‘And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free;’

“Again did we hope Sambo would take the outstretched arm that would free him from the hold of the world for he confessed his guilt and asked that we pray together.

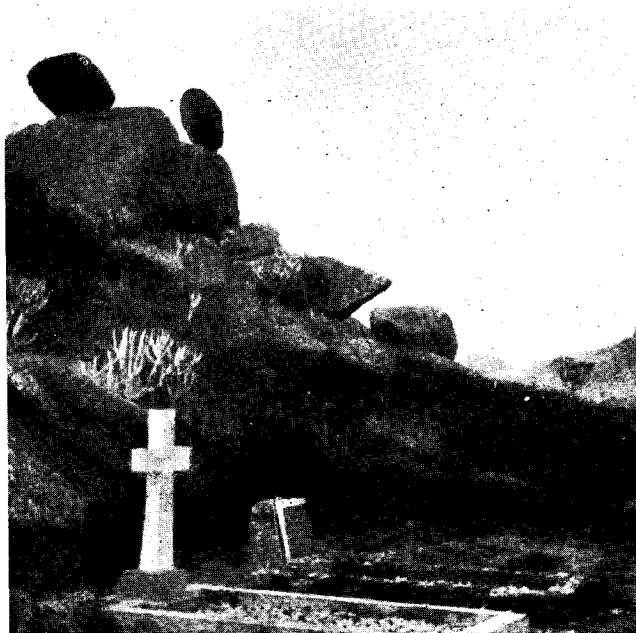
“Recently word was received that the Donga chief had taken the daughter of the Wukari chief as his wife. This chief is head of the Jukun fetish system, yet a baptized Christian would ally himself in marriage with the powers of darkness. Our hearts were sore as we heard that now Sambo has somewhere between ten and twenty wives. The Christian who came and told us said, ‘Batuirya, for four days I sat

as one dead. I never left the compound. I was ashamed of the man who bore the name of Christ and would have a seven day marriage feast for heathen and Moslems — joining hands with all the enemies of the Savior whom we love.'

"Another of Donga's early converts has chosen the path of the world. Angry because a Christian girl, preferring another, had refused him, Elisha'a in haste married a harlot, a woman twice divorced and once living with a man out of wedlock. When we spoke of the sin he had committed he cried like a child and wanted to put his wife away. Instead we read together from God's Word showing how he should strive to win her to the Lord. In deep contrition he cried for mercy and pleaded that his wife might 'Know Him whom to know is life eternal.' The 'Lord's ear is not heavy that He cannot hear,' and Azumi became a regular attendant at all services and even accompanied the women in their compound preaching.

Now without cause, Elisha'a has sent his wife to her people and wilfully, despite pleadings of native leaders and missionaries he refuses to take her back. Instead he has started proceedings for a divorce. In contrast, the wife has asked permission to make confession of faith in the Lord she has learned to love.

"Donga church has many who have 'Lost the love they had' and we ask that you pray with us that the iniquities which separate them from God and the sins which hide His face from them may be re-



Miss Veenstra's grave, marked by a cement cross



Pa'ana — Daughter of Prayer



*Miss
Tena A.
Huizenga,
R. N.*

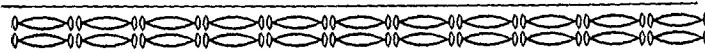
pented of and again His face shine upon them for He will hear.

“We know His arm has the power as in the days of Isaiah for in these days He is manifesting His strength of arm and His listening ear. Most of our Sudan friends know of Iliya or Gani and his patient, persevering witnessing in Wukari. Oh, the years that His servants have pleaded with the Jukuns of Wukari to give their hearts to the Lord! The countless tears they have shed in pleading before the throne of grace for the souls of those who loved the darkness rather than the light. Now and again a faint glimmer would arise and the hearts of God’s saints would rejoice, only to have darkness again descend. Yet Iliya faithfully went on, calling his townsmen to repentance. He might today be a man of wealth and honor among his people for the chief sent him to the Mission school that he might later use his knowledge in the court, but God stretched forth His arm and chose Iliya for His service.

