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From Scottish Moors To African Swamps: A Story of Missionary Life in Uganda

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Chapter 1—A Missionary Exhibition

NOT very long ago [written in 1928] what was called "A Missionary Exhibition" was held in one of the largest buildings in London; for the three weeks during which it remained open it was visited every weekday by numbers of people. Grown-up people were there in crowds, but there was also a fair sprinkling of boys and girls, who took an intelligent interest in what they saw, and really wanted to learn all they could about the dark places of the earth. They will not, I think, soon forget the delightful stories, told by more than one missionary, of the people among whom he or she (for more than one lady missionary told us about Chinese women or Indian schoolgirls) had been seeking

to make known the sweet story of salvation through the precious blood of Christ.

"What was to be seen?" I am afraid that if I were to try to write down the names of all the articles exhibited you would not think the first chapter of "From Scottish Moors to African Swamps" an interesting one, and might not even care to read the second; so I will only name two or three.

In the "Indian Court" some very beautiful shawls were shown, made by native workmen. A loom, so simple and almost clumsy that it was not easy to believe that stuffs so varied in design and rich in color could have been woven upon it, was also shown. Carved work in ivory, and chains and necklets of Indian gold met the eye at every turn, but from all the forms of beauty and blaze of color many turned sadly away to look at the idols, of which quite a number were on view. Some were large, others small—all were ugly, and some almost shapeless; and yet these senseless idols are feared by millions of men, women and children, many of whom obey the same laws as ourselves.

In another court, bright with Chinese fans, lanterns and umbrellas, a medical missionary, at home on furlough, was telling how sick people are often treated in China. They cannot have a good time, and often have to suffer a great deal of needless pain. A native doctor has no need to learn much about different kinds of illnesses, their cause and cure; he will not be required to "walk the hospitals." His stock-in-trade usually consists of one or two books, some packets of herbs, a bundle of charms and a few large, dirty needles. Chinese doctors are, as a rule, very fond of using these needles, but as they take no trouble to keep them clean, their use often not only causes severe pain, but leaves worse trouble than the doctor at first attempted to cure.

A poor woman who was quite blind had, the doctor said, been brought to the Mission Hospital where he had worked, and to which he hoped very soon to return. She had been suffering from bad headaches, causing great pain in her eyes. She was taken by her friends to a native doctor, who said he must prick her eyes to let the pain out. He did so, in such a way that her sight was destroyed, and for the rest of her life she was hopelessly blind...

A peep at the "Far North" would be interesting, but we must not linger among the snow huts in which the [Eskimos] live and sleep. They take long journeys in sledges drawn by reindeer or dogs and have very clever ways of catching seals and fish. The brave little band of

missionaries who live and work in these cold countries often have to endure great hardships; and as mail steamers only visit some of the ports once a year, we may be sure that their opportunities of getting home-letters and new books are few and far between.

But I have not told you anything about the African exhibits, and we shall find them of more than common interest. Day after day, groups varying from ten to twelve and fifty to sixty, gathered round a printing-press. Was there anything remarkable about it?

I think not. It was old-fashioned, a trifle clumsy, and had few, if any, of the improvements that of late years have done so much to perfect the art of printing; and yet the hearts of Christian men and women were deeply moved as they read on a card the simple but touching story of how on that very press, in far-off Uganda, in the very heart of heathen Africa, the first scripture portions ever seen in that dark land had been printed.

"Who took the press there?" Alexander Mackay, who will long be remembered as the pioneer missionary of Uganda. The story of his useful and unselfish life is a deeply interesting one, and if in thought we follow step by step the way in which he was fitted for his life-work among African swamps, we shall, I hope, learn some lessons of patience, courage and simple trust in God.

His life-story, written by his sister, lies before me as I write, and from it we learn that on a dull, cheerless day in the autumn of the year 1849 there was rejoicing in a Scottish home over the arrival of a baby boy. The father, a godly, well-informed man, who preached every Lord's day in the neighbouring church, or "kirk," as he would have called it, and when not visiting among his poor or sick neighbours spent much time in his study, decided that the little stranger should be named Alexander.

The father looked with a strange blending of pride and tenderness on his firstborn, and when his eyes turned from the face of the unconscious infant, they rested upon a picture that always hung just above his writing-table. It was that of a man somewhat past middle life, whose strongly marked and almost rugged features told their own tale alike of suffering and resolution. It was that of John Knox, the Scottish reformer, whose fearless preaching had kept a purer faith than that of Rome alive in many of his countrymen and women.

"God bless the wee laddie," said the father, "and grant that he may

grow up to love and serve his Maker as John Knox did, who never feared to preach the faith of his fathers before priests, and did not quail before the scepter of a queen."

"If he be like his mother he'll have a gentler spirit and a softer heart than that good man had, though I doubt not that he was raised up by God to meet the need of the times he lived in, sir," was the reply of Annie McWilliam, the old housekeeper who had lived for many years in the family, and like most upper servants in those days stood on very friendly terms with her employers.

Chapter 2—A Scotch Laddie.

ALEXANDER MACKAY did not walk out of the pages of a story book to enter upon his life work in Uganda. He was a real boy, fond of fun, ramble and adventure; but also gifted with rare powers of observation and a quiet thoughtfulness beyond his years.

Surrounded from infancy by the influences of a godly home, he was early taught the way of salvation. Naturally warm-hearted and affectionate, the "wee laddie" soon became a general favourite, not only in his home circle, but with the simple country folk who lived near his Highland home, and who, even not more than forty or fifty years ago, clung to their old habits and ways of life in a manner we may not find it easy to understand. They would often walk from five to six miles to attend the preaching, and the same distance to return to their scattered homes. Neither rain, snow nor storm kept them away, and to make their homeward way seem shorter than it really was, they used to form little companies, telling each other all they could remember of what they had heard, while the children were encouraged, not only to answer, but to ask questions.

Many of the women wore no bonnets, only high-crowned white caps, the wives and daughters of farmers being known by their closely-fitting bonnets, made of cardboard covered with black silk. When one was worn out, it was replaced by another of exactly the same pattern. Each carried her Bible, neatly tied up in a large, white pocket-hand kerchief, with a sprig of some sweet-scented plant, while the other hand held the family umbrella, usually a green cotton one, for however bright the morning, a "Scotch mist" or drizzling rain might come on at any time.

Perhaps, next to his parents, there was no one the boy loved better than his kind and faithful nurse, Annie McWilliam, or, as she was more

often called in the house and parish, "old Annie." Age had bent her form and silvered her hair, but she was true and godly, and loved her young charge dearly. One among the stories told of Mackay's childhood is that as on an ironing day he watched Annie deftly smoothing snowy linen and dainty lace, he suddenly exclaimed, "Annie, you like to look nice! Why don't you smooth the creases out of your neck, and iron the wrinkles out of your brow?" Annie stopped in her work for a moment, but her only answer was, "If 'tis fine on the morrow, we'll gang to Blackfells farm for a day or two."

"Oh, that will be delightful" the boy replied, clapping his hands; "but tell me, Annie, what made you look so sad just now?"

"It's because you didna ken me when I was young."

"I'm glad I didna, for then you would not have been old Annie, and you could not have told me half the things I want to know," was the boy's answer.

The following morning was all that could be wished, so after an early dinner the two set out for the farm, fully six miles away. Both were good walkers, and long before sunset had received a warm welcome from the farmer and his wife, who were old friends of Annie's, having known her in her young days. Their long walk had sharpened their appetites, and they were quite ready to do justice to the home-made bread and butter and new-laid eggs with plenty of fresh milk set before them (tea-drinking having in those days hardly found its way into Highland homes). After sundown, as the evenings were chilly, the party drew round the cheerful fire, built of pine logs, that blazed and crackled merrily; the wide chimney was open to the sky, while from the rafters near hams and flitches of bacon were in process of curing. The farmer and his sons went out to attend to the cattle, and the women plied their knitting needles.

Annie and her friend talked over old times, and told stories of the Covenanters, of their sufferings for their faith, and of the hardships and dangers they so often had to face. Forbidden by unjust and cruel laws to worship God according to their own consciences, enlightened as many of them had been by the teaching of the Bible, they had found comfort and help in secret gatherings, often after nightfall, and always in lonely, out-of-the-way places, often in woods or caves. But even this was not allowed them, and if, as was sometimes the case, the time and place of these secret assemblies became known to their ever watchful enemies, a party of Claverhouse's soldiers would be sent to

surprise them, and any who were unable to escape were hurried away to prison; some were sentenced to death for no other crime than reading their Bibles and meeting for prayer and praise with others who thought and felt as they did; while others dragged out long and weary years of imprisonment.

To such stories the boy would listen with great attention, and when overcome by the excitement and fatigue of the day he could no longer keep his eyes open and was sent to bed, the two friends talked to each other of the look that had made that bright young face so grave and thoughtful, and said, "May the good Lord bless and keep Sandy (his household name), for surely some great work lies before the wee laddie."

And they were right, but before he could enter upon it, many and varied lessons had to be learned, not only from school-books, but in the battlefield of life. Alexander Mackay did not attend a day school till he was fourteen; up to that age he was taught by his father, who took great pains with his education. Gaelic was at the time of which I am writing largely spoken by the simple country people among whom Mackay's boyhood was spent, but from his early childhood he spoke English with ease and correctness, and his father took care that he should be well grounded in Latin and mathematics.

Many outdoor lessons, remembered in later years, were learned as father and son made collections of flowers, ferns and mosses, or watched the ways of birds and insects. But perhaps his mother, a woman of gentle spirit and deep piety, had no small part in molding the character of her boy.

Christian missions had a large place in her thoughts and prayers, and she would often tell her son stories of perils from robbers, floods and wild beasts, that had been so bravely faced by African explorers and missionaries. Sunday evenings Mrs. Mackay usually spent with her children, her husband having gone to preach at some distance. Bible verses committed to memory during the week were repeated, and if the lesson had been well learned the reward was a missionary story.

Chapter 3—A Mother's Influence.

ALEXANDER MACKAY was a merry-hearted, fun-loving boy. Few things gave him greater pleasure than a long ramble across the moorlands, sometimes stopping to watch the flight of a flock of grouse or wild ducks the noise of his approach had startled from their hiding-

place among the heather; at others he would stop to gather some rare fern, to be carefully dried and pressed on his return home. From his father he had learned to observe, so found never-failing interest in studying the ways of birds and insects. Being a good walker, he was often his chosen companion in the visits that from time to time he paid to people who attended his preaching, but who lived in outlying, often faraway places.

During those walks many a never-to-be-forgotten lesson on natural history or botany was given and received, for Mr. Mackay had read and studied much, and his son was early taught to trace the goodness and wisdom of God told out in His care even for the smallest and weakest things He has created. Often father and son would repeat together, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11.) Or, after a interval of silence, they would sing such words as

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a Shepherd's care;
My noonday walks He shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend."

And their voices would awaken many an answering echo in the surrounding hills—hills the boy dearly loved to climb.

