www.WholesomeWords.org edition 2005

The Life Story of Alexander Mackay

Contents

Chapter 1 - A Glance Into the Future

..."Tell the king that I die for Uganda. I have bought this road with my life." These were the last words of the heroic, the sainted, James Hannington, the first Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa. After many years' devotion to the Master's cause in Africa, he conceived the idea of pushing right into the heart of Uganda for the purpose of communicating with, and assisting, Alexander M. Mackay, the noble Christian Scotsman, who, in spite of terrible persecution, persisted in delivering his God-given message.

After much weary marching, Hannington reached Luba, where he fell a victim to the treachery and brutality of Mwanga's savage host. He was seized on Wednesday, the 21st October, 1885. The entry in his diary for that date graphically describes the incident. Though treated with almost revolting barbarity the sublime faith of the hero sustained him. He felt certain that his captors were dragging him to his death, but he sang, "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and also, "My God, I am Thine."

But James Hannington was not granted as quick a passport to his eternal reward as he expected. After being kept eight days in prison he was led out towards the banks of the Victoria Nile and there martyred. Such a reference to Bishop Hannington is valuable for two things — his death took place upon the threshold of the territory which is dedicated to the heroic service of Mackay; also because the same characteristics belong to both — heroic, devoted to duty, loving God and His cause on earth more than life, and saint-like to a degree seldom seen on earth.

As the opening sentence of this narrative typifies the life and work of

Bishop Hannington, so may we throw into bold relief the noble simplicity of Mackay's character by two passages from his writings, referring to the land for which he so willingly, so cheerfully, died. Writing to the Church Missionary Society on the 12th December, 1875, he said:

> "My heart burns for the deliverance of Africa, and if you can send me to any one of those regions which Livingstone and Stanley have found to be groaning under the curse of the slave hunter, I shall be very glad."

At the time he wrote this he was well on the road to the highest possible material prosperity. An equal partnership in a successful business in Moscow had been offered him, but his heart had been touched with a live coal from the altar of God, and the condition of the thousands in darkest Africa seemed to weigh upon him like a heavy personal burden. To go out and teach them was the great passion of his life, and this led him to offer himself to the Church Missionary Society for service in Uganda. He left England on the 27th April, 1876.

Then, after many years of devoted and loyal service, too often checked and interrupted by bitter and unreasoning persecution, he wrote to Mr. Eugene Stock, the editorial secretary of the Church Missionary Society, a letter which shows his love for the country in which he laboured:

> "What is this you write — 'Come home? Surely now, in our terrible dearth of workers, it is not the time for any one to desert his post. Send us only our first twenty men and I may be tempted to come to help you to find the second twenty."

In this manner he refused to accept the tempting offer to return home, where so many dear ones were anxiously waiting to welcome him. Then, at last, on the 14th April, 1890 (fourteen years after he left England), the sad news of his early death reached the Church Missionary Society. It had been telegraphed from Zanzibar. Ten days later Mackay's last letter reached the Society's headquarters. It shows how much he loved the heathen land for which he died, and for the enlightenment of which he forsook home, and all its dear ones, and turned his back upon business prospects which, in a few years, would no doubt have made him a wealthy and successful man.

Referring to recent events in Uganda, and more particularly to the Church, which had stood the sternest of tests, he asked:

> "Shall it be left to die of neglect, or mayhap to be suckled by some ravening wolf, which is already eager to nourish the infant

> nation with her milk, which centuries have shown to be deeply saturated with the ravening wolfish nature? Is this to be so? or is it the resolve of Christian England that the blood of *pure* Christianity shall be instilled into the veins of this African infant, and that it shall be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Mwanga (who had very recently been carried in triumph to the throne from which he had been deposed) writes: 'I want a host of English teachers to come and preach the Gospel to my people.' Our Church members urge me to write, imploring you to strengthen our mission, not by two or three, but by twenty. Is this golden opportunity to be neglected, or is it to be lost for ever? You sons of England, here is a field for your energies! Bring with you your highest education and your greatest talents; you will find scope for the exercise of them all. You men of God, who have resolved to devote your lives to the cure of the souls of men, here is the proper field for you. It is not to win numbers to a church, but to win men to the Saviour, and who otherwise will be lost, that I entreat you to leave your work at home to the many who are ready to undertake it, and to come forth yourselves to reap this field, now white to the harvest. Rome is rushing in with her salvation by sacraments and a religion of carnal ordinances. We want men who will preach Jesus and the Resurrection. 'God is a Spirit,' and let him who believes *that* throw up every consideration and come forth to teach these people to worship Him in spirit and in truth."

This last message of the hero and martyr should be an eloquent appeal to Christendom to stretch forth its hand and gather, in the heart of even dark Africa, a rich and bountiful harvest. Though dead, Alexander Mackay still speaks. His life has become a sainted memory, and the record of his heroism will undoubtedly inspire in the breasts of many young men a God-like zeal to continue the work which he began.

The quotations here given from his letters throw his noble character into bold relief. They tell us the life he lived, the deeds he performed, the prayers and supplications which he daily and hourly laid before his Maker.

They are the best possible prelude to a consideration of those outward and visible deeds which made him an ideal missionary — a zealous and devout Christian burning with a passion to extend Christ's Kingdom on earth, an intrepid explorer, a practical and skilled mechanic, and an organiser and leader of the highest order. Mr. Stanley frequently met Mackay, and had ample opportunities for testing the value of the work he so patiently and so devotedly performed in Uganda.

The testimony of the great explorer is emphatic. "He was the greatest missionary since Livingstone," said Mr. Stanley, on hearing the news of his unexpected death. The ordinary terms of eulogium seem stale and commonplace when used as a description of such a magnificent and yet such a simple life, but it is perfectly safe to place on record the statement that public opinion will yet place Livingstone and Mackay upon the same level. He has not been dead long enough for us to see fully the beauties of his life. We shall draw nearer and nearer a true conception of his character as the years roll by, and as the work which he pioneered draws nearer its inevitable golden harvest.

Chapter 2 - A Mother's Prayers Answered

"In full and glad surrender
He gave himself to Thee;
Thine utterly, and only
And evermore to be."

Alexander Mackay was blessed with a truly Christian parentage. He owed much to the life of a pious mother; he owed a great deal more to her death. It was during the sadness which surrounded her death that the future missionary sought Divine light and guidance, which afterwards were the mainsprings of his inspiring life. Alexander Mackay, LL.D., was Free Church minister of the parish of Rhynie, and it was in this obscure Aberdeenshire village that the future engineer-missionary was born on the 13th October, 1849...

Much might be written of Mackay's boyhood, but we must be content with a reference sufficiently long to foreshadow his after-life. His boyhood was spent amid cultured and godly society. His father was a scientific student as well as a preacher, and he undertook his son's education until he reached his fourteenth birthday, when increasing pastoral duties rendered it necessary to send, in 1864, young Alexander to the Aberdeen Grammar School.