“Today Iliya came back to Lupwe with a face just radiant with joy in the Lord. He had received word that three young men who are attending the government secondary school were home for vacation and wanted to confess their Lord as Savior. Iliya is with us for three months of school, so we gave him permission to go home and receive these boys if he found they were worthy. He went and found not only three but many who desired to confess the Lord,

but upon questioning and talking with them, six were reckoned ready for the step.

“When we remember the twelve young men who took a stand for the Lord in March, the three in April, two in May and now these six we do not believe we are too optimistic in believing that ‘The light is come.’ We have faith in the mighty arm that is saving Wukari’s young men, the ear that is not heavy but heareth the cries of the Dzompere tribe, snatching many from the powers of darkness, and believe the same arm can and will save Donga’s sons and daughters!”



CHAPTER XX

THE WORK IN MISS VEENSTRA'S DISTRICT TILL DATE. NEW WORKERS AND NEW BLESSINGS. THE MEMORIAL SCHOOL. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1936

*"God buries the workman but the
work continues." — WESLEY.*

"GOD buries the workman but the work continues," that famous saying of Wesley, is also applicable to Johanna of Nigeria. Eva Stuart Watt, whom we already named, tells us: "God allowed me to see the outcome of faith put through the same furnace heat of testing, and standing today as pure gold. It was at Lupwe, in another section of our American Branch, among the wild Dzompere cannibals. The day I reached Lupwe station I found myself in a round hut which I learned had been Miss Veenstra's bedroom. A floodtide of thought at once stirred me to my depths. Was it here that woman of God had poured out her disappointments into her Father's bosom? Here that she had knelt storm-tossed and buffeted by Satan and risen in the very calm of heaven to face the battle again? Here that by faith she had subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, and stopped the mouth of lions?" Filibbus also died, the beloved evangelist of Takum, "a man beloved by

all, full of grace and truth." We are glad to be able to show his picture.

But new workers were raised up to continue the work of the Lord in the Sudan. In fact they had already been selected by Miss Veenstra — with careful and prayerful care. Following the Bierenga's as related elsewhere, the first one to come to her aid was Miss Nelle Breen, whom we have already mentioned several times. Our readers will find a charming picture which shows the two ladies in front of their home in Lupwe, in connection with chapter XV.

Miss Breen returned in the late summer of 1932 for her first furlough.

Miss Veenstra, on her return in the spring of 1932 was accompanied by two new workers. They were Miss Bertha M. Zagers, a native of Fremont, Mich., a registered nurse, hitherto engaged in social work for Kent County, and Miss Jennie Stielstra of the Harderwyk, Mich., Christian Reformed Church who was to labor as teacher.

They sailed during the middle of May and gave a good account of themselves. The churches were much interested in their addresses on the work of Nigeria when these two able sisters appeared before large audiences at their first furlough. We are glad to present their pictures as well as that of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Smith, nee Breen, and their little daughter.

Miss Zagers, a consecrated and enthusiastic missionary, did a fine piece of work as nurse — much

appreciated by the natives. But she felt constrained to terminate her labors in Nigeria and at present is making herself useful in philanthropic service in the homeland.

Miss Stielstra, however, continues in her chosen field of labor and the readers of the *Missionary Monthly* are gladdened and edified as she from time to time tells about her activities in the heart of Africa.

Taking the place of Miss Zagers, Miss Tena A. Huizenga arrived at Lupwe, April 1937, in time to see Mr. and Mrs. Smith leave for their furlough. At present writing they are in the United States.

As soon as the news of the demise of Miss Veenstra spread among her countless friends in the United States, a movement started to have something of a *memorial* erected in Nigeria. In the shape of a *schoolbuilding* at Lupwe.

It was carefully constructed, as the following account shows. How were the walls put up? It shows the difficulties with which Miss Veenstra already had to struggle in her days. We read: "First of all we are reminded of the destructive *termites*. If the brick wall is built directly on the concrete foundation, the ants will climb up or follow the cracks which inevitably come because of the terrific heat. Then they will bore into the clay bricks and climb up to the roof in no time. To prevent this, a four-inch layer of pure cement is placed above the foundation. If ants succeed in getting as far as this they will

leave a trail of brown, sticky earth which is easily discernable, and the ants are traced. On top of this a tin sheeting is placed with the corners interlocked. This, extending outside of the wall, makes a barrier for the ant.