We almost wonder if, as he scaled their rugged heights, he ever thought of himself as one day to cross African swamps, or as climbing mountains to which the heights on which he then stood were mere molehills in comparison.

We do not know, so we will not venture to guess, what his day-dreams were; but we are sure of one thing, that Alexander Mackay was being even then shaped and molded by God to fit the niche he was one day to occupy. His early training was just what he needed to fit him for his lifework as a pioneer missionary in Uganda.

But you must not think that he was allowed to run wild, or that he was an idle, careless boy. Naturally thoughtful and fond of study, his lessons were almost without exception well and thoroughly learned. Several hours each day were spent in his father's study, where sometimes he read aloud, at others committed to memory large portions from books selected by his father. As he grew older he sometimes helped by copying MS., answering letters, and other things.

In all such work great neatness and accuracy was required of him.

To his mother, whom he loved with all the devotion of which a deep, strong nature is capable, he doubtless owed much of the missionary spirit that in after years led him to leave his loved home circle and his native land, to help carry the gospel to one of the darkest of the dark places of the earth, Uganda, which at that time was wholly heathen.

Mrs. Mackay was descended from an old Huguenot family, and would often tell her children how, after the "Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," they were obliged either to escape from France, or attend the mass. They chose the former and after many hardships and dangers reached the coast, and finally settled in Scotland. Their property, and much of their worldly goods, had been left in France, but like the Hebrew believers to whom Paul wrote, they were enabled to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods," for in Scotland they were free to read their Bibles in broad daylight, and worship God according to the teachings of that blessed book.

These stories made a life-long impression upon the boy, but Sunday evenings in the old manse were rich in holy, happy memories to all the younger members of the Mackay household, for when the verses of scripture learned during the week had been correctly repeated, mother was always ready either to read aloud from some interesting book, or to have what her children loved to call "a missionary talk."

Let us take a peep at the little group one Lord's-day evening. It is a winter's night, rain and sleet beat against the closed window-shutters, and the wind moans and howls outside. Inside all is warmth and brightness. The mother and children are seated round a cheerful fire; lessons are over, and Alexander claps his hands and cries joyfully, "Now, mother, we are all ready for a story, please!"

"Do you remember the one I told you last week?"

"Oh yes, mother, it was about Henry Martyn, and his work in India, and I can say the verse of the missionary poem you taught us."

"Light on the Hindoo shed!
For the maddening idol-train;
The flame of the suttee is dire and red,
And the fakir moans with pain;
And the dying faint on their cheerless bed,
By the Ganges laved in vain."

"And what Indian custom is referred to by the word 'suttee'?"

"That of burning a widow alive with the dead body of her husband. You told us, too, that when more than seventy years ago a great part of India came under British rule, laws were made to punish those who attempted it. There was only too good reason to fear that in out-of-the-way places, or where there were few if any British officers, it was still, carried on, though not so openly as before. But, mother, will you tell us to-night a story from the very beginning; when did you first begin to think about missions?"

"I was quite a little girl, not more than eleven or twelve years old, when I heard there was to be a missionary address in the church I attended with my parents. I did not expect there would be anything said that I should find very interesting, but I knew the gentleman who was going to speak. He was a friend of my father's and often came to our house; he loved children, so I felt I must listen to every word he said. I had even heard that he had a great wish to go to the heathen, but had been prevented.

"I shall never forget that night. The church was very full; we went early to get a front seat, as my father's hearing was not good. Two short verses of scripture were read, 'Jesus said, If ye love me, keep my commandments,' and 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,' and as the address went on, I felt as I had never felt before. Child though I was, I felt sure that I loved my Saviour, and so much was said about the honour and happiness of being a missionary, and seeking to bring souls to Christ, that I longed to be old enough to go and teach little black children about Jesus. At the close, prayer was offered that some among his hearers might be constrained by the love of Christ to go; and that others, who perhaps could not go, might by prayer and gifts help to send others.

"That night I could not sleep. I got up very early, dressed, put on my sunbonnet, and went out into the garden. It was a lovely June morning, roses were everywhere. I went into a quiet spot, and kneeling down, asked God to let me help the missionaries. If I could not go, even a little girl could, I knew, pray; and perhaps when I was older He would shew me some other way in which I could help.

"From that day to this my love for, and interest in, missions has never died down."

Chapter 4—A Boy's Request.

"WOULD you like me to go as a missionary to Africa, mother?" "If God prepares you for it, my boy, but not unless. You may be a true missionary, and yet stay at home; you must first come to Him, and if He has need of you in Africa, He will call you in a way you will not mistake. Should the message, 'Depart, for I will send thee far hence,' ever come to you, take care that you do not disobey it. Remember what Jonah got for his pains."

It was in the "quiet hour" Mrs. Mackay and her children loved so well that the boy listened to his mother's words; the impression they made upon him was deep enough to influence his whole after-life.

Every now and then business of importance rendered it necessary for Mr. Mackay to leave his Highland home and visit Edinburgh. In the spring of 1859, when Alexander had not passed his tenth birthday, father and son were on their way to the railway station, where Mr. Mackay was to take the train for the great city; he was driving, his son accompanying him in order to take home the trap kindly lent by a neighbouring farmer. They had gone more than half way when Mr. Mackay broke a silence which had lasted some minutes by saying, "Sandy, what book would you like me to bring you from Edinburgh?"

This was the opportunity the boy had been longing for, he could not afford to lose it, though he was by no means sure that his request would be granted. "I think, father, if it would not cost too much, I should very much like to have a printing press." Mr. Mackay dropped the reins for a moment, then said in a voice of mingled surprise and displeasure, "A printing press! Whatever can you want with a printing press? What you have to do is to become a good scholar; be that, and then if you ever write anything worth reading, any one will print it for you. Why, only last week when I called upon Mr. Smith at Keig I found one of his sons lying on the study floor, poring over a great Hebrew Bible, and you talk of wasting your time over a printing press!"

"But, father, do you really think it would be wasting time? I have often heard you say that skill takes up no room in the pocket or traveling bag, and some day I may find it very useful to know how to print."

"My dear boy, do you not know that the desire of my heart for you is to see you one day become a preacher of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, father, but Martin Luther said that printing was the latest and

greatest gift by which God enables His servants to advance the tidings of the gospel."

The railway whistle was heard, Mr. Mackay's train was due, and with a hasty good-bye at the station, father and son parted. Alexander watched till his father was out of sight, then drove carefully home.

As the train bore Mr. Mackay along, he thought over his son's request. "A printing press! What could have put such a thing into the boy's head? I expect it is the part printing played in furthering the work of the Reformation. I know he has been reading D'Aubigne lately. He does not play like other boys, but devours every book he can get hold of; yet every now and then he seems hankering after some kind of manual work. When he has a free hour, if he is not in the study with a book, I find he goes down to the carpenter's shop, handling all kinds of tools, and now and then lending a helping hand.

I think the best thing will be to send him to school. In the meantime, I must look for a book that will make him forget the printing press."

A few days later Mr. Mackay entered the well-known publishing firm of Messrs. Blackwood. New books in every variety of style and binding there certainly were in plenty, and yet he could not find exactly what he wanted. He was a well-known visitor and always welcome, and was soon engaged in friendly chat with the head of the firm. Before they parted, he spoke of his son's desire for a printing press, to which Mr. Blackwood laughingly replied, "He wants a printing press, does he! Well, my dear sir, there is no need to worry yourself about it. Let him have one. We cannot all be on the same lines. I believe that boy means to strike out a course of his own. Give him a free hand, and he will come out all right in the end. You get the press, and it will give us pleasure to make him a present of the type. But tell him, that even if he prints your books, we do not give leave to publish them."

So the printing press was bought, and in due time, with a large and varied collection of types, packed and sent off. No words can tell the delight with which it was received by its young owner. For some weeks every spare moment was devoted to making himself thoroughly acquainted with every part of his new possession. At first he found considerable difficulty in getting good, clear impressions, but he kept on trying, and in time was able to produce really creditable work.

How little any one thought that one day, in the very heart of "Darkest

Africa," upon that press the first portions of scripture that were to bring light, peace and joy to many of the sons and daughters of Uganda were to be printed. We can only say that in that quiet Scottish home God in His love and wisdom was preparing the future workman for his work.

Chapter 5—First Thoughts of Africa.

UP to sixty or seventy years ago very little seems to have been known about Central Africa. I remember, when quite a little girl, having read in an old geography book that the greater part of that vast continent, lying nearest to the equator, was supposed to be only a sandy desert, with here and there pools of water, round which a few native huts, in shape very much like beehives, were clustered. In some very old maps of Africa a great river has, been traced, but as no one appeared to be quite sure of it being there at all, it was often left out altogether.

Several explorers had tried to trace the river Nile to its source, and about the time that Alexander Mackay was making his first attempts at printing, a great deal of attention and interest had been aroused by hearing of wonderful discoveries. Yes, the old maps were, after all, right. The Congo, a mighty river, was really there, also lakes. Uganda was not a barren waste, but a well-watered and well-peopled country. Every new discovery formed a fresh subject of conversation in the boy's home, and few things gave him greater pleasure than to trace the journeys of Livingstone and Stanley on the map that when no longer required in his father's study, he carried off in triumph to his own room.

"Father," said Alexander one day, "there is one thing that puzzles me very often. I know that till quite recent times, when any skilled work such as building bridges, piers or lighthouses had to be done, we had to send across the Channel for engineers and they had to bring their own workmen with them. Have we had to send for missionaries too? Livingstone and Moffat were, I know, Scotchmen, but I see that quite a number of the missionaries in Africa are Germans."

"Well, my boy," was his father's reply, "you see the field is so large, and so many stations needed to be filled, that it was difficult to find a sufficient number of really suitable men at home who were willing to be despised, unknown missionaries, and a large missionary institution at Basle, in Switzerland, responded nobly to the call for the foreign field."

"But, father, why did you say 'despised missionaries'? I have always

thought it was a great honour to be a missionary."

"So it is, to those who are constrained by the love of Christ to carry the glad tidings to heathen lands; but any who have not that constraint had better stay at home."

Soon after this conversation, the boy confided to his father his great desire to become an engineer. Mr. Mackay, who had long noticed his son's growing love for mechanics, was not surprised, though his own hopes and plans for the future of the boy had been quite different. He heard him patiently, and explained kindly that to place him as a pupil with a good firm in Glasgow or Edinburgh would cost a large sum of money, much more than he could afford. He advised him to go on with his studies, and when old enough, try to win a good scholarship that would carry him through the University, and in wearing college cap and gown he would, he told him, forget all about saws and hammers.