Up to this point he had shown great intellectual capability. A love of books and an intense passion for mechanics appeared to run concurrently through his ever active brain. At seven years of age his text-books were the immortal *Paradise Lost*, *History of Modern Europe* by Russell; *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon's prodigious masterpiece; and *History of the Discovery of America* by Robertson.

Men who were leaders of various branches of scientific thought met around the serious, but hospitable, table of his father, and the boy's

developing faculties were inspired by the discussions on various important questions which took place.

He was alike the pet [loved person] and the anxious care of his mother. All her motherly yearning seemed to concentrate itself around the young, impulsive, bright, lovable boy. Daily, almost hourly, her prayers ascended for his welfare. Her great hope was that his life should be dedicated to the Master's cause, the sacredness ,of which had been increased by the stainless life and the holy devotion of her husband. This hope she was never privileged to see fulfilled.

His love of books produced an almost natural revulsion, and for two years, or a little over, the passion for practical handicraft became the absorbing interest of his young life. Many and many a time he would walk out of his picturesque native village to the nearest railway station in the hope of seeing the engine stop for a few minutes before going farther on its journey.

There is almost a tragic element intermingled with the death of the hero missionary's mother. He was sixteen years of age when the end came, and was still a student at the Aberdeen Grammar School, preparing for the career of a professional teacher. He was the only member of the family absent from the deathbed. The death of his mother was the beginning of his spiritual life; it was the first thread woven into the strong cord which afterwards drew him with a mighty impulsion into the very heart of Africa.

Her last days and nights were spent in prayer for her boy, and when the end was approaching more rapidly than the messenger who could bring Alexander to her, she handed to a godly attendant her most precious souvenir, to be given to [Alexander] when the last scene was over. It was her Bagster's Bible, which had been presented to her as a wedding gift by her husband. To her it had been one of the dearest of mute companions, and she gave instructions that certain passages, specially applicable to the needs of her son, should be prominently marked, in the hope that they would flash conviction across his mind.

Her repeated prayers were abundantly answered; and if Christians can behold after death the things of time and sense (as some authorities aver), she would be more than abundantly satisfied with the nobility of purpose which was created within her son's breast by her last prayerful injunction, "Search the Scriptures."

The Bible was given to the youth just after the funeral. The injunction and the marked passages came to him like messages from Heaven, and they had an inestimable effect in bringing about a thorough

conversion. His later life was marked by a devotional reverence and a fervent waiting upon God.

Chapter 3 - Offers Himself for the Mission Field

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee."

The prayer of Mrs. Mackay not only shaped the destiny of her son, but influenced the whole history of Africa. This is only one additional testimony to the illimitable influence which good and true women have exercised in the world; it is another proof that very often mighty influences spring from *apparently* trivial things.

In 1867 a great change came over the family. The little village of Rhynie was left, and residence was taken up in the busy, but picturesque, city of Edinburgh, "the modern Athens," the most beautiful city in the United Kingdom. Vastly different scenes surrounded the family, but on the whole they were beneficial in giving fuller scope to the constantly developing faculties of the youth whose history we are following.

Alexander, determined upon the pursuit of teaching, entered the Free Church Training College for Teachers, of which the Rev. Dr. Maurice Paterson was Principal. To this sterling Christian Mackay owed a great deal, and of him he always spoke in enthusiastic and affectionate terms. For two years he remained there, and retired with the very highest laurels. Of the students sent for the examinations by the Free Church he stood the highest, and he also received a valuable prize from the Art Department of South Kensington. Three years' study at the Edinburgh University increased alike his knowledge and his reputation. His studies were applied more particularly to the highest branches of handicraft, with an earnest search into classics more by way of relaxation than anything else. Mechanics and engineering, higher mathematics, natural philosophy, surveying, and fortification building: these were his pet studies, and at them he laboured with an industrious application which commanded the best results, not only in the examinations, but in the greater tests which followed.

For a time all intention to enter the ministry was abandoned. To say that this determination was a disappointment to his father is using the mildest possible phrase applicable, but, like a man of sound judgment, he did all he could to ensure his son's proficiency and success in the pursuit of a profession for which apparently nature had eminently fitted him. For a time Alexander held a morning engagement as a college teacher, and then, after donning the roughest of clothes, he went down

to Leith and spent the afternoons toiling hard and patiently in the engineering works of Messrs. Miller & Herbert. Then back to Edinburgh he went, and most of his evenings were spent at the School of Arts, where he earnestly studied chemistry, geology, and other sciences.

Very few of those who then knew him apprehended the momentous fact, but in God's hands this varied educational experience was but the training for his history-making, history-brightening labours in the dark land which provided him with a tomb. Of course it matters little where his body lies; we know where his spirit is, and that is the sole importance which surrounds the whereabouts of a man who has passed out of the range of man's contracted vision.

It was during his terms at the Edinburgh University that he began to take an active, personal part in Christian work. He attended the church of the Rev. Horatius Bonar, who never failed to exercise a very powerful influence over him. The Sunday afternoons he filled up, not by visiting the picturesque sights of the magnificent city, but by conducting special services chiefly for the outcast and ragged children who exist in large numbers even there, and in the evenings he and Dr. John Smith were amongst the most faithful of the teachers at Dr. Guthrie's ragged school, which, at the time referred to, was under the superintendence of that devoted Christian, Mr. Robert Simpson. The future missionary was always happy amongst children, and if we wish to estimate the measure of his self-sacrifice for the sake of Africa, and for Christ's sake, we must pursue our investigation by taking into account the beautiful home life he might have lived if he had been content to pass away his life in the profession which would undoubtedly have yielded him a greater degree of wealth than his soul craved for.

For several reasons Mackay, in November, 1873, left Scotland for Germany. One reason is plain enough -- he was enamoured of the German tongue and the wealth of legendary lore which it covers. He secured a lucrative appointment as draughtsman in a large locomotive factory just outside the imperial city of Berlin. At that time German religious thought was in a strange state of unrest. Thousands were literally wrenching themselves away from the old creed which enabled, or compelled, Luther and Gustavus Adolphus to win their immortal, though opposite, victories. Both these warriors fought on German soil, and secured the same ends with vastly different weapons -- the liberty to read the Scriptures, and to worship God according to its dictates.

Mackay in his new sphere was surrounded by many young men, who considered it an evidence of intellectual superiority to keep their

infidelity and their godlessness perpetually under the eyes of all beholders. This caused the young Christian draughtsman much anxiety, and many prayers he offered up on behalf of those who too frequently indulged in jeering scoffs at his earnestness. There were over a thousand men employed at the works, and Mackay was ever anxious to so conduct himself before them that he would lead at least some to come to a right conception of the Christianity which was the motive power of his useful existence. Once he wrote home the following pithy sentence:

> "Here I am amongst a heathenish people; almost all are infidels, but agree in so far acknowledging God as to continually use the expression, 'Ach Gott!' often more than once in a single sentence."