“After this the building proper is begun. First the corners must be made — and what a time they had getting them right-angled! Some of the best of the workmen were taught how to lay bricks, for, with only two masons the building would never have been finished. Each builder had to have a man to hand him bricks, another to hand him the mixed clay to put between the bricks. So all day long, some carried kerosene tins of this mixed clay, others loads of bricks, and still others tins of water brought from a nearby stream.

“We thought arched windows would look nice, so a few frames were made from boxes in which our provisions had come. These were placed on top of the space left for windows and the building went on, on top of these frames. Later the frames were removed. No window frames were put in, for there are no glass panes; there are only open arches in the church. They make a pretty frame for the hills and banana trees which are seen through the open window. The school has proper windows with glass panes, for it faces the east from whence our storms come.

“Competitions were held to see which group could do the most in a day. During February and March

it was very, very hot out in the bright sun, for these are our hottest months. Yet the work went on from six in the morning till twelve at noon without a rest time. Then again from two until five in the evening. The wives sent 'kunu,' the native drink, to their husbands (mine had to have jugs and jugs of lime water). Then the little girls came with roasted peanuts, bean cakes and other 'pastries.' Often a great shout of laughter could be heard as someone told a joke, or the impersonator of the group 'took off' someone. Thus the drudgery and the heat were forgotten a bit.

"When the walls of the building are finished there is still a great deal to do. The timber from the fan palm is the best for making the *main frames* of the roof, for it is very hard and strong timber. Weeks and weeks were spent in the surrounding country finding tall, straight trees. A tax must be paid to the government for every tree cut down. When a tree is near some huts, a man must climb it and tie a rope to it, so the tree can be directed when falling. There are no branches until the very top, all the foliage being at the top of the palm tree. Hence climbing the palm tree is no easy matter, and only a few have acquired this skill.

"The work of splitting these trees is very arduous. There are no saw mills to cut up these trunks, but each tree is split by men into four or five lengths. An adze is used to do this work. Many, many callouses were formed in preparing the many strips

we needed. These had to be carried a considerable distance to the place of building.

“After being brought, the frames were made on the ground and these in turn were hoisted onto the brick building. Bands of tin had been built into the building, and when the frames were up these were used to bind the frames to the building. We have such severe tornadoes in Africa that often roofs have been torn from buildings and thrown some distance away.”

But even this was not all. Branches of another kind of palmtrees were nailed across the frames of the roof to form a foundation of the thatch. What thatching looks like another picture in this book will show.

The Lord prospered by work of erecting this memorial school. The work was completed during 1936. The building's main part is used for church services, catechetical classes and ordinary school-work. Morning prayers are also said in this building—and another chapter told us the exemplary turnouts at these prayermeetings in the heart of Africa. The building is used practically the entire year. We read the following statement from Mr. and Mrs. Smith:

“We are greatly enjoying the better facilities for our school work in the new Veenstra Memorial building. We are having a happy time with a fine group of men and women. The sessions are only three months at a time so it means intensive work

while here. The group live right on the compound which enables them to fellowship with one another and also with some of the older Christians who reside here. During part of the first session the three evangelists from Acha, Fikyu, and Jenuwa were here with their families.

“We tried a new plan beginning at 5:45 A. M. and going to 8:00 A. M. Then there was a period of farm labor until 9:45 when they were allowed time to clean up and appear at school at 10:00 for a second session. The women only attended the first session. The afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00 was spent in outside labor and carpentry. This proved so much better that we think best to continue thus.

“Practical evangelistic work is carried on in conjunction with the regular school duties. Each morning the preaching at the medical quarters is done by the Christians from the school. Besides this there are numerous villages round about which are reached on Sunday mornings by the students. This year at the end of the sixth week we held a day of prayer, after which eight of the school men went on a preaching tour of the villages about Gindin Dutse. This little trip meant much to the men for they learned the joy of telling others of Him. Some were quite new for going for any length of time. We pray that it may be an inspiration to them and cause some of them to give their lives for full time service.”