In the spring of 1860, when "Sandy" (as he was still called in the home circle) was just entering his eleventh year, he seemed to lose his robust health and high spirits. His lessons were, as a rule, well and faithfully learned; but it was easy to see that his heart was no longer in them. He did not complain, but grew thin and pale; he lost his appetite, and his parents grew anxious. He was seen by a doctor, who owned he could not tell what ailed the laddie. His father took him to Edinburgh to consult a physician, who gave as his opinion he was not really ill, but had grown beyond his strength, and advised change of air and a long holiday. Acting at once upon the advice of the doctor, his father took him for a tour in the Highlands. In later years he often recalled the happy, restful time he enjoyed during those weeks, specially when a friend lent him a strong Shetland pony and he was able to take long rides over the moors, and get delightful glimpses of lake and mountain scenery.

Three months of free, out-of-door life did him good in more ways than one, and he returned to his home greatly improved in health; but though he did his utmost to please his father by attention to his studies, his old love of books seemed almost a thing of the past. He was still gentle and thoughtful, and very kind to the younger members of the family, but he never seemed more happy than when engaged in some kind of manual labor. It was "Sandy" who shoveled and swept the snow that often lay in deep drifts blocking the way, and almost preventing visits to or from neighbours. He would clear and weed the garden paths; and sowing and reaping time always found him ready

and willing to lend a helping hand. Small repairs, requiring the use of carpenter's tools, soon began to be looked upon by the family as his work, and he rather enjoyed, than otherwise, taking a turn at wood-chopping.

And so the years, happy, busy years, passed on till the boy was fourteen, and his parents felt it was high time he should be sent to school. Much prayer about it was made by both; for kind and amiable as he naturally was, they were not sure that he had really decided for Christ, and they feared that his affectionate, confiding disposition might, in the wider world of schoolboy life, expose him to temptations he would be unable to resist.

He had never had a boy companion, and looked forward with great delight to a promised visit, during the holidays, from a youth of about his own age, the son of an old friend of his father's who, like himself, was about to enter the Grammar School at Aberdeen. On the appointed day, John Hector, who in after years went as a missionary to Calcutta, arrived at the manse, and the two lads soon found that they had much in common, and, as the parents of both had hoped, a warm friendship grew up between them. They were left pretty much to themselves, and took long and delightful rambles, sometimes visiting a neighbouring loch or waterfall, at others fishing or bathing in some mountain stream.

Chapter 6—School Life and Business Training.

SCHOOL LIFE was the turning of a fresh page in the lesson book of men and things to Alexander Mackay, but he took to it kindly. His home training had formed habits of thoroughness and industry; and even before his conversion "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. 9:10) seems to have been the motto of his life. He did not lose his love of machinery, and took a lively interest in all the buildings in course of erection in the neighbourhood. He still studied well, and if ever he felt himself tempted to be idle or careless, the thought of how disappointed and grieved his loved ones at home, most of all his mother, would be if he failed in his examinations, or his report proved anything but satisfactory, spurred him on to renewed diligence.

He was a day pupil at the grammar school, and during his first half-year formed one of the family circle in the house of an old friend of his father's. For several reasons, however, it was thought best that lodgings should be found for him, and to satisfy herself that he was comfortably placed his mother undertook a journey to Aberdeen.

For some months Mrs. Mackay had been far from well, and her doctor advised her not to go till the weather was warmer. But to think of herself, her own health or comfort, when others were to be helped or served, would have been unlike her gentle, unselfish disposition. So she went, and the memory of the ten days mother and son spent in the great city was one that, to the close of his life, Mackay loved to recall. It was holiday time, so that he was her companion in her walks and visits to places of interest. How little he thought, when he saw her off at the railway station, that the end of her journey was so very near.

A chill, taken on her homeward journey, proved too much for a frame already weakened, and three weeks later the boy received a hasty summons home as his mother was dangerously ill. He remained with her a week, and, as she appeared much better, returned to school; but she had not strength to rally, and a few weeks later calmly fell asleep in Christ. Her death was his first great sorrow, and as he stood by her grave, he felt as if he never could be a light-hearted, fun-loving boy again.

He was not with his mother when her home-call came, but her dying charge, "Tell Sandy not only to read, but to search his Bible, and to meet me in heaven" (faithfully repeated to him by a relative), was never forgotten, and proved a turning-point in his life. Religious knowledge, godly training, were not all, he saw clearly enough. He *must* have to do with Christ as a trusted, personal Saviour. He took his place before God as a lost sinner, and that he was "on the Lord's side" was well known among his friends and schoolfellows from that time.

He still had a great wish to become an engineer, a wish that for some years his father did not feel free to encourage.

Writing to a friend in 1866, he said: "I cannot see my way for the future, but I feel certain that the Lord will make it plain in His own time. I believe that God gives each of us some talent that we are bound to turn to the best possible account, therefore I must go on with engineering. You say it is impossible, as my father cannot afford to give me the help I should require. But if I cannot overcome a greater obstacle than that of my father not being a rich man, I shall never make a good engineer; therefore I must go on with engineering; for He who gave me the desire will in some way grant it. This I feel sure of."

And in ways that perhaps he did not expect the way was made plain. In

1867 the family removed to Edinburgh. The six years that followed were very busy ones. Time was, he felt, very precious, and hardly a moment was wasted. Two of these years were spent as a student in a training college for teachers. Afterwards, he took a course of study in engineering and other subjects at the University, and that he might get a practical knowledge of the different kinds of work he might one day find himself required to do or to superintend, he worked for a time in the well-known firm of Messrs. Miller and Herbert.

During the greater part of the time, in addition to his other work, he taught for three hours, almost daily, either in public or private schools, and in this way earned money enough to pay his class fees and personal expenses. One of his most valued friends was Dr. Horatius Bonar, the author of the well-known hymns, "I heard the voice of Jesus say," and, "I was a wandering sheep."

The close, personal friendship and counsel of this ripe and matured Christian were an unspeakable help and comfort to the younger, and deepened his desire really and truly to serve his Lord and Master.

School and college life lay behind him, and as he was just entering his twenty-fifth year Alexander Mackay took passage on board the S.S. "North Star" for Hamburg. He had a twofold object in going. Having already made some progress in the German language, he wished to perfect himself in it; and some things connected with the profession he had chosen could, he felt sure, be more thoroughly learnt in Germany than in London or Edinburgh. It was soon after the Franco-German war, and trade was very dull. However, he soon obtained employment in a large firm. It was just the kind of work he liked, and he put his whole might into it, but he sorely missed his Christian friends.

Many among his workmates were openly freethinkers, and by hard questions, and clever, though unsound arguments, did their utmost to shake his faith. "Indeed," he wrote to his sister, "if it were not for daily Bible-reading, and that every time I open the word of God I get a fresh ray of light, I think I should give way altogether."

"The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy," and before many weeks had passed he had found in Dr. and Mrs. Baur just the friends he so greatly needed. They did not speak much English, and his German was at that time far from being fluent; but they loved the same precious Saviour, and had much in common. "Come and see us whenever you like; you will always find a welcome," said the doctor, as with a warm hand-shake he bade Mackay good-bye at the close of

almost his first visit.

Always frank and open, he spoke out his desire not only to visit but to live with his newly-found friends, adding that, surrounded as he was, not only at his work, but in his lodgings, by infidels, he longed for a quiet, Christian home. So he was received into their family. Dr. and Mrs. Baur soon learned to love him almost as if he had been their own son, and found him a useful and trusted helper in the home mission work in which they were actively engaged.

Chapter 7—A Long Journey.

THE employers of Alexander Mackay soon found that, in addition to more than common talent, he was industrious and persevering, and several very important pieces of work were left almost entirely in his hands. Still he did not allow his weekday duties to occupy his whole time and thoughts. Remembering that he was not his own, but had been bought with a price, "the precious blood of Christ," he really and truly desired to serve his Lord and Master. His Lord's days and evenings were either spent in Bible study, happy, helpful intercourse with Christian friends, or visits to the sick and poor.

One bitterly cold night in the winter of 1875 he finished reading a book in which he had grown deeply interested, "How I found Livingstone." It was at that time quite a new book, written by the well-known African explorer, Henry Stanley, who tells in its pages how he and his men, in their search for the pioneer missionary, Dr. Livingstone (who had not for a very long time been heard of by his friends in Scotland or England), had crossed rivers, climbed mountains, and for days and even weeks together forced their way through forests where the trees grew so closely together that though the sun was shining brightly overhead they had sometimes, even at noonday, almost to grope their way.

As he read, all his old interest in and love for Africa seemed to revive. He lingered for a few moments over its last page, then closed the book. As he laid it down, his eye fell upon a packet of books and papers sent from his home in Scotland. Hardly knowing why, he took one up and read with delight, not unmixed with surprise, an appeal for Christian men who wished to devote their lives to the Lord's work to go as missionaries to Uganda, in the very heart of Africa; its then king, Mtesa, being, it was said, quite willing to receive and welcome them. It was already past midnight, but Mackay felt he could not sleep until the first step had been taken, and a letter offering himself for Uganda

was at once written.

Some correspondence followed, after which he paid a short visit to London. Early in the New Year he received a letter telling him that he had been accepted, and asking him to get ready for a voyage to Zanzibar as soon as possible.

Just at that time he was more than usually busy with work for the firm by which he was employed. He had invented a machine in which a great number of different parts had not only to be made, but fitted together, and he did not feel free to leave until the whole was in proper working order. However, he replied that he hoped to be ready to sail about the last week in March. But a great domestic sorrow, the sudden death of a younger brother, a bright, noble boy to whom he was greatly attached, prevented his going so soon. He did not sail till towards the end of April.

How glad he must have been when fairly out at sea! The three or four weeks before his departure had been such busy ones, that the friends who bade him good-bye at Southampton thought he looked very worn and weary. What a number of packing-cases he had seen labeled "Zanzibar" and lowered into the hold of the ship!

The contents of these cases were very varied. All kinds of tools, several machines, presents for Mtesa and other native sultans and chiefs through whose dominions the missionary party would have to pass before reaching Uganda, and bales of cloth and bags of beads, the two latter to be used as money in the purchase of food and other things that might be required, coins being quite unknown in that part of Africa to which they were going. A medicine chest and some books had not been forgotten.

On the voyage to Zanzibar the party met a merchant who had known the missionary, Dr. Livingstone. He had done business with him and been impressed by his fair dealing and kindness. He did not speak very good English, but when asked what he thought of the doctor, replied: "Livingstone very good man, yes, very good man; Livingstone the best man I ever have seen; good for rich man, good for poor man, good for every man."

For the first time in his life Mackay had an opportunity of seeing something of the horrors of the slave-trade. A British man-of-war and several gunboats did good work against the dhows. During one week no less than one hundred and fifty poor slaves who had been stolen

from their homes and sold to Portuguese or Arab traders were set free and helped to return to their villages. "The boats and men are," he wrote home, "all too few for the work required. It is like catching a few of the stolen horses after the stable door has been left open."

To tell of all the difficulties, dangers and disappointments of the journey from the coast to Uganda would make the story far too long. Day by day, and hour by hour, "ye have need of patience" seemed to be saying itself over and over again. But the lesson was by no means easy to learn.