He prayed much and was sustained. In May, 1874, he went to reside at the home of Herr Hofprediger Baur, a man of earnest Christian life, and full of a deep sympathy for foreign missions. Here the young man was brought into close personal contact with the elite of Christian society in the city, and to a far greater extent than hitherto he dedicated his life to Christ's service.

In the same month (4th May, 1874), the following passage, which is perhaps the most significant foreshadowing of future events ever recorded, appears in his diary: "This day last year Livingstone died — a Scotsman and a Christian, loving God and his neighbour in the heart of Africa. Go thou and do likewise!" And in God's good time he did go and do likewise, and to-day, whilst both fell on sleep under the hot sky of Africa, they stand, in the estimation of their countrymen, linked together as the two greatest missionaries and explorers of modern times.

This seems to have been the period in which he solemnly and reflectively dedicated himself to the work of foreign missions. Somehow he felt that he would be called to the work in Madagascar, which at that time was creating a good deal of public interest and sympathy. He consequently began a close study of the language, and of the sciences which he considered would be most suitable to him as a missionary in that interesting, though afflicted, island.

His dedication to the work came about in a simple manner. God was guiding his life. His sister, living in Edinburgh, attended a meeting of the literary association which was held in Chalmers's Memorial Church. Dr. Burns Thompson delivered an interesting address on Madagascar, and appealed to the young men present to dedicate their lives to the work of medical missionaries out there. She forwarded a

lengthy description of the address to her brother, who was fired with a holy zeal for the work. Almost immediately he wrote to his old friend and pastor, Dr. H. Bonar, offering himself for mission work in Madagascar. To him, and also to his sister, he wrote: "Well, I am not a doctor, and therefore cannot go as such; but I am an engineer, and propose, if the Lord will, to go as an engineering missionary."

This was a perfectly novel idea, and Mackay knew it, and was therefore not surprised when, in reply, Dr. Bonar told him that he thought the ideas difficult to combine — mission work with engineering — but at the same time he offered to make all necessary inquiries.

Another letter home shows how intense was his desire for mission work. "Do not think me mad. It is not to make money that, I believe, a Christian should live. It will indeed be a trial of all trials to part with you all, to go to such a country, where so many Christians (2000) were not very long ago put to death. Such persecutions I do not expect will occur again. At any rate, Christianity should teach men, of course, how to be saved for eternity, but also how to live comfortably and healthily together."

At the time he wrote this letter he was not quite twenty-five years of age. Naturally the world was tinged with a roseate hue, and, like most young men, he was ambitious to make his mark in it. Nor did he relinquish his ambition with his dedication to foreign missionary labour.

Nothing definite was done for a long time about his offer to go to Madagascar. Patiently he prepared himself, so that when the call should come he would be ready to accept it. His twenty-fifth birthday came round, and on the 13th October, 1874, he jotted in his diary:

> "Twenty-five years old this day. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' for all His goodness. Man is immortal till his work is done. Use me in Thy service alone, blessed Saviour."

He was ever thinking about a missionary's life. In 1875 the Church Missionary Society appealed for the services of a lay superintendent to take the secular oversight of a settlement for liberated slaves, to be established near Mombasa. Mackay instantly offered himself for this arduous duty, but the position was filled up before his letter reached London.

In September of the same year the engineering company at Berlin dissolved, and Mackay was thrown out of employment. One of the directors, however (one of Abraham's wandering sons), offered him a

partnership in a similar enterprise at Moscow. This would have sealed Mackay's fate. Africa would not have been the better for the devoted labours of one of the noblest missionaries who ever lived and died there; and Alexander Mackay would, perhaps, have attained to opulent prosperity as an engineer in the ancient capital of Russia. The offer was one that would have allured most young ambitious men. It was an encouraging testimony to the manner in which he had performed his work at Berlin; it was an evidence of the Jew's belief in the vastness of his future prospects. He prayed much as to the way in which he should turn, and having in mind the glory of his after career, who dares to say that God did not listen to, and answer, every petition sent up by the young anxious one?

The offer was refused. This was one of his first great sacrifices. It gave him strength to make many more in after life. He afterwards accepted an appointment as chief *constructeur* in a similar firm at Kottbus, sixty miles from Berlin. Few men of twenty-six receive such onerous appointments; still fewer have the moral courage to vacate them because they inwardly feel that the finger of God points towards poverty and duty, hardship and the glory of being engaged in Christ's service.

His change of residence did not contract his sympathy with religious endeavour. He was soon hard at work in his new sphere. He translated into German one or two of Dr. Bonar's devotional works, and, at much trouble and expense, sent copies to a large number of ministers in Germany.

Then came the great crisis of his life. Two offers of missionary labour in Africa were received by him on the same day, the 26th of January, 1876.

Most people are acquainted with the genesis of the Uganda Mission. The intrepid explorer, Mr. H. M. Stanley, in his travels, came into personal contact with Mtesa, the King of Uganda. Recent events have unfortunately proved too clearly that Mr. Stanley's estimate of the king was much more hopeful than accurate. He represented Uganda as ripe for the harvest. Mtesa was anxious to receive English missionaries as guests at his court, and he challenged the missionary societies at home to stretch forth their hands to grasp the finest opportunities ever providentially placed within their reach.

The Church Missionary Society were the first to develop their plans. Almost immediately they accepted the challenge and placed themselves in communication with Mr. Mackay and others. The other offer was made by an old friend, Rev. Alexander Duff, who was

practically acting on the authority of the Free Church of Scotland's Committee, who had determined to send out a small missionary steamer to Lake Nyassa and were in need of a head engineer.

After much prayerful thought he decided to accept the offer of the Church Missionary Society, and began to prepare himself for his great life's work. He did not leave Germany until the following March. An industrial and mechanical element was intermixed with the purely evangelical plans of the Society, and of this branch Mackay, then just turned twenty-seven years of age, had almost complete control. Few men of that age have opened their eyes to the infinite possibilities which even a degenerate world offers for being good and doing good.

His first task was to request a London engineer to manufacture a boiler and engine from plans and drawings prepared by himself. These were upon an entirely new principle, and the engine was made in such a way that it could be conveniently carried by porters right through the heart of Africa to the Victoria Nyanza, where the missionaries were to erect a boat specially suited to their requirements. This, though a work of considerable difficulty, was but the prelude to many more of a much more difficult nature.

Mackay had placed his hand to the plough. He was not the man to turn back until the greatest possible measure of success had crowned his efforts. He prayed much and devoutly, but his efforts did not end here. He did all that was humanly possible to make himself a capable missionary. And in that brief interval between his return from Germany and his embarkation [embarking] for Africa he studied a variety of practical arts and sciences, which afterwards proved of immense service in the dark continent. He laid in a full set of tools and purchased a printing press, with all accessories.