Mr. Smith evidently does a good deal of itinerant work—“trekking” as the term is, taken over from

our Boer brethren. In a letter dated March 23, 1937, he writes us:

“I was away on trek for 45 days during which time my wife and Miss Stielstra bore all the burden of the routine work, which is very heavy.

“In all I walked some 350 miles of bush paths, which partly ran over very hilly country enabling us to reach the Mambilla Plateau 4000 feet high, and bringing us into most of the villages of the hitherto untouched Tigum tribe. For days on end we clambered up and down the treacherous and dizzy hillsides, panting to reach yet further villages of these people so that we preached to well over a thousand adults who had never once heard of Jesus and who called the sun, ‘God’ as it was so faithful in rising every morning. They were an unclothed people apart from strips of bark cloth, and generally resorted to smearing their bodies with palm oil and red powder as a protection from the cold. Red black men who have retained their religion of idols by hiding themselves in these hill fastnesses against the attacks of Moslem Fulani. Even now many are unwilling to set up villages in the valleys where their farms are located. This is partly fear and partly because they own hundreds of oil-palms on the hillsides, and are afraid of thieves should they leave them. The thieves would steal the fruit, from which oil is extracted.

“Everywhere we were received gladly — I think something like 60 fowls must have been given to me

— but it took some time to get them to see the true purport of our coming, as they were used to tax-collectors and they could not fathom why someone should simply walk about preaching. Especially as preaching was such a novelty to them. We were very pleased with the reception given to the Message. Everybody came to listen. In all over 3000 heard the Word at the 75 meetings which we held.

“The trek has enabled me to get first-hand knowledge as to our Eastern boundaries. It takes nine days travelling to reach the boundary and all the country traversed in that time has yet to be evangelized. Many places have only just heard, some haven't been reached and no place has had the Gospel more than ten times. In fact in the main they have never heard more than three times— each time separated by an interval of one or two years. This stretch of country includes the Kento, Ngoro and Tigum tribes and the only and first group of believers is found at Nyita. ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ This is only one point of the compass. You can judge for yourself the problem which is before us. Hilly and hard country, no motor roads, diverse languages, a scattered population, lack of staff either white or black, and needed funds. We know that you bear this burden with us and are sure that our joint petitions at the Throne of Grace will bring an abundant answer from God. His is the work, to Him be all the praise.”

What are the *visible* fruits of all this toil? Our readers know there is *invisible* fruit too. And above

all we should remember that *obedience* to the great missionary command of our Lord, is in God's sight of prime importance. No matter if fruits abound or are but few if any. But as to the fruits that men can see we learn the following from "*Extracts from the Annual Report of Lupwe Station*" as contained in the News Letter of the American branch of the Sudan United Mission, April 1937:

"The spiritual condition of the christians showed a steady growth. Evidences of this is shown by the fact that 17 were baptized during the year, all of them having been carefully examined as to their fitness. Eight of them were from the village of Kwambai, the first to be baptized from that village. Four of these are leaders of work in other villages. There has been a growing number of conversions in the out-centers.

"In earlier years a certain amount of compromise was made over the matter of beer drinking for Christians. For a long time this matter has been kept before them and now there is a fine response. Over fifty per cent have rejected beer drinking. This makes for a stronger church.

"A number are out of fellowship because of sin, but apart from Donga, many have repented and after suitable probation have been received back into fellowship.

"Another sign of growth is evidenced in the big improvement in giving throughout the year in all the out stations. Apart from a small group at Bete,

all the centers have good balances and have proved entirely self-supporting for their own workers and their schools. Moreover, they have now a general fund which is composed of one-tenth of all collections and gifts from all communities. This fund is set aside for the use of needy places and for reaching further afield with the Gospel. From it Malam Istifanus is paid a small sum monthly as a recognition of his leading position and as a slight remuneration for the help he gives to the hill villages. These steps have been taken by the leaders of the church in consultation with myself and have their hearty support.