A good deal of time had to be wasted in getting the different parts of their boat, "The Daisy," out of the Custom House. Part of a valuable engine had been lost and was never heard of again. There was difficulty, too, in getting porters to carry the boat and other heavy baggage up country. The friends at the French mission station gave him all the help they could, but so many broken articles had to be repaired, and so much blacksmith's and carpenter's work had to be done before the party was ready to start, that sometimes it seemed as if they would never start for Uganda.

Black men, however heavily loaded, always sing at their work. One day Mackay got a number of natives to carry the boat (ten men to each piece) for some distance, and as they tugged and pulled and groaned under heavy burdens, they chanted, "White man give plenty pence!" They thought themselves well paid when each man received the value of twopence for a couple of hours hard work!

A page from his note-book will give some idea of how busy his days were. "Got up at daylight. Coffee, oranges and quinine at 6 a.m. Weighing goods, packing them into bales of 60 lb. each, till 7. At 7 sound the drum and take out my men for drill; 8 o'clock till 10, busy packing. Hard work at any number of things till lunch, then at work till dark. Numbers of visits from natives of different tribes, all good at looking-on, but have no desire to help. After dark, dinner, then at work again. So far it has been hard times for most of us, physically and mentally."

"The Daisy" had been built in three sections for transport by land to Lake Nyanza, but as they were found much too heavy to be carried any great distance, Mackay set to work to take out screws and rivets, so as to divide it into small pieces which could be carried by two men. This, of course, took some days of hard and seemingly fruitless work, but after delays and much trouble in getting porters, they were at last

ready to start.

Tools, books, machinery, valuable instruments and many other things were to be carried by native porters, of whom, after considerable trouble and many delays, Mackay succeeded in engaging about two hundred.

His home letters and journals show that he felt it was no easy task he had undertaken. He wrote, "Suddenly to have stepped into the place of father to so large a family of children, who are every day crying out, 'Poss-ho!' which may be translated, 'Give us our daily bread' is by no means an easy task. All their little disputes and complaints I have to settle. My interpreter is very poor in English, so he often misunderstands, and makes fresh trouble by doing so. Still we get on wonderfully well, and it often comes to my mind, If two hundred men on march can give such endless trouble, what an anxious time Moses must have had all through the long years of the wilderness journey!"

It is a great comfort and help to remember that hour by hour we can commit our way to the Lord and He will give all needed wisdom and grace for guiding.

Over-strain, alike of mind and body, brought on frequent attacks of fever, and at times Mackay was so weakened as to be quite unable to walk, and needed to be helped to mount his donkey. Still, there was very little sickness among his men, for which he was very thankful.

Chapter 8—Fever and Famine.

AS days and weeks went on, the work of the pioneer missionaries to Uganda seemed to grow more, instead of less, trying and difficult. "The Daisy," stores, and many other things, all had to be carried for hundreds of miles on the shoulders of men, and he found himself obliged to take the command of a caravan of more than two hundred. Very often the road lay through marshes, where they were forced to wade knee-deep through stagnant water, quite unfit for drinking, and even when boiled and filtered still dirty and ill-smelling. Repeated attacks of swamp-fever left him so weak that some days he was too ill to travel at all, and more than once he thought himself dying. But his work in Africa was not done, and through the mercy of God he recovered.

Small-pox broke out among his men, and though he used all the means in his power to prevent its spread, several of his native porters died.

Writing to his sister, he said, "It would have shocked an English doctor to have seen my donkey-boy, almost covered from head to foot with small-pox sores, wading for a couple of days through the swamps with very little clothing on; but here he is to-day, quite well, and with hardly a mark upon him."

Most of his provisions were either lost or stolen, and sometimes the whole party knew what it was to be short of food. It was no uncommon thing for a porter to throw down his load and run away, and when they came near a native town, or even a cluster of mud huts, the chief, or headman, never failed to expect and demand large presents in the way of cloth, salt and beads.

Soon after passing Mtamburu, Mackay was seized with such a severe attack of fever that in his already weak state he could scarcely bear even to be carried in a hammock. His companions decided that he must return to the coast, but he was with difficulty persuaded to do so. Mackay at last consented, and set off eastwards, carried by two strong men and eight others with his tent, clothes and other things on their shoulders. With this small party a rapid journey to the coast was made, and there a sea voyage in the mission steamer "Highland Lassie," did his health good.

When he was again fit for work he set about collecting another caravan for the relief of his companions on the Nyanza, intending to go with it in order to join the party he had accompanied in the autumn. Porters were more difficult to obtain than when the previous caravan had started, so he made a tour of three hundred miles northward and back along the coast to collect men. Often he and the few men who were still with him had to wade for hours across swamps where they were waist-deep in mud and water, sleeping in the open air or in cow-sheds, and living on roots, berries, or anything they could get.

Before setting out again for Uganda, Mackay received instructions to try, if possible, to construct a road, the first ever made in Central Africa, and though a severe attack of fever forced him to be idle for six weeks he was soon at work collecting men and tools. The Sultan of Zanzibar seemed much pleased at the proposal, and gave Mackay a fine horse to ride on.

By May day the work was fairly begun, and to his great delight he was able to engage as his personal servant and interpreter Susi, an old servant of Dr. Livingstone's, one of the faithful few who helped to carry his body to the coast, and afterward went with his remains to

England. He could speak several native languages, and proved a real help and comfort to the lonely missionary.

The slave-trade was still a cause of great trouble and anxiety to Mackay. He writes: "How many poor slaves are being nightly driven to the coast no man can tell. A well-beaten track leads from here to the sea, and every time I cross it, I shudder to think of the unhappy men, of the helpless women and children who, after being stolen from their homes, are being driven along it to be crowded into the hold of slave-dhows.

A British man-of-war, for the suppression of the trade, was stationed off the coast; but its boats and men were too few for the work that needed to be done. The Sultan could, he said, do nothing to prevent the slave trade, and Mackay soon found that the native interpreters, who were engaged to help the British sailors, were often bribed by the slave traders to allow their dhows to pass unnoticed, or to say that the women on board those captured were the wives or household servants of the owners.

Still he kept bravely on, and his home letters were bright and cheerful. Here is one. "I am well again, thank God, and camp life has set my spirits up. My horse, my dog, my goat, my oxen and donkey, with my household of nearly seventy men and a few women, are enough to feed, and quite enough to look after at one time. It is now dark and all is quiet, my men are going to rest. I have given them their food, and they know I shall take a good day's work out of them to-morrow. The insects are hard at it again; midges, flies and mosquitoes above, and ants and other creeping things below. A cup does duty for my inkstand, with a little powder mixed with water for ink; but eight or nine o'clock is bedtime when one is on the march or in camp, and I must turn in, so good night."

Day by day the work went on; miles of forest and jungle had to be cut through, trees felled, and river banks sloped down. Herds of elephants roamed through the jungle, and tracks of the lion and panther were often seen. Camp-fires had often to be kept burning all night, but the party were preserved from the attacks of wild beasts, and in rather less than twelve months two hundred and thirty miles of road were completed.

The business of road-making over, Mackay was once more free to set out for his beloved Uganda, though it was still six hundred miles away. He was advised to travel by bullock-cart, and to his great delight found

a young Englishman, an earnest Christian, and by trade a carpenter, had been sent out to help him. His new companion proved of great use in improving or repairing the native carts, and as his strength had not, like Mackay's, been wasted by frequent attacks of fever, he was able to manage the wilder oxen.

At last they started. Six large carts loaded, eighty oxen, sixty men, half of whom were drivers, the rest porters, five donkeys, a flock of sheep and goats, with six dogs, made up the party.

But every day the carts upset, sometimes two or three times; and in some places the jungle was so thick that it was found that twenty oxen yoked to one cart were hardly able to draw it.

Chapter 9—On the March.

I ALMOST seem to hear some of my young friends saying our last chapter was not a very bright one, and it made them feel quite sad to read of the difficulties and dangers Alexander Mackay and his friends had to face in their attempt to carry the gospel to the then darkest part of "Dark Africa."

Well, dear ones, if I only told you of the bright and pleasant things, and left out all the trials of faith and lessons of patience that had to be learned by the way, I should expect you to say my story was not a true one, and then you would not care for it.

Frequent attacks of fever thinned their numbers, and the few who survived were weak and often suffered greatly. Crossing rivers was often no easy matter, and in a letter written to friends in the homeland, Mackay tells of one that must have needed not only all the nerve and courage he possessed, but much real confidence in God.

He wrote: "I have just arrived at the Rukigura river. It is at present in flood, a mighty, rushing river, neck-deep. How I am to cross it I cannot tell. By putting up ropes and pulleys, much in the same way as for the lifesaving apparatus in shipwreck is done, I think I could manage to get the men and most of the stores over, but eighty oxen, the carts, and several donkeys will, I am afraid, prove slow and troublesome work. Still, I must make the attempt, or stay where I am till the flood is past, and I cannot tell how long that may be, as we are having thunder-storms with heavy rains day after day. A few of my men have run away, taking cloth and other things with them; those still with me are, I think, on the whole, fairly faithful. They are all sad

cowards, and when any danger arises take to their heels, leaving their master to get out of it the best way he can.

"Just now a scorpion (one of a kind much feared by the natives, as its bite is almost always fatal) crawled over me as I sat writing. It would make you shudder to see half the horrors of this kind one meets every day. Snakes glide about in the soft, slimy mud through which we have, often knee-deep, to wade. Several kinds of flies draw blood with every bite, and they can bite too! Last night I was quietly sleeping when the growl of a hyæna just at my ear made me start up, seize my rifle, and fire; but Bobby, my dog, was before me, and set up such a lively bark that the hyæna was off before I had time to present it with a bullet."

Heavy rains had made deep ruts. Large felled trees and bushes often lay right across the road, and the rough, uneven path was so wet and slippery that one or other of the carts seemed almost always in trouble. Sometimes the pole ox would fall and upset the cart. It must have been trying to find, as was often the case, that everything breakable was broken, and nearly everything that could be spoiled was so. But Mackay was not a man given to crying over "spilled milk"; so the cart was reloaded, and making the best of what could not be helped, they were soon again on the march.

About this time an accident rendered him lame, and for more than a week he was unable to walk. While helping to get one of the carts out of a rut, a bush caught his foot and he fell, the wheel going twice over his leg. Two of his men put their loads into a cart and carried him in a light hammock; but as cart after cart upset, they did not make very good progress, and weary and almost fainting from pain and loss of blood, the day's march ended, and they reached a village. The chief, hearing of his arrival, brought six or seven sick people to be treated, and one little boy he wished to be cured of spinal disease.

Weak and worn out as he was, the sad news that reached him while still some distance from Uganda, must have added greatly to his sorrow and anxiety. There had been fighting in a district through which they still had to pass, and two white men and about fifty natives had been killed. He did not need to ask who the white men were. Too well he knew that two of his missionary friends, with whom he had sailed from England, Messrs. Smith and O'Neill, were the only Englishmen within many miles; and he felt their loss deeply.