Then he went up to Edinburgh to take a farewell, which proved to be the last. His love for all who made home the dearest place in the world was intense, but his love of duty was more intense still. In those last few days he evinced an almost pathetic longing to lay in a stock of information which would in some way ameliorate the condition of the people to whose service he had nobly dedicated his life.

Those last days at home were amongst the most active of his busy life. His friends and relatives complained (and with excellent reason) that they saw too little of him during what unfortunately proved to be his very last visit to the modern Athens. Three hours every alternate day he spent at Leith Fort studying astronomy and the use of the sextant; another three hours a day in the extensive printing office of Messrs. Blackwood & Sons. Then he paid long visits to the Medical

Dispensary, where he was taught the valuable arts of vaccination and the use of the stethoscope. Photography, coal-mining, iron puddling, etc., were also added to his already extensive collection of practical subjects.

Then at last the heroic pioneers were ready for departure — eight of them in all, and only one younger than Mackay, who was not quite twenty-seven years of age. Mackay died at the age of forty-one, and yet he survived by several years every other member of the first momentous expedition upon which so much has depended.

Chapter 4 - At Uganda. The Beginnings of His Life's Work

> "Fly, happy sails, and bear the Press;
> Fly, happy with the mission of the Cross;
> Knit land to land, and blowing Heavenward
> With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
> Enrich the markets of the golden year."

On the 25th of April, 1876, the party of five took their farewell of the Church Missionary Society — the Rev. C. T. Wilson, Dr. John Smith (one of Mackay's earliest and dearest friends), Messrs. T. O'Neill, James Robertson, and A. M. Mackay. Lieutenant G. Shergold Smith, with two artisans, had already sailed, taking with them, in sections, a little steamer, which was afterwards used for missionary purposes on Lake Nyanza.

We have a great amount of ground to cover, but we must make a diversion for the purpose of quoting a brief extract from the last speech delivered by Mackay in England — at the farewell gathering already alluded to. Mackay spoke last, and sent a thrill through the audience with these prophetic words, which, alas! were soon too amply be verified by actual facts.

> "There is one thing which my brethren have not said, and which I want to say. I want to remind the Committee that within six months they will probably hear that *one of us is dead*. Yes, is it at all likely that eight Englishmen should start for Central Africa, and all be alive six months after? One of us at least — *it may be I*— will surely fall before that. But what I want to say is this: when that news comes, do not be cast down, but send some one else immediately to take the vacant place."

One by one those Christian heroes and pioneers died at the post of duty and danger, and within three years Alexander Mackay was at Uganda alone, and anxiously but patiently waiting for the coming of reinforcements which were, by the very necessity of things, long

delayed. The thought of that last speech often recurred to him in those days of lonely watching and waiting. Yet he bravely held the fort alone, and in the savage, barbarous court of Mtesa, laid the seeds of a great spiritual harvest, and protested, with all the force of his strong, freedom-loving nature, against those revolting and barbaric practices, which so often made Uganda, in common with almost every other portion of Africa, the scene of lawless and bloody carnage.

In his last letter home, dated from Southampton, 27th April, 1876, he said:

> "It is His cause. It must prosper whether I be spared to see its consummation or not. Pray for me that grace may be given me to keep steadily in view the one great object."

On the day he wrote this letter he went on board the *S.S. Peshawur*. On the 6th of the following month they arrived at Malta, and on the 30th they lay at anchor in the harbour of Zanzibar. Right in front lay the vast continent which these few men, in their God-inspired strength, hoped to draw nearer to Christ.

During the voyage Mackay kept a journal which, after many strange vicissitudes, came into the possession of his sister, who undertook to write his biography. Though it is full of interest we cannot make any quotations.

Their privations soon commenced. Lieutenant Smith and Mackay underwent many perilous experiences in exploring the River Wami. Fever attacked Lieutenant Smith and O'Neill, and shortly afterwards Mackay also. Dr. Smith was the first to die under the influence of the malaria; but before Mackay fully recovered he received instructions from the Church Missionary Society not to commence the long march into the interior until June, 1877, at which time the rainy season (so fatal to Europeans) would be over.

During this delay he lived on board the steamer *Highland Lassie*, which was anchored off Zanzibar. Soon after his recovery he despatched a caravan into the interior, and then commenced the laborious operation of making a good permanent road from Sadani, which is on the coast line near the Island of Zanzibar, to Mpwapwa, a distance of 230 miles. At Sadani he made some searching investigations into the slave trade, which he quickly found was one of the worst curses which afflict Africa. In more than one instance he gave chase to the marauding bands of slave-hunters, and liberated poor helpless things who had fallen into their merciless clutches.

The march across the heart of Africa was a terrible undertaking. The

sufferings they had to patiently bear were enough to test the powers of the strongest and the most godlike of men. It is a stock slur against missionaries, in some quarters, that they go into these out-of-the-way quarters for the purpose of living lives of ease and affluence. Surely the records which come from this pioneer expedition to the Nyanza are in themselves a perfect refutation of these slanders. It must be remembered that almost all these men had been brought up in cultured and refined homes, and the prospects of two or three of them were nothing short of brilliant. In all human probability most of these men would have lived long lives if they had remained at home, whereas they were content to place themselves in the hands of God, and undergo all manner of privations for the purpose of carrying the message of love and hope and peace to benighted Uganda. All the world united in paying tribute to Mr. H. M. Stanley, and rightly so; but we must never forget that the same work has been done in a more complete degree by many who are now lying in unnamed and unknown graves in the land where they laboured.

Slowly the party journeyed through the country, and Mackay always endeavoured to arrange amicable terms with the chiefs through whose territories they passed, and with a considerable number he established "a blood brotherhood."

Very soon he was called upon to perform a painful act of duty which showed how chivalrous were his feelings. Lieutenant Smith and Mr. O'Neill had pushed on in advance of the rest of the party. On the 6th December they wrote from Kagei, which is on the borders of the Victoria Nyanza. Nothing more was heard from them, but Mackay gathered conclusive evidence that they had been mixed up in an unfortunate quarrel between Lkonge, King of Ukerewe, and an Arab who had taken refuge with the two missionaries, who sacrificed their lives in trying to protect him.

Mackay's task was one of immense difficulty. Mtesa, who at the time was a professed Christian, was sending down a large army for the purpose of chastising Lkonge for permitting such an outrage upon his guests. The intrepid Scotsman knew that if bloodshed was once commenced there would be very little scope for the labours of missionaries for many years to come. He therefore pushed on towards Ukerewe with all possible haste for the purpose of seeking an explanation from the king and, if possible, avoiding the outburst of Mtesa's revengeful purposes. At Kagei he found a few things which had belonged to these friends, and also their boat, the *Daisy*, which was in a very dilapidated condition and in need of great repairs before it could be made serviceable to the pioneer missionaries.