“The year closed with a series of special meetings held at Takum. They were for all who are following Christ in that town and in the hills about it. The special preachers were Bali, a Yergum from Langtang, and Akiga, a member of the Munchi tribe. Some 120 came from the hills and in all there was an average of some 250 at each meeting. The power of God was manifest. In the service on New Year's morning the church was filled and the overflow sat outside. I am not able to describe it adequately as it is the first thing of its kind I had seen in this land. Prayers, entreaties, exhortations and confessions, not according to a premeditated plan. It just happened. God led. Crowds were constrained to unburden their hearts of the sin which was besetting them, — of deceit, slander, evil living, coldness, cursing, drinking, vile temper, and theft — and all this from professing Christians. Heart deep were these things, eyes brim-

ming with tears, and voices all unsteady, until one's heart was full of mingled sorrow and joy. So ended the old year, and so began the new. Again we take courage.

“The attitude of non-Christians at this time is partly seen in the case of Adamu of Dissam. Ten or more years ago he was a laborer at Lupwe and a bitter opponent of the Gospel. In 1935 he began to show signs of repentance, and this year, without preamble, he announced his intention to leave fetishism and follow Christ. Within a few days he and his entire village burnt their ‘tsafi’ stuff and instituted daily services for Christian teaching. Another example is that of the town of Nyita. In May I spent three days there and discovered that their knowledge of our religion was nil. In July two of the school students spent a week there, and in October when Yakubu went that way, they told him of their intention of leaving the way of their fathers, and within a few days the entire village turned from their fetish and asked for the Christian's God. Already they are building a church and are taking offerings on Sunday on their own initiative.

“The educational enlightenment of the district as a whole does not progress as rapidly as we should like. The lack of spiritual men capable of teaching is largely responsible for this. As long as the people cannot read the Scripture portions in their own language or the Bible in the Hausa language, they remain relatively weak.

“The Boarding School at Lupwe gives us much cause for praise. The new Veenstra Memorial School Building, with its separate class rooms, and the better equipment, has made a striking difference. Concentrated Bible study, hygiene, history, geography, and a pupil teacher class were included in the curriculum. Impromptu prayer meetings were a feature and preaching in the villages on Sundays was a regular routine. As a character moulding agency the boarding school is far greater than the day school. A day school has been started this year and large numbers attend from the surrounding villages.

“The medical work has been carried on throughout the year. After Miss Zagers left in March, the work was done very largely by Audu who is a capable worker and a faithful Christian. Daily the Gospel is preached to the patients and comfort ministered in the Lord's name.

“Manual work is done by all the male boarders at the Lupwe school as a means of earning their board. They do farm work, rough carpentry and simple building work. Such training has much to do in the building of character. Edgar H. Smith.”

And so the good work continues. With its ups and downs. Its seasons of trial and of triumph. What the future has in store — we know not. But it looks to us to be a fine working plan what a S. U. M. Conference held at Miango adopted in 1936 when it was agreed that the following order should be followed. First, evangelization, by visiting compounds, preach-

ing through an interpreter, reducing the language to writing; second — choosing from those interested a few of the most likely, and teaching them to read and write, preparing and printing for their use primers and short Bible stories, and afterwards portions of Scripture and gospels; third — sending out converts to preach to their own people; fourth — classes for training teachers and native evangelists; fifth—starting small classes under native teachers as bush schools; all the above to be voluntary work, carried on by native workers while earning their own living. Later on, whole-time teachers and evangelists to be supported partly by the people they were working amongst, and possibly partly from native Church funds.

It was resolved that during the next three years an attempt should be made to preach the Gospel in every compound within reach of all the mission stations of the various societies represented at the Conference. This will mean a big effort.

Our readers will, of course, notice the great stress laid on evangelism, and we think, rightly so, although not the whole of the missionary task in a country like the Sudan. Really adequate occupation requires more than what is outlined in the Miango plan.

May the Lord graciously bless these efforts and continue to fulfil in Nigeria and everywhere what an old hymn declared:

*“He calls His chosen from afar,
They all at Zion’s gates arrive,
Those who were dead in sin before
Through sovereign grace are made alive.”*