Soon after he wrote: "There were eight of us sent out; two soon found they could not stand the climate and had to return broken down in

health, four have gone home, only two are now left. Poor Africa! But the work of God will proceed, even if we break down."

The next stage of the journey lay through a plain thirty-six miles in length. He was only taking a few of his men, carrying small loads he was unwilling to leave behind, and as he knew robbers were often to be met with he ordered them to keep close to each other.

Towards evening of the first day, one of them fell a few yards behind, when a party of robbers sprang from their hiding-place, and striking the hapless man a heavy blow with a club, seized his load and disappeared. To attempt to follow them would, he felt, be worse than useless; but the contents of the stolen load could ill be spared. All the food supplies on which he depended for several days were gone, also his candles and matches. Perhaps the loss that tried him most was that of two ounces of quinine, a medicine he had found very useful in keeping off attacks of fever.

The robbers were hardly out of sight when a caravan drove up. The leader was an Arab trader, who was crossing the plain in a very comfortable way. He had a nice large tent, with Persian carpets, cooking utensils, sweets, coffee, plenty of rice, and many other things. He behaved in a most friendly manner to Mackay, and gave him a good dinner of rice and curried fowl, and before saying good-bye made him a valuable present, a packet of candles and a box of matches!

He had no quinine, so the next day Mackay sent back one of his men a distance of thirty miles with a note, begging that the precious powder might be sent to him with as little delay as possible.

Chapter 10—Fresh Trials.

WRITING to his sister in June 1878, Mackay says, "What a forlorn hope our mission to Uganda seems to be! I am almost the only one still living of the missionary band who sailed from Southampton little more than two years ago. Very few could endure the hardships we went through in the early months of this year. The loss of so many valued friends and fellow-labourers is a great grief to me. But God's ways are not our ways. I am now in some thirty miles of desert, and am going (D. V.) to the island of Ukerewe, to see the king who so lately murdered Lieutenant Smith and O'Neill. I have just had a bad turn of sun fever, but am quite well now."

Elephants, hippos, giraffes and zebras were frequently seen in the desert. After an evening march Mackay and his porters arrived just before nightfall at a deserted village. They were all very tired, but having found water, lighted a fire, cooked some potatoes and nuts, and lay down to sleep. Mosquitoes, however, were very troublesome, and about ten o'clock an alarm was raised. Loud reports as of guns were heard, and flames seen in the direction from which the sounds came only increased the alarm.

The men made up their minds to be off at once. They left their pots, gourds and half-cooked food all lying about, and packing his clothes and other belongings in less time than they had ever required before, by their very terror forced their leader into getting up, though he was at first very unwilling to do so. There was no moon, and the night was dark and cloudy. On they went, tripping, slipping and stumbling at almost every step, till, after a two hours' march, they reached another village, where the people were friendly.

Their next day's march brought them to a third village, where the cattle lived and slept in the same huts as their owners. The men wore no clothes at all, and little girls and young women only a small apron made of beads.

His socks were all worn out, and Mackay suffered greatly from blistered and often bleeding feet, when marching across sandy deserts or through brushwood. A few days later he caught the first glimpse of the lake, and enjoyed the refreshing breeze that cooled his sun burnt cheeks. On the shore of the lake lay the mission boat, "The Daisy," overgrown with grass, and very much the worse for its long rest. The machinery, too, was in a very bad state, and many valuable tools lying about were either broken or so injured by rust as to be useless.

Soon after he had a message from the king, who seemed to be greatly in fear of the white man, and said he had no quarrel with the murdered missionaries, and that the slave-traders were the only persons to blame for their death.

One or two extracts from his notebook at this time are interesting. "I have," he wrote, "sorted and assorted machinery, nails, screws, etc., till quite done up, and much has still to be done. To-morrow is the Lord's day, and I cannot tell you how gladly I shall welcome its rest. May I have grace to use it aright."

The morrow brought him an early visit from a neighbouring chief, who

wanted to know why he and his followers rested on that day. Mackay told him the story of the six days of creation, and how God rested on the seventh day. The chief listened well, and seemed to understand what he was told, but the scripture lesson was a good deal disturbed by the cattle, who took to fighting while it was being given. Mackay wrote, "It does seem as if Satan is doing his utmost to prevent even a little gospel light entering this dark land."

The natives advised Mackay not to trust Lkonge, the king, as they were sure he intended to poison him. They told him that after the murder of the missionaries, Smith and O'Neill, he had persuaded their men to lay down their guns, saying that he was their friend, and wished only for peace. They believed him, sat quietly down, and began to cook their food; while they were so engaged, Lkonge's men fell upon them, and many were killed.

Mackay felt his position to be one of danger, but it was a cheer to remember that the God whom he served was able to shut the mouth of the lion, and that it was not for his own pleasure or profit, but in the service of his Lord and Master. So leaving himself and the whole matter in His hands, he went quietly on, alone, for his men were so overcome with fear, that they begged to be allowed to go to their villages.

King Lkonge, who was at that time little more than twenty years of age, seemed more anxious than before that Mackay should believe his account of the murder of the white men. But when, as a proof of his friendship, Mackay asked for the book in which Lieutenant Smith had been seen writing only a few hours before his death, as he wished to send it to his friends in England, he was told it was lost, and could not be found. He was also told that guns and other things that had belonged to him had been carried away by his people, and he did not know where they were.

Mackay replied, "Lkonge says he is a great king. A great king need only tell his people to bring back the articles, and they will soon be here."

The king said he would look for them. He then asked a great many questions about England, and expressed surprise on hearing that the subjects of Queen Victoria greatly outnumbered his own. Several days, however, passed, but neither the book nor other lost property were forthcoming. Mackay felt that to wait longer would be a mere waste of valuable time, so after presenting the king with a red blanket and a

dressing-gown, they wished each other a friendly good-bye, and Mackay returned to where he had left "The Daisy," and at once began putting her under repair. The natives gave him a warm welcome, and came in crowds to watch the progress of the work. All were good as lookers-on, but had no idea of giving any real help, and as all the heavy part of the work had to be done by his own hands under the rays of a burning sun, a sharp attack of fever again laid him up for some days.

Chapter 11—Uganda at Last.

AFTER many days of very hard work the mission boat, "The Daisy," was repaired, and with a glad and praise-filled heart Mackay, in company with a missionary friend, set sail for Uganda.

For the first four days everything went smoothly, but on the fifth a terrible storm arose. Heavy seas broke over the little vessel, and the blacks, who formed the crew, were so overcome with fear as to be worse than useless. "The Daisy" was fast filling with water, and there was nothing for it but to let her drift on to a barren and somewhat rocky coast. The natives were friendly, brought food, and built a hut to shelter the white men and some of their goods; but the work of repairing the boat had to be done almost all over again, and as the weather continued wet, with frequent storms of rain and thunder, only slow progress was made.

After a delay of eight weeks they were afloat again, and after a rough and trying voyage, on November 1st, 1878, they came in sight of Ntebe, the port of Uganda. The natives saw them and manned a canoe, beat drums and appeared very pleased to see him. Five days later they reached Rubaga, the capital. King Mtesa was, they were told, too ill to see them, but sent his salaams (greetings), and two very fat goats as a present.

On the 8th Mackay wrote, "This has been an eventful day. Word came this morning that the king was somewhat better, and wished to see us. We (that is, Wilson and I) set off at once, carrying our presents, as everybody seemed too excited to be of any use. Messenger after messenger came running and shouting like so many madmen to hurry us on, but we did not mean to give way, so kept up a steady step. After a long walk we reached the palace, when the gates were opened, and the guard presented arms. We were ushered through long rows of soldiers and attendants to an inner room. At the end of a large hall we found the king, seated upon a mat. He wore a long white robe,

something like a dressing-gown, and a black coat, richly embroidered with gold thread. He bowed politely, and stools were brought for us to sit upon. Several gaily-dressed attendants were seated on the ground, and an old woman, at a little distance behind the king, seemed greatly interested in watching us.

"For quite ten minutes we just looked at each other in silence, as it would not have been polite for us to speak first. Then a little talk began. We presented our gifts, one being a large musical box, which we set playing 'The Heavens are Telling.' He seemed pleased, but after a time said he was too ill to sit longer, and we might retire. The whole court rose when we left, and followed us for some distance, small boys being, as usual, well to the front. In the evening the king sent a present of cattle, tobacco, coffee and honey."

Any of our readers who are fond of history will perhaps remember that in Saxon times the smith was considered a very important person, and, treated with great respect. Next to him ranked the worker in metal, closely followed by the physician. In the royal court of Wales the smith was allowed to sit with the king and queen in the great hall; at least, so we are told by Dr. Samuel Smiles in a chapter of his interesting book, "Industrial Biography," in a chapter all about "Iron Workers and Tool Makers."

From his great skill in all kinds of metal-work, Mackay soon became almost as important as the Saxon smith had been. All kinds of broken articles were brought to him for repair, and the natives were never tired of watching him at his work, and admiring the brightness of the polish he put upon much of it. Native workmen could, it is true, make hoes and hatchets, and a few could even manufacture knife blades, but the art of tempering metals was unknown, and when one day he rolled some logs up an inclined plane, he was followed by a wondering crowd, who shouted, "Mackay is the great spirit; yes, he is truly the great spirit."

King Mtesa was very intelligent and quick to understand anything that was properly explained to him. Mackay told him about railways, and steamboats, and delighted his majesty by describing the wonders of the telegraph and telephone. One day he said, "King Mtesa, my forefathers made the WIND their slave, then they put WATER in the chain, they next enslaved STEAM, and now the terrible LIGHTNING is the white man's slave, and a capital one it is too."

On another occasion he gave a magic-lantern lecture before the king

and his court on "The Human Body," pointing out the wickedness of selling a boy with a body made by God with such wondrous skill and care to an Arab slave-trader for a piece of soap! The king paid great attention and said, "From this day no slave shall be sold out of my country." Mackay was delighted, and told him it was the best law he had ever made.

Busy as Mackay always was, he did not forget that his real object in going to Uganda at all was not so much to make roads, or teach useful arts to the natives, as to carry the glad tidings of salvation through the finished work of Christ to those who had never heard the gospel. In all the haste and bustle of preparation for his journey the printing press that had been the delight of his boyhood had not been forgotten, and he was soon at work translating and printing some short scripture portions.

About this time almost every page of his notebook has some such entry as, "House, or rather hut, full of boys, who come for a reading-lesson, and take a great interest in watching me at my work." "A chief, who brought a canoe, spent last night with me. I gave him one of the white blankets off my bed, and we had a long conversation. I tried to tell him as clearly as I could the way of salvation; he asked many questions, and showed a good deal of interest. The longer I live among these people, the more I learn to admire, and even to love them."

Every Lord's day Mackay, by royal invitation, went to the palace, when a short gospel service, to which many came, was held. For a time the king showed great interest. On one occasion he was so deeply impressed that he said to his people, "Isa [Jesus], was there ever any like Him?" Mackay rejoiced, and hoped the day was not far distant when Uganda would be ruled by a truly Christian king.