Mackay had several interviews with King Lkonge, and the result was a satisfactory agreement between them that the death of the missionaries was due to Smith and O'Neill having defended the Arab rather than to any hostile intention on the part of the king or his people. Lkonge expressed great regret that the painful incident should have happened in his territory, and the two thereupon established "a blood brotherhood" — a token of mutual agreement and friendship.

This chivalrous act is a type of Mackay's character, caring much more for others than himself, perfectly willing to risk everything if the performance of his duty demanded it.

Mackay remained the guest of the king for several days, and in his free intercourse with the people he never failed to improve every possible opportunity for sowing the precious seed of God's divine message to men. For several days more he was delayed in patching up the *Daisy* and in exploring the magnificent Nyanza. In his journeyings he was frequently brought face to face with the curses inflicted by the slave traffic, and too often for his comfort or convenience he was besieged with multitudes of people who desired him to make all manner of things for them and to administer medicines to their sick ones. Though yearning to help these poor people, Mackay was often compelled, for want of knowledge or want of resources, to refuse to accede to these requests for physic. He was not a doctor, and some of the patients brought to him would have sorely puzzled the skill and ingenuity of our best physicians. Besides, it was an extremely dangerous thing to doctor these people. Mackay himself defines this danger in these words: "If a cure is effected, good and well; if the patient dies, it is unfortunate, but natural enough, for such ignorant people to say my medicine was the cause of death."

That voyage across the Nyanza was full of difficulties and dangers; on one occasion they were wrecked, and Mackay and his comrades had an exceedingly narrow escape from death. But they were in God's hands and were saved for the accomplishment of a great and glorious purpose. How many people were blessed by Mackay's ministrations in Uganda it would be impossible, of course, to conjecture; but it is safe to say that by his careful and patient plodding he laid the foundation of a mighty work which has had, and will have, a vastly beneficial influence on Africa.

Chapter 5 - Sowing the Seeds

"Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o'er the land;

And duly shall appear,
  In verdure, beauty, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
  And the full corn at length."

When at last Mackay arrived in the capital of Uganda (in November, 1878), he quickly ascertained that Stanley, with his accustomed buoyant hopefulness, had exaggerated the prospects of the mission. Mtesa was still on the throne, and though it was true that he had asked for missionaries, and though he extended to Mackay a courteous welcome, he was far from an appreciation of even the rudimentary elements of a Christian character. His life was in many respects vicious in the extreme — not vicious precisely from lack of knowledge of the truth, but because of a lack of inclination to forgo his brutal orgies.

The Rev. R. P. Ashe, who afterwards became Mackay's colleague in Uganda, in his book, *The Two Kings of Uganda*, admirably sketches in a few words the arch king's character — "Mtesa, kindly but formal, fearful of his dignity, crafty, suspicious, and capable of acts so foul that they may only be hinted at; surrounded by an abject court, an object of grovelling adoration to slavish thousands, but really great in nothing."

Mackay himself adds a grim somberness to this dark picture.

> "The king and I are great friends, and the chiefs also have great confidence in me, and I hope to be able to guide them in the way of a more humane policy than has existed hitherto. Cruelty, slavery, polygamy, witchcraft, are only some of the terrible evils to be combated, and I have not been slack in my testimony regarding them. Only the grace of God can undo all that the Devil has been doing here since the world began. But that grace is sufficiently powerful to do so and more."

The hero's entries in his diary, and likewise his letters to England, are full of hope and confidence. For a time, work progressed smoothly but slowly. Mackay was prepared to sow the seeds patiently and faithfully, and wait God's good time for the reaping. Continents like Africa are not converted in a day, nor a year, nor even during the lifetime of the oldest man. Mackay knew this, and was patient. He knew too well that the truth (though divinely destined to triumph in the end) moved slowly in the cultured cities of Edinburgh and Berlin, where hundreds of devoted servants of God were labouring together to accomplish the same glorious purpose. How long would it take one or two, or even three, lonely men to win the teeming thousands of Uganda from their rapacity [greediness?], their idols, their false gods, their superstitions,

which they cherished as dearly as their own lives? God only knew. The issue was in His hands. Mackay felt honoured by being called to be a co-worker with Him in the fulfillment of His purposes.

Many things prevented rapid progress. The Arabs, who represented the old heathenism, were in the confidence of the king, and had great influence upon the development of his character. Then Mackay was seriously ill for a long time, and very soon after his providential recovery he was, more frequently than he liked, brought into very close controversial contact with the papist propagandists, who had followed him to Uganda as it seemed for the purpose of destroying the beneficial effects of the Christian teaching. But Mackay possessed a wonderfully strong faith in the vitality of the truth to outlive, and eventually subdue, all forms of error and strife. So he worked on patiently, devotedly, and his influence began to be perceptibly felt in the purification of the moral atmosphere of Mtesa's court. Frequent services and Bible readings were held at court in the presence of the king and his numerous chiefs. Then he began to carve wooden types for the purpose of printing select portions of the Gospels in their own tongue, after which he commenced the necessarily slow and tedious task of teaching numbers of people to read. Mackay, it must be remembered, was a statesman and organiser just as much as he was a Christian missionary. Like a strong, patient, self-constrained man, he laboured for the purpose of placing a boundary upon the paralysing effects of the slave trade. His influence upon Mtesa was considerable. He argued with him the question of slavery, from its religious and humane points of view, with such power that he published a decree forbidding any person in Uganda to sell a slave on pain of death. The king also forbade Sunday labour, and after a long struggle Mackay wooed him from his bloody charms, which in his heathen superstition he considered were a prevention against the machinations of the evil one.

The missionary often turned his mechanical skill to useful account in the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Mackay always wrote enthusiastically of the natural resources of Uganda, and the reading of his geographical descriptions is an instinctive reminder of the region immortalised in poetry where "only man is vile."

On Sunday, the 26th January, 1879, he held service in court and read the 51st Psalm, and the king interpreted to those assembled.

A passage or two from his diary tell the missionary's feelings which were created by this memorable service:

"The Spirit of God seemed to be working, for I never found so

> deep an interest before, nor so intelligent an understanding. Explained carefully the failure of man to keep the commandments of God, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ — He who loved man so much as to die for him. The king was so struck with the truth of this that he said to Songura, 'This is truth I have heard to-day. There can be only one truth.' The king spoke also of the persecution which he must endure from Egypt by becoming a Christian, but saw that persecution was the cross of Christians. I never had such a blessed service. Oh, may the mighty Spirit of God work deeply in their hearts by His grace! He alone can do it. In the afternoon the king sent a message with a present of a goat, saying it was a blessed passage I read to-day. Toli called and spoke of the same."

Extracts like these come with all the force of messages from the sainted and honoured dead.

How closely the heroic missionary walked with God through the years of his danger and toil is evidenced by the following passage from his diary, which is only the echo of many similar passages:

> "Lord, enable us to search our hearts and humble ourselves before Thee. Oh, for a closer walk with God, more faith, more sincerity, more earnestness, and more love. I must study more the Word of God. 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' The Master said so, and His words are true."

The priests of Rome continued to arrive in Uganda much more rapidly than the teachers of the Protestant faith. Mackay was anxious to avoid anything approaching controversial contact with them, but this ultimately became impossible, and he had to combat before the king and chiefs the many sweeping assertions which Père Lourdel and his associates made against the truthfulness of the faith which he taught. The Frenchmen made presents to the king very much calculated to win his vain heart. In one place Mackay records in his diary the presentation by the French priests of "five repeating rifles, a box of powder and shot, embroidered military suits, cuirassiers' helmets, swords, mirrors, silver plate, etc." — most unbefitting emblems of the doctrine of peace and righteousness which they *ought* to have taught by word and deed.

In spite of the efforts of the priests, the king more than once begged Mackay to pray with him, and read to him portions of Scripture. Mackay fortunately had with him various chapters of the Bible printed in Suahili, a language understood by the king and many of his people.

Mtesa also requested baptism, and after one of Mackay's arguments he confessed his belief in Christ as the Son of God from all eternity, and as the only future judge of the world. "I liked exceedingly Mtesa's behaviour to-day. I often think there is the work of God in his heart. We must only pray earnestly that the Lord will give him grace to be a real disciple. It is no small matter for such as he to leave the way of his forefathers and live a Christian."

On the anniversary of his arrival at Uganda (Nov. 6) Mackay wrote cheerfully:

> "This day is the anniversary of my arrival in this place. Praised be the good and loving Father of all, who has bestowed on us and on our work so much blessing and prosperity since then, in spite of our imperfect service and our constant unfaithfulness. I have much reason to rejoice that matters have turned out as they have done, in spite of the gloomy prospect not many months ago, and the still gloomier forebodings of the members of our mission here."

From this point it must be confessed that Mackay's hopefulness of the king's intentions began to materially decrease. He played with the old superstition and the new faith, until at last the missionary felt compelled to ask him if he desired him to cease teaching the Word of God at court. The king's reply was a negative one, but it soon became evident that his life was not perceptibly improved by Christian teaching. He began to regard Mackay as one of his slaves almost, and constantly ordered or requested him to use his mechanical skill in his service.

Mr. Ashe gives a somewhat amusing description of Mackay making a copper coffin for the king's mother out of fine Egyptian trays, which most probably had been given to the king by General Gordon during his governorship of the Sudan.

On one occasion (very soon after the time when Mackay asked the king if he should cease teaching at court) Mtesa said he had understood that missionaries came to teach him and his people how to make powder and guns. What he wanted at his court was men who could do so. Mackay replied that he could not, if he would, teach the king how to make guns and powder, and insisted that the object of his presence in Uganda was to teach the people the Word of God. "The king thereupon got exceedingly angry, and replied that if to teach was our main object, then we were not to teach any more." The diary continues: "He (the king) wanted us to work for him. I said 'we had never refused to do any work he wanted us to do, and that everything

he had asked to be done I had done. There was scarcely a chief present, I said, for whom I had not done work. I showed my hands, which were black with working in iron every day for these very chiefs who were saying we would not work for them. They said they wanted us to stop teaching to read, and to do work only for them and the king. I replied that we came for no such purpose; and if he wished that, then we could not stay. 'Where will you go ?' was asked, to which Mackay replied: 'We shall go back to England.'"

It is perfectly clear that Mackay never conjectured an immediate return to England. He was too chivalrous to leave those poor benighted ones who had embraced Christianity to redrift into their heathen idolatry and superstition, and to become the defenceless victims of cruel persecution. But it is equally clear that the conduct of the king, which continued to develop in an unpleasant direction, created a good deal of anxiety in Mackay's mind. He could measure the king's influence in contributing to the success or abject failure of the pioneer expedition. In those regions the people almost blindly follow the king. How can they be expected to do otherwise when their lives are literally in his hands, and when a single word from him would doom hundreds, perhaps thousands, to a bloody sacrifice?

Still against everything that opposed him, the Christian exhibited a noble courage and an almost sublime patience. It is said that not long before embarking Mackay had a few minutes' conversation with Robert Moffat, who had just returned from Africa. The young man asked the veteran what was the chief qualification for a missionary in Africa, and with a shrewd smile he replied, "Patience, patience, patience." Mackay now realised the significance of that quaint but admirable piece of advice. "A godly patience" became, as it were, his motto, his guide in life. He was brought into hourly contact with many things that grated somewhat harshly upon his manly nature, and it needed all his sanctified restraint to keep his protests within the measure of respect which was rightly due to the king, who, with all his faults and foibles and sins, was a host who had extended towards them his protection and support.

In the same day's entry in the diary he says:

> "One result I should rejoice to see, viz., to have permission to work among the common people, and let the court alone. When I asked this to-day (Dec. 23, 1879), the idea was scouted. It seemed that the chiefs themselves saw the absurdity, or rather the danger, of the common people being taught Christianity while they themselves stuck to their idols and witchcraft."

Things went from bad to worse. Mtesa sniffed human blood and then began to wallow in it. Human sacrifices of a most inhuman character, and on a large scale, became one of his chief sources of amusement. Truly, "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Mackay and his few comrades, and those whom he had reclaimed from the blackness of their heathenism, went in daily expectation of being sacrificed on the terrible altar of Mtesa's inhuman cruelty.

"We are in God's hands," calmly wrote Mackay; but a few days later his mighty spirit seemed to burst the restraint he had placed upon it, and he indulged in some bitter passages which are happily rare indeed in his many letters home. After describing some of Mtesa's vile acts, he says:

> "The wretch who orders all this to be done for his own gratification is he who is called in Europe 'the enlightened and intelligent King of Uganda.' It is he who professed to Mr. Stanley to be converted to Christianity, whom the Romish priests write of as becoming a good Catholic. It is he who says that we Protestant missionaries are mad, because we deny the use of worshipping the *lubare* (genius of the country); while I am especially mad, because I told Mtesa that he was merely playing with religion, in professing himself one day a Christian, another day a Mussulman, and a third a follower of his old superstition ... Now, however, he has for more than a year thrown off all disguise, so far as our teaching is concerned. Even the Romanists allow that all his professions of faith in them are only a *ruse*. The Mohammedans, too, are obliged to confess that he is no Mussulman at heart, nor in practice, even to the smallest degree. Mtesa is a pagan -- a heathen -- out and out. All the faculties of lying, low cunning, hatred, pride, and conceit, jealousy, cruelty, and complete ignorance of the value of human life, combined with extreme vanity, a desire for notoriety, greed, and absolute want of control of his animal propensities -- all these seem not only to be combined, but even concentrated in him. All is self, self, self."