But this state of things did not last long. More missionaries were on their way to Uganda. Some of them thinking that to sail for some distance up the Nile, and then across Egypt, would be a quicker and easier way of reaching that country, chose that road. This displeased the king greatly. For some time he had not been on friendly terms with the government of Egypt, and his suspicions were aroused. In vain Mackay assured him that the missionaries were not sent by Queen Victoria or General Gordon; that they did not come to spy out the country, and would not be followed by soldiers who would bring many large guns. The king was frightened and angry, and the outlook was certainly not a bright one.

Chapter 12—Dark Days.

A FEW mornings later, as Mackay and a missionary friend were at breakfast, a messenger arrived breathless with haste. The king had called for them! They must go at once. On arriving at the palace, they found his majesty excited and angry. Two white men (Frenchmen) had, he had been told by an Arab trader, landed at the port. Who were they? and what was their object in coming? were questions he wished to have answered at once.

The strangers were Roman Catholic priests, and Mackay explained to the king that though they believed in the one true God, and also in the Lord Jesus, they thought more of the Virgin Mary than of the Lord Himself; and prayed not only to God, but to people who had been dead for hundreds of years. They also taught that the Pope was to be obeyed rather than their own king.

The king listened, but it was easy to see that he did not understand. He looked bewildered, and said, "Who am I to believe? How can I tell which is right?" The slave-dealers, who disliked Mackay, because he had on more than one occasion exposed their wickedness and done all in his power to put a stop to their trade, lost no opportunity of trying to persuade the king that while pretending to be his friend the white man was really his enemy, and would, sooner or later, bring ships and soldiers and take possession of his country.

The Lord's day that followed must have been a time of more than usual trial. The preaching service could not be held, as the king gave a grand reception to the newly-arrived, who made him large and valuable presents, while the beating of drums, firing of guns, and shouting of an excited crowd of onlookers, made it impossible to get a moment's quiet. The priests shewed a most unfriendly spirit, and Mackay felt that if they were allowed to remain it might be well for him and his missionary brethren to leave the country, as their preaching was put a stop to, their usefulness hindered, and their lives in danger. The king was ill again, and they were told that should he die, the chiefs intended to kill every foreigner in the country.

Still, in spite of difficulties and discouragements, they held on bravely. Going to the palace one Lord's day morning, Mackay asked the king if he should bring his Bible and read to him. The king said, "Yes, bring the book." He also asked many questions about the future state and the resurrection of the body. He did not, he said, wish either English, Scotch or French teachers to leave his country.

For a short time after this visit things went on more quietly. The preaching services were again held, and the printing-press was at work, for as the number of those who wished to be taught to read was increasing, scripture portions and reading-sheets were badly wanted.

The next serious trouble was with an old woman who said she was a witch and could cure the king of his illness. She saw him very often, and though his health did not improve, Mackay was grieved and disappointed on finding that to please her he had returned to many of his old heathen ways.

"How I wish I had learned to sew before coming here!" Mackay wrote one day in his journal. His clothes were all but worn out, and to dress himself with any degree of respectability was not easy. "I had a day at tailoring yesterday," he wrote. "A coat of checked tweed which one of the Nile party hung up in his hut at night on his way here, was partly eaten, and partly built into the wall before morning by the white ants; he made me a present of the coat, and I have patched and darned till the result is quite a tidy garment. But my needlework will not bear a very close inspection."

The mission stores were very low indeed. Hardly any barter cloth was left, so as Mackay and his friends were no longer able to buy food, but were obliged to live almost entirely on what the king chose to send, it was decided that he should again go to the coast to bring up supplies. Taking a few of his boys, he set out with as little delay as possible, but the journey was neither an easy nor a pleasant one. At every village, however small, they were stopped by its chief, who expected tribute or presents of cowries (a small shell, used as money in many parts of Africa), cloth, knives, or beads.

At one village be was obliged to wait for many days, as its chief was not content with such things as Mackay was able to give him. But his waiting time was not wasted. He spent much of it in teaching his boys; they in return told him many things he had not known before about the people, their customs, and belief in witchcraft.

At almost every stopping-place he was surrounded by crowds of women and small boys, who came out to indulge in a long stare at "the white man." Sometimes he would take out his musical-box, with which they were always delighted. In almost every case their favourite tune was "God save the Queen."

Often, when after a long day's march they stopped at some village, his rest was broken by the bitter wail of some mother whose son had been stolen and sold to the Arab slave-traders. Kidnapping boys who, when employed as shepherds or goatherds, were often too far away from their own village for their cries to be heard, was, he found, quite a common practice. There were always plenty of traders ready and willing to buy them; in some places hardly a boy was left. How he longed to do something to suppress, even if he could not stop their wicked trade!

But at last the object of his long and wearisome journey was gained, he got the needed stores, found porters, and started on his return journey.

When still at some distance from Uganda, his three faithful boys narrowly escaped a violent death. While they were sleeping in a hut behind the one in which Mackay (who was again down with fever) lay, some natives with whom they had quarrelled during the day rushed in upon them, firing their guns as they entered. The lads fled for their lives and Mackay, though feeling very ill, forced himself to get up, and after some trouble persuaded the leader of the party to sit down and talk to him. Other natives came up, all fully armed. The boys remained in hiding until far into the night, when after a long and exhausting debate, Mackay was able to induce the whole party to fire off their guns and go quietly to their homes.

Chapter 13—Unfriendly Arabs.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1881, found Mackay and his brother missionary passing through a time of more than usual trial.

Mackay often thought of the home of his boyhood. The hills there were now covered with snow, almost dazzling in its whiteness. Under the hospitable roof of his father, friends and relations from whom he had been long parted were meeting; the fire burnt brightly, and everything spoke of comfort.

How different all was in Uganda! The drought which had set in some weeks before still lasted. The cloth, beads and other things brought for barter were all gone. The chiefs, though they found Mackay plenty of work, were unable to pay for what they required; some were so poor that they had been obliged to send away their many wives, who had gone to their country homes, and were living as best they could upon the roots they dug up. From early morning till late at night the tired missionary might have been seen busy at his bench, yet times were so

bad that he was sometimes obliged to beg food, and often suffered keenly from hunger. He had to keep a sharp look out over the brass taps and other fittings of his engine, or they would have been stolen and worn as ornaments.

It was weary, up-hill work, and they often said to themselves, or each other,

"Now, the sowing and the weeping,
Working hard, and waiting long,"

and if they had not with God-given faith and courage looked on to an

"Afterward, the glorious reaping,
Harvest-home, and grateful song,"

they would have given up, and taken the first opportunity of leaving a field so unpromising as Uganda. But they did not give up; though often "faint," they were "still pursuing."

They went quietly on, teaching a few boys who came to them and using their spare time, when they had any, in translating the Gospel by Matthew into the language of Uganda. Mackay wrote: "In studying the gospels, word by word, I see in them more beauty than I ever saw before, and I pray that the Holy Spirit may bless them greatly, not only to my own soul, but to the faithful native boy who is my helper."

Letters from home, always so welcome to those abroad, and eagerly looked for, were due, and ought to arrive not later than the middle of January, also books, clothes and goods for barter. But instead of these, a bitter disappointment had to be faced. The stores had to be brought from the coast by Arab traders. The traders arrived, but upon being closely questioned, confessed that they had left the letters and goods with which they had been trusted at Kagei, a place at a great distance, from which they were not likely to arrive for many days, perhaps not at all. The king, though of uncertain temper, had learned not only to like, but to respect Mackay; he evidently did not wish him to leave the country, for sometimes he would listen with seeming interest to the gospel message.

The Arab slave-traders, who had never been friendly with Mackay, were now his bitter enemies. It would not be easy to decide which they hated with the more deadly hatred, the man who had dared to expose their wickedness, or the faith he taught. They lost no opportunity of trying to poison the mind of the king and his chiefs against him and his

teaching, and tried in every possible way to hinder his work.

Long and trying interviews with the king took up much of Mackay's time during the next few months. Would the king allow any of his subjects who wished to become Christians to do so was a question to which it seemed impossible to get an answer. At one time the king would say, "There are many witches in Uganda [mostly old women] who have great power, and if I consent, they would kill any one who turned away from the gods of the country." To this Mackay would reply, "Mtesa says he is a great king, and if he gives liberty to his subjects to become Christians, the witches will not dare to injure them."

"I give liberty," said the king, "to all my subjects to learn to read. You may teach reading to any who wish to be taught."

"But learning to read does not make any one a Christian," urged the missionary. "The liberty for which we ask is for any who in their hearts believe in the true God, and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to confess their faith by baptism."

"If I consent," said the king on another occasion, "can I have an English princess, a daughter of Queen Victoria, for my wife?" Mackay smiled, but prudence suggested the answer, that as he was not an English princess, he was unable to say.

Frequent attacks of fever, quickly following each other, sometimes as many as three in a single week, weakened Mackay greatly. He wrote in his notebook, January 6th, 1881: "At midday, the usual hour, a bad turn of fever came on, in just the old way: cold shivers, pain all over the body, most severe in the head, and sickness. Got into bed, but a hundred blankets, even if I had had them, would have been of no use. A fire lighted close to my bed, on the floor, gave no warmth in the first stage of the attack. The coldness was followed by a burning fever; a few cups of hot tea bring on perspiration, and after a night of broken sleep and frightful dreams, leaves one the next morning weak, sick, and fit for nothing."

The Arab traders were a never-ending source of trouble and annoyance to him. Though there was not a word of truth in the stories they told the king about his past life, and his reasons for coming to Uganda, at times the king seemed inclined to listen to and believe them. The king really disliked, and knew he could not trust the traders, but as they brought him presents of guns and gunpowder, he did not wish to

offend them.

Mackay next asked for permission to leave the country and return to England, but this the king was unwilling to give. He at first refused, and afterwards made excuses to delay his departure.

Chapter 14—Letters from Home.

FOR a time at least, day after day seemed to bring some fresh trouble to our missionary friends. The much-dreaded plague broke out in the palace, and several of the king's wives died within a few hours. The king and his chiefs left with all possible haste for the hills, and Mackay and his friend, Mr. Pearson, had to endure many hardships and privations. They were often hungry and in want of proper clothing.

Under date March 13th, 1881, Mackay wrote in his notebook: "The hours of daylight are very precious, as we have only one candle left, and we do not know when we may get more. Fat and oil are not to be had, hence every hour of daylight must be filled up with useful work; so after dark we must just sit in the dark, as we have had to do at intervals many times before. I miss a nightlight for reading or writing a little. There is so much to be done, that I always grudge the hours of daylight for these purposes, but now I must do without my evenings. How I thank my dear father for the pains he took to store my mind with useful knowledge. When I cannot read or write, I often enjoy a quiet hour spent in recalling much that I learnt when quite a boy."

Food, too, was scarce and dear; sometimes for days, or even weeks, they were unable to get anything except a few plantains, and to buy these they had to part with all the clothes they could possibly spare.

March 14th "I had been busy all the forenoon translating, and had just got to work printing our first book of texts. I had my composing-stick in my hand, and was just in the middle of the verse, 'God so loved the world, that he gave...' when I heard a shout outside. It was our boys, who had set it up to welcome the man we had sent down to the coast for letters two months before. Down went my work, and on went my sun hat and white canvas coat, and I was out in a moment, just starving for home news and letters. Pearson was letter sorter. He had fifteen letters, but I had forty. I just hugged them with delight, and asked for the books and papers my dear ones at home never failed to send me. But none had come, so we began to read our letters. We read while daylight lasted, and as the moon was full and the sky clear, we were able to read by moonlight for some hours longer. Then we lighted our

one remaining candle, and finished our piles. We were too happy and excited for sleep, so talked to a late hour.

"We have nothing to go by here as to when we may expect letters. After about three months, we begin to think that in another three months we may get home letters, but we often have to wait much longer. When we send off our letters, please don't think all that is needed is that they should be stamped and posted. First we have to consider which of our men we can best spare. Perhaps those we fix upon refuse to go, and we have to try others, till a party of four is made up. Each man asks for a gun, powder and caps; also calico to wear, and calico to buy food with. If he has any small debts, we are expected to pay them. We have also to settle with the owners of some canoes about to cross the lake for the passage of our letter-carriers. We are glad when their backs are turned, as we have been writing late the night before, and the packet has to be made up, sealed, sewn into a piece of strong calico or bark-cloth, with a string for hanging round the neck of the carrier."

The king, who for some time had been suffering from several diseases, was again seriously ill. His mother (the Queen Dowager), who had her own court at some distance, paid him a visit. She was a heathen, and had always been unfriendly to the missionaries; but on this visit her object was to attempt to cure the king of his sickness. All the donkeys were, she said, to be killed, or sent out of the country before the king could recover.

The mission house, or hut, was three miles away from the royal palace, and as the long walk was trying in the great heat, Mackay had for some time been the owner of a donkey, not so much for his own use as that of a fellow-worker. The king did not order it to be given up, but sent two of his pages to "borrow" it. The donkey was never seen again.

Still many pupils, both chiefs and slaves, came to Mackay, all anxious to be taught to read, and amid all his troubles he was often cheered and encouraged. Sometimes they were only allowed to visit him for a short time, and were ordered off to some other part of the country. But as they had all, or nearly all, very good memories, and learned to read quickly, it seldom took more than two months to teach one of the younger boys to read fluently. Their teacher was not discouraged, for he felt sure that they would carry the good news they had heard, also some sheets of texts, into places where he could not go himself.

In one of his home letters Mackay described himself as "engineer,

builder, printer, physician, surgeon and general artificer to Mtesa, King of Uganda, and overlord of Unyoro."

The summer proved a more than usually hot one, and the plague spread rapidly. Many died, and though Mackay felt it would be unwise, as he did not really understand the disease, to attempt to do much for those who were really down with it, he spent a good deal of time in trying to make the king understand how much might be done to prevent the terrible disease from spreading.

The king gave a patient hearing, and said something ought to be done. But though numbers of women and slaves were set to work to sweep and clear the roads, the huts remained as dirty and ill-smelling as they had been before.

A young elephant was captured in the forest, and of course presented to the king, who handed it over to the care of the missionaries, with a request that they would teach it to obey, carry loads, and do other useful things like the tame elephants of which he had heard in India. The time and trouble this would involve was by far too great an addition to their regular work, beside, they could not afford to feed the hungry animal. So Mackay sent it back with a message that if the king would build a suitable house, send two men to attend to it, and send daily food enough for the elephant and its keepers, he was quite willing to look after it. This, he knew, the king would not be likely to do, and no more was heard of the elephant.

Chapter 15—Market-Day in Uganda.

FROM early morning till night Mackay was hard at work. For many weeks all the time he could possibly spare was spent in building a house, "fit," as he said, "for an Englishman to live in."

Perhaps the weekly rest of the Lord's day had never been more welcome to him than at this time. Under date January 8th, 1882, he wrote, "Had a pleasant afternoon with my young men, studying two of the psalms. How glad I am when Sunday comes round, bringing as it does a few hours rest and quiet, and giving me a little time to get food for my own soul, never more needed than in this dark and heathen land."

The house was finished at last. The people—rich and poor, high and low—came in crowds to see, admire and wonder. Indeed, on some days Mackay had so many visitors that for hours together he was able

to do little except answer, or try to answer, their questions. Windows! and doors with locks and hinges! a double story, and a staircase with a handrail! and if last, not least, an oven in which Mackay and his friends could bake their own bread! Such wonderful things had never before been seen in Uganda!

But the greatest wonder of all was a cart, built by his own hands, and painted red and blue; it was drawn by a couple of bullocks he had broken in and trained to pull.

Such a thing as a market had never been heard of in Uganda. But one day when the king asked how it was that many other countries were so much richer than his own, he was told that one way by which not only men but nations became rich, was by trade.

They had markets, in which they bought and sold. He thought it would be a very good thing to have a market, and ordered that a piece of ground close to the palace should be cleared and enclosed at once, though almost his next words shewed that he really did not know much about buying and selling, by making a law that any one offering articles for sale in any place but the market should be chopped in pieces!

Busy as Mackay had been, he had never lost sight of his real object in going to Uganda, which was to help carry the glad tidings of the gospel to its dark, ignorant people. In weakness and weariness he and his fellow workers had sown the "good seed," and the God in whom they trusted gave the increase.

In the spring of 1882 he was greatly cheered by the baptism of the first native converts, five young men who had, there was good reason to believe, received a saving knowledge of Christ. Several among his older pupils had also asked for baptism, but it was judged best for them to wait. All the pupils were, however, invited to be present, and all greatly enjoyed a treat of beef, plantains and other good things that had been provided for them.

Mackay wrote to friends in the homeland, "Our daily prayer for these dear lads, all of whom have reached the years of manhood, is that they may be kept faithful, and that the Lord may give them much grace. They may be called to suffer for Christ's sake, but each may be 'a light shining in a dark place,' and may, we hope, be the means of leading others to the Saviour."

In reply to a letter urging him to leave Africa for a time, and take a year's rest at home, he wrote, "I cannot forsake my work till God gives me some plain proof that the time for me to do so has really come. Our mission party is much too small for the varied kinds of work going on, and I have no right to leave while I have strength to stay."

On one occasion he put the bullocks into his cart and drove to market, a distance of three miles from the mission station, as he wanted to buy a load of plantains; but when he reached the market no one was there. The king, on hearing of his arrival, ordered his wives to go at once and sell plantains, bidding them also take a good look at the cart, as, though he would not go out himself, he wished very much to know what it was like.

Mackay gave an amusing account of his return journey. In the first place the people wondered how he got his oxen yoked. Did he tie them by their tails? "Off we went," he wrote, "down the steep hill, with the crowd after us. When I clapped on the brake, they all yelled with delight; at every yell the oxen went faster, and the crowd grew thicker; on they ran, some before, and some behind, till at last I had a procession of not less than a thousand. But oh, the noise they made! It was no easy task to drive. We however reached home without any mishap."

Chapter 16—A Royal Funeral.

WE know something of the many ways in which Mackay had made himself useful to the king and people of Uganda, but a new kind of service, neither expected nor wished for, was forced upon him. Early in the spring of 1882 Namasole, the Queen Dowager, died, and in great haste the king sent for Mackay. He wished to know how the kings and queens of England had been buried. Mtesa wished equal, or, if possible, greater honour to be paid to the memory of his mother, who died as she had lived, a heathen. He pressed Mackay to act as undertaker.

Printing, teaching, translating and other work made his life a very busy one but he did not wish to offend the king, so he consented.

The court presented a strange scene, All the chiefs and nobles were dressed in rags, and as each pretended to be crying, but was really yelling at the top of his voice, it could have been no easy matter to hear his own voice, or find out what the king really wanted.

Court mourning in Uganda lasts thirty days. No letters could be sent away, as no boat was allowed to start. No native must carry a load, and no work of any kind could be done till the royal lady was buried. Mackay, however, was toiling from morning till late at night, for everything had been left to and depended upon him. The king said the funeral was to outdo in every way, both in cost and grandeur, that of any former king or queen, and a tax of two thousand native or bark-cloths was at once laid upon his subjects.

Coffins for the dead were things unknown in Uganda, but on hearing that at the funeral of an English king or queen three coffins, two of wood and one of lead, would be required, the king said it was "good," and asked Mackay if he could make three coffins. Little knowing the task he was undertaking, he said if Mtesa would give him wood, metal and men to help he would try. The king said he had no lead, but would give him copper and bronze trays and bowls, of which he had a great number. These were sent to Mackay, who at once turned the school-house he was building into a workshop, and all the smiths who could be mustered were set to work to hammer them into flat plates. Like most of Mackay's native helpers, they were of little real use, as, though they had no objection to looking on, it was almost impossible to get them to work for any length of time, and, of course, the funeral could not take place till the coffins were ready.

Unforeseen difficulties now arose. The grave, Mackay was told, would be a deep pit, so the coffins must be made very, very large. Mackay told the king that he should require much more wood than had been supplied, so men were sent into the forest to cut down trees; but the planks they brought were so crooked and uneven as to be of little real use. A large tree had been chopped up to make two boards!

He next asked for logs. These, he was told, could not be had. But as he said he must have them, or the work could not go on, the men said they would try. The next evening about two hundred shouting and yelling men appeared, some pulling, others pushing, a thick slice of a tree, dragging it along the rough ground by the climbing stems which still clung about it.

Mackay laughed, and told them he could carry it alone. They looked their wonder, and it was easy to see they only half believed his words, but when he lifted the body of the cart off the wheels, and strapping the log to its axle with leather ropes, with one hand pushed it along, the crowd grew thicker, their yells louder. They danced, clapped their

hands, and cried out, "Mackay is truly the lubare!" (the favourite idol of Uganda).

To write the story of all the trouble and worry Mackay had in performing the task of undertaker to the dead queen would make my chapter far too long. Every day, and sometimes several times during the day, pages were sent from the palace to report the progress of the work. With one or two exceptions the native workmen ran away, and Mackay was left almost single-handed to complete the work. From early morning till far into the night, and sometimes all night, saw and hammer were in his hands.

The Arab traders, who had all along disliked and tried to injure him, shewed the same unfriendly spirit. They told the king Mackay was wasting his time, and keeping back the wood that had been sent for the coffins to build his own house. For once, however, the king refused to believe their reports, and remained friendly.

At last all was ready, and the day of the burial fixed. The pit was of great depth; thousands of bark-cloths were neatly spread along the bottom, or fastened on to its sides. Into it the coffins were, with great labour, one by one lowered, the space being then filled up with more cloth, many hundred yards of English calico being added. Mackay said afterwards he did not think there could have been so much cloth in the country, and when he and his brother missionary tried to put into writing the actual value of the cloth, beads and other things put into the grave, they found it came to little short of fifteen thousand pounds in English money.