This is perhaps the most terrible indictment that has ever been penned against the arch autocrat who ruled with a rod of hot iron over the court of Uganda during the greater part of Mackay's residence there. This is undoubtedly the verdict on Mtesa that will go down to history and be accepted as literal truth. There was very little bitterness in Mackay's soul; he possessed an intense love of the absolute truth, and we may rest assured that nothing but the grimly accumulated testimony of years allowed him to sketch Mtesa's character in the stern words

given above.

And yet, in spite of the treachery of the king, a noble work was done — a work that will continue bearing rich and golden fruit until the blessed day when all flesh shall come for judgment before the great white throne of Him who ordered all things. In Mr. Stanley 's last great book, *In Darkest Africa*, it is claimed that "the success of the Mission to Nyanza is proved by the sacrifices of the converts, by their determined resistance to the tyrant (Mwanga), and by their successful deposition of him." In the next chapter or two we shall see the basis upon which the great explorer founds this argument.

Chapter 6 - The Flames Burst Out

"Safe in the fiery furnace,
Joyful in tribulation;
  My soul adores,
  With all its powers,
The God of my salvation."

In June, 1879, three envoys from Uganda, in company with returning missionaries, started by the Nile route for England, where they arrived in April, 1880. A powerful help reached Mackay in March, 1881, in the person of the Rev. P. O'Flaherty, who in succeeding years proved a devoted helpmate. And in May, 1883, further reinforcements arrived, including the Rev. R. P. Ashe, to whom reference has already been made in this brief tribute to the God-given greatness of one of the ablest men who, in the faith of God's promises, lived and died for Africa.

The three men worked with praiseworthy unanimity and devotion. In spite of the gathering storm, which cast many dark shadows before it, much useful and lasting work was done, and many of the people, including several high in authority and great in power, were publicly baptised. The public and private readings were continued on an extended scale, and there was seldom any lack of pupils, despite the ever-growing animosity of the king to the teachers of the new faith.

Mackay had several narrow escapes from death. Afterwards he turned considerable attention to building a new house for himself and comrades and a boat for the use of the missionaries, who began to disperse to various comers of the magnificent lake. The courageous Scotsman often travelled from one station to another, doing all he possibly could to help and cheer those who were fighting the Lord's battle against terrible odds.

Bad as Mtesa had often been, worse followed him. He died in October,

1884, and Mwanga, a weak and vicious youth, came to the throne. Then began a series of fiery trials to the missionaries and all who had accepted their teaching. One graphic paragraph from Stanley's book on this subject may be given as a testimony of the fierceness of the persecution and the vitality of the faith which outlived it:

> "I take this powerful body of native Christians in the heart of Africa, who prefer exile for the sake of their faith to serving a monarch indifferent or hostile to their faith, as more substantial evidence of the work of Mackay than any number of imposing structures clustered together and called a Mission Station would be. These native Africans have endured the most deadly persecutions — the stake and the fire, the cord and the club, the sharp knife and the rifle bullet, have all been tried to cause them to reject the teaching they have absorbed. Staunch in their beliefs, firm in their convictions, they have held together stoutly and resolutely, and Mackay and Ashe may point to these with a righteous pride as the results of their labours to the good, kindly people at home who trusted in them."
>
> "Our first martyrs have won the martyrs' crown. On January 30th three Christian lads were burned alive, after being terribly mutilated, for their acceptance of and adherence to the faith of Jesus Christ. They were snatched from our very presence, accused of no crime but that they were learning from us, and first tortured, then roasted alive. Both Ashe and I suffered a deal of violence, but that was soon over, and was nothing to the anxiety of mind which we suffered on account of the cruel death of the dear lads and the threats of determined persecution against the whole of the native Christians, the threats of robbery and expulsion of ourselves, and, later on, a rebellion of the chiefs, whose aim was to make a complete end of us."

Then followed an intensely anxious time, when they gained the information that Bishop Hannington was pushing towards Uganda, and more than once Mackay and Ashe went to the court to beg the king's protection for him. These efforts, however, were fruitless, as all the world painfully knows, and the good bishop was brutally murdered -- as referred to at the opening of our story. For weeks, even months, the missionaries literally carried their lives in their hands. The king refused to allow them to leave the country, and yet he refused to allow them to quietly complete the work they had gone out to perform.

Even if they had desired, escape was impossible. Whilst things were at the worst they received a visit from Dr. Junker, the Russian explorer, who, however, could offer them no service beyond promising to make

their extremity known throughout Europe — if ever he himself got there again in safety, which was an exceedingly problematical question. The burning of the king's palace (necessitating his flight from the capital) only made confusion more confounded, and the war in the Sudan did not help to settle things in the least. In this connection it may be interesting to note (although it is not in proper chronological order) that General Gordon tried more than once to secure Mackay to assist him in the accomplishment of his great work in the Sudan, and also the Imperial East African Company offered him a responsible post. But nothing would induce him to turn his hand from the work he had given himself to do, and the only worldly honour he accepted was a decoration from the Khedive [Turkish viceroy] in return for eminent services rendered to Emin Pasha whilst he was surrounded by difficulties in Africa.

After a great amount of controversy, Mr. O'Flaherty and Dr. Junker were allowed to leave the country, and Mackay and Ashe also made a similar application, so that they could recommence work in another sphere where their influence would not be destroyed or hampered by the persecutions of a blood-thirsty tyrant. The king eventually consented to Mr. Ashe going, but Mackay was useful to him, and he consequently refused to give him a passport. Then for eleven months Mackay was left to fight the grim battle alone. Ultimately he was allowed to leave on the conditions that he would speedily return, and also that his place would be taken in the meantime by another missionary. The Rev. E. C. Gordon took Mackay's place, and later on he was joined by the Rev. R. H. Walker. In one of his first letters the last named says: "Really Ashe, Mackay, and the others have done, by the grace of God, a glorious work here; it is a great privilege, but a great responsibility, to follow up such good work. It would seem a terrible disaster if anything happened to compel this Mission to be given up" In a letter, dated 2nd June, 1889, Mackay sums up the question why the king refused to allow him to leave, and pleads, in conclusion: "Please do your best to aid in getting up a crusade against the mad policy of flooding Africa with gunpowder and guns. These things are the curse of East Africa, as gin is of the West Coast."

On the 21st of July, 1887, Mackay paid his farewell visits to the king, also to the French missionaries and others, and then bade goodbye to the place where for so many years he had laboured so hard and suffered so acutely. He stepped on board the *Eleanor* with a heavy heart. He did not feel that his work had been a failure. His own consciousness told him that he was leaving behind him many true Christians who, had it not been for his ministrations, would still have been wallowing in their heathenism and superstition. But there was a

sense of inevitable pain at being driven away from the work he passionately loved. It was arranged that his absence should only be a temporary one. The king expressly stipulated that if Mackay went to Msalala he was to return in three months, but if he went as far as the coast he was not to be absent more than twelve months. A vast change came over affairs at Uganda before the expiration of the year.

Mackay crossed the mighty lake, and on 1st August he reached Ukumbi, where he met Mr. Gordon, who, on the 10th August, went forward to Uganda in the boat brought down by Mackay.

Mr. Ashe came to England for the purpose of showing the people how matters stood in Uganda, and, if possible, to elaborate a definite scheme for throwing a strongly protective influence over those who had placed their lives in terrible jeopardy by accepting the Christian faith. Mackay, though primarily entitled, by reason of his long service abroad, to the rest and change in England, refused to leave Africa, though driven from the place where he had dedicated his life by so many years' patient service. He established himself at Usambiro, where he and several other Christian missionaries laboured usefully and peacefully under the protection of a friendly potentate.

It was at Usambiro that Mackay met Stanley, who remained several days at the mission house, an enthusiastic description of which he gives in his latest book. Disease, however, soon reduced the devoted band, by carrying off Bishop Parker (Bishop Hannington's successor) and Mr. Blackburn. Consequently Mackay was alone again, until he was joined by his successors in Uganda, Messrs. Gordon and Walker, who were compelled, by a lurid outburst of persecuting fanaticism, to leave the post of duty which they had chivalrously defended in the hour of Mackay's discomfiture. Mr. Deekes (to whom afterwards fell the melancholy duty of writing the record of Mackay's death) joined him at Usambiro for a visit, and occasionally a few of the persecuted converts succeeded in escaping from Uganda. They never failed to turn their faces to Usambiro in order to secure the protection of the hero and Christian whose fervid teaching had first inspired them with a love of God and a detestation of their old idols.

Mackay, in his new sphere of labour, was quite as busy as he had been during his long sojourn in Uganda. One of his pet schemes was to build a steam launch for the purpose of facilitating communication on the lake, "on the shores of which we hope to establish several stations." He also did all he possibly could to establish a Christian mission at Muscat, the capital of Oman, the place from which all the Arabs who throng Africa, and carry everywhere a malignant influence, start on their nomadic wanderings and bloody incursions. Mackay

knew better than most men how Mohammedanism scourged Africa with a deadly scourge, and he projected this mission as an excellent means of purifying the stream at the very head of its defilement.

In a letter to the Church Missionary Society, dated from Usambiro, on the 8th of August, 1888, he earnestly pleaded for the mission, and at the annual meeting of the Society, in Exeter Hall, a resolution, passed by the committee, to appeal for picked men for special effort amongst the Mohammedans, was heartily endorsed. But this was one of the great tasks left uncompleted when he was called to his reward. Mackay also wrote what may be regarded as the most important essay on "African Evangelisation" ever given to the world. He sent it home with these words appended, "To be continued. " But the remaining portion of his heart's thoughts were never written — at least they never reached England.

Chapter 7 - Called Home

"Servant of God, well done."
"Beyond the glittering, starry skies,
Far as the eternal hills,
Here, in the boundless worlds of light,
Our great Redeemer dwells.
Legions of angles round His throne
In countless armies shine--
At His right hand, with golden harps,
They offer songs divine"

Alexander Mackay was called home on the night of 8th February, 1890. He died in the fullness of his manhood. He died at the post of duty and danger. He obeyed Christ's injunction to His disciples. Persecuted beyond all hope of further continuance of useful work in one place, he flew to another, and in those last months of his precious life at Usambiro he was mightily instrumental in strengthening old mission stations and establishing new ones, which are now continuing a work which *must* go on, making the inevitable harvest more precious than all the gold of the Indies.

His death was as chivalrous as his life had been. Time after time the authorities at home begged of him to return to England for rest. Though thirsting for personal communion again with those who occupied the first place in his noble heart, he, time after time, refused to leave the work he had begun. Mr. David Deekes, in sending news of his death to Mackay's father, recounts the fact that only a week or so before he was struck down with malaria fever which quickly ended his life, he was busily engaged in fitting him (Mr. Deekes) out for a return journey to England on account of his health. He ever thought of others

before himself; he died in thinking of others. Though dead, his life, his works, will speak for generations to come. His life, his death, must be an inspiration to Christians in every part of the world to renew their efforts to evangelise the dark land which, despite so many discouragements, is pregnant with immeasurable possibilities.

What need to recount the history of Uganda from the time Mackay ceased his *personal* contact with it! His *heart* contact never ceased until his heart ceased to beat. It is common knowledge how the people of Uganda were driven into insurrection by the violent deeds of the miscreant Mwanga, who was compelled to flee from the throne he had polluted; how in his craven fear and avowed penitence he sought the aid of Mackay in recovering his kingdom; how Mackay, with truly Christian magnanimity, did all he possibly could to destroy the feud and to assist the wretch back to his throne.

In a letter he wrote to Mackay, the fallen king says (25th June, 1889): "Do not remember bygone matters. We are in a miserable plight; but if you, my fathers, are willing to come and help me to restore my kingdom, you will be at liberty to do whatever you like. Formerly I did not know God, but now I know the religion of Jesus Christ... Sir, do not imagine that if you restore Mwanga to Uganda, he will become bad again. If you find me become bad, then you may drive me from the throne; but I have given up my former ways, and I only wish now to follow your advice." Then with a truly regal way of overlooking previous facts which rear their ugly heads in testimony against him, he signed himself: "I am your friend MWANGA."

Judging from Mackay's last message, the young king's protestations of repentance were sincere. He was successful in recovering his throne. "All the posts of authority are occupied by Christians; all the land falls into their hands; even the king himself is no more their despotic master and murderer, but a helpless instrument in their hands. God has given them the victory." Later in the same sad last letter, Mackay writes: "Mwanga writes, 'I want a host of English teachers to come and preach the Gospel to my people.' Our Church members urge me to write imploring you to strengthen our mission, not by two or three, but by twenty. Is this golden opportunity to be neglected, or is it to be lost for ever?"

Nay, thank God, Britain will not allow such an opportunity to be lost. Mackay would certainly have gone back to Uganda, but he had done his work, and God called him home to his rich reward.

At home the news was received with infinite regret. All the great English papers paid warm tributes to his memory, and everything was

done by the Church Missionary Society to soothe the old father who was strong enough to part with his dear son for the sake of Africa and the cause of Christ. Mere words of eulogium are too small to apply to such a man as Mackay. His work in Uganda mirrors in the most accurate manner the character of the man who initiated it — a bold, honourable, Christian gentleman. The work must go on, though Mackay sleeps, until the great day when the Christians of Uganda, and the Christians of Great Britain, and all other countries, will stand purified from the dross of flesh before their Redeemer. Then Mackay's life-work in Uganda will be estimated, but not until then.