How sad it is to think of all this reckless waste at the burial of one who had turned a deaf ear to the gospel message; who died trusting to idols, and hoping the bundles of charms put into her coffin would secure her happiness after death!

The day after the funeral every man, woman and child had their heads shaved, and laid aside the rags they had worn during the court mourning. Mackay was, we may be sure, glad of a little time to rest his aching limbs and toil-hardened hands. One native workman, the head blacksmith, had stood by him. This man soon after became an inquirer, confessed his faith in Christ, asked for baptism, and proved a bright Christian and a faithful friend to the missionaries.

Chapter 17—Boat-Builders.

AFTER the royal funeral, things in Uganda went on much as they had done before the thirty days of enforced idleness always required when the court went into mourning. Mackay, who had been again (after an interval of two years) suffering from attacks of fever, sorely needed rest. Friends in the homeland pressed his return, if only for twelve months; but though it must have cost him a great deal to refuse, there was, he felt, so much to be done, and so few to do it, that he decided, if possible, to hold out for another year or two.

The Roman Catholic priests left the country, taking with them about fifty small boys they had purchased and were teaching to say Latin prayers and make the sign of the cross. Shortly after their departure another missionary, Mr. Ashe, arrived at Uganda. This was a great cheer to Mackay who, during the six years they worked together, found in him not only a devoted fellow-labourer, but a true friend and brother.

Early in the year 1883 a letter was received at the mission station from Urima, a district at the south end of the lake. It was a letter of only three words, "We have arrived," and Mackay was left to guess who the "we" were. About a month later he heard that stores and other things he had been for some time expecting had been sent on by an Arab dhow and were lying at the port. With the help of a young chief he got porters to carry the loads, and before sunrise the next morning set off with a donkey and four men, himself walking most of the way, in the hope of shaking off a threatened attack of fever.

On reaching the port they were sorry to find that all the calicoes, barter cloths and other things had suffered severely from the wet, but it was too late in the day to do much in the way of opening the bales and drying the goods. A young Arab gave the tired missionary part of his supper of rice and gravy, and cleared out half his tent for him to sleep in. The chief, who was quite an old friend, sent as a present a sheep and some sugar-canes. About midnight a fearful storm of thunder and rain came on, and Mackay, who was lying on the ground with the donkey's saddle for his pillow, soon found that the thin calico tent was no protection from the fury of the storm; and as it was on the open beach, no shelter was to be had. His blankets were dripping, and the floor flooded; he got to the top of a bale, and sat there, half asleep, till the morning.

The rain lasted all day. The next night he got a hut, if such it could he called, for it was a cow-shed. The swarms of fleas and mosquitoes

made sleep almost impossible. Next day the work of looking over and drying the goods began. Many bottles of medicine were broken, and the oil-cans leaked badly. This was a great loss, as night in the tropics comes on quickly, and it meant often being obliged to sit through the long hours of darkness without a light. After repacking the bales, he engaged more porters, but just as they were about to start, rain came on, and they all ran away.

Many delays followed, but at last he reached a place nine miles from the mission station. The people came in crowds to see and hear "the wisdom of the white man," as he told them of the one true God, and tried to shew them that the charms in which they trusted had been of no use to keep away the plague, from which many had died. He advised them to clean their houses and roads.

A week later Mackay wrote, "Many visitors to-day. One man had been a witch-doctor and fortune-teller. His master, a sub-chief, had taken very kindly to learning, and wished to have all his people, women as well as men, taught to read, but by the king's orders was suddenly sent away to a great distance. But he had not forgotten us, for the old man brought as a present from his master—a fine fat bullock. The old man said that since hearing his master taught about the one true God, he had thrown his charms into the swamp, and no longer believed in witchcraft.

"Another old man came in who said he had heard of the fame of our wonderful house at the other end of the lake, and had travelled many miles to see it for himself. We had some interesting conversation, and before leaving his faith in charms was somewhat shaken, as he owned they could not keep sickness and death away. He promised to come again to hear more, and said he would bring a friend. We hope they will come, and that the Holy Spirit may so open their eyes that they will not only throw away their idols, but believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their own trusted Saviour."

Boat-building was the next large piece of work Mackay had to undertake. A boat for the use of the mission had been sent out in numbered sections, but when he reached the place where they had been left, he saw the task that lay before him would not be an easy one. The covering that had been put over the sections to protect them from sun and rain had been stolen. Bolts, iron plates, nails and screws were all missing, and the planks had been so warped by the sun that many of them were quite useless.

He was in a district ruled over by a king who had never seen a white man, and was not at all sure that he would be allowed to stay long enough to build a boat. The king accepted a present of cloth and other things, but refused to see Mackay, saying he was afraid of the white man, though he wished to be friends with him. He was afraid to let him stay in his village (ten miles away), and he must only stay for a month, as no rain would fall as long as the white man was near, and the crops would be spoiled. The people came in crowds to see the strange white man, and he was able to tell them that it is only God who can give or withhold the rain.

After a great deal of very hard work, the "Eleanor," as the boat was called, was built, painted and launched. It was not roomy or comfortable; a Scotch herring-boat would, he said, have been far better, but such as it was, he was thankful for it.

Chapter 18—The New King.

THE year 1884 was one long to be remembered in the history of missionary work in Uganda. During its early months Mackay made several journeys to the south side of the lake Nyanza.

On one occasion, as he had been unable to get bread, plantains, or other food supplies on board before starting, the missionary and his crew were very hungry, so they made up their minds to try, if possible, to land upon the large island of Sesse, where he hoped to find friendly natives who would be willing to sell food. But in this he was disappointed, for they no sooner caught sight of the boat than they ran down in crowds to the beach, uttering frightful yells, throwing stones, and shaking their spears and war-clubs in a very threatening manner.

Mackay stood up in the boat, and holding up cloth, beads, and a string of cowries, did his best to explain that he had not come to rob, but to buy of them, but could not get a hearing. It was as much as he and his men could do to keep the boat out of the range of the stones, which at times came flying in showers. Still, in the goodness of God, no one was hurt. He then asked if, as they refused to let him land, they would put out a canoe and bring food for sale, but even this they could not be persuaded to do. It was trying to be obliged to go away hungry, but he wrote in his journal: "These poor people have been so badly treated, and so often robbed and even murdered by Arab traders, that I was not surprised that they were afraid to allow strangers to land. Had we persisted in landing, it is quite likely they would have all run away, and I should have been no nearer buying food than before."

For several years King Mtesa had been in failing health, and day by day he grew weaker. To the end of his life he continued in a half-hearted way friendly to the missionaries, but gave them no ground for hope that he had really accepted Christ. His illness was kept a great secret, and he had been dead for some days before the news got abroad. The death of a sovereign in Uganda had always been a signal for plunder and bloodshed, and there were grave reasons to fear that for some time neither life nor property would be safe.

Mackay was away at the coast when a messenger arrived with the tidings, at the same time telling him that four of his men whom he had sent to the port for stores had been robbed, and forced to run for their lives. Houses and gardens were being robbed, and the mission house was to be burnt or pulled down. Nearly all his men were away, but he felt that he ought to return at once.

After many hours hard work the boat was launched and safely anchored near the shore. On the return journey the boat narrowly escaped being swamped during a violent gale, but by the good hand of God no lives were lost.

The morning after his return to the mission premises, Mackay received a message from the chiefs, who had sent a party of a hundred armed men to escort him to the palace. They could not settle the question of who was to fill the throne left vacant by the death of the king till after his funeral, and Mackay was required with all possible haste to make the coffins. The palace presented a strange scene. Thousands of women were weeping, or pretending to weep, and uttering mournful cries; while the men were yelling and roaring in a way that in one of his home letters he described as "simply frightful."

They wanted three coffins, but after a good deal of talking, said they would be content with two. Mackay went back to the mission house for tools and some zinc cases to be hammered into plates, collected as many native helpers as he could, and set to work with a will. By dawn the next morning the coffins were finished and the funeral took place.

The king had many sons, and the new king was to be chosen from among them by the chiefs. Their choice fell upon Mwanga, a youth of about seventeen, who bore a strong likeness to his father. His mother became at once a very important person, and the queen-sister, or maiden-queen, was at once chosen from among the princesses.

The missionaries were pleased that Mwanga had been the prince chosen to succeed his father. They knew him well, as he had often visited them and received instruction. On one occasion he had been asked how, if ever he became king, he would treat his old friends the missionaries? His reply was, "I shall like you very much, and shew you every favour." But he was no sooner raised to the throne than he forgot his promise and behaved very badly.

On their first visit to the court after his accession he refused to see them, and when, after long waiting, they obtained an interview, his manner was rude and insulting in the extreme. He received their presents of cloth, beads, and a large umbrella, but was very haughty.

It was not long before he shewed himself in his true colours as a bitter enemy of the gospel. Several of the chiefs, seeing the temper of the king, made the most of their opportunity to still further poison the mind of Mwanga against the missionaries, though still making a shew of being friendly to them. Persecution broke out; a plot to entrap Mackay and the native Christians, the firstfruits of his work in Uganda, was laid.

It was again a needs-be that Mackay should take a journey to the south side of the lake. Permission to go was given him by the king, also by a chief through whose district they would have to pass. He started with a fellow missionary and two of his christian lads. As they were about to enter a dense forest they were met by a party of armed men, who drove them back, and after tying the hands of the boys, carried them off as prisoners. The missionaries never saw them again.

Chapter 19—Testing Times.

UNABLE to learn what had become of the two Christian boys who had been so roughly taken from them, they went to a chief who, only a few days before, had made a great profession of being their friend, and begged to know the fate of the boys. They could not get a hearing, and were treated with great rudeness and violence. King Mwanga had, they were told, given orders that all the Christians in Uganda were to be burnt.

With almost breaking hearts the missionaries left, and making all possible haste to the mission premises, told their pupils of the state of things and urged them to fly and hide themselves in the woods, but had great difficulty in persuading them to do so.

Later in the day they heard that the mission boys had, with another young man, also a Christian, been burnt to death. The young martyrs had, they were told, boldly confessed their faith in Christ. Some said that after the fire was lighted they sang in their own language a hymn beginning with, "Daily, daily sing His praises."

Mackay wrote, "Our hearts are well-nigh breaking! Our Christians are all driven away, and we are lonely and deserted, sick and sad."

Under date February 8th he wrote, "Ashe and I have been all this week busy printing. It is quite likely we may be driven away, and if so, we cannot do better than leave as many scripture portions and gospel books as possible. These will be treasured by the Christians, and so the work of God may go on, even if our voices are no longer heard."

King Mwanga sent for the missionaries, and pretended that the boys had been burnt without his knowledge or consent. Mackay did not believe this, and spoke very plainly and faithfully to the king, though knowing that he risked his own life by doing so. He told the king that the boys had not been guilty of any crime, and to burn them because they loved the Lord Jesus and read their Bibles was to commit a great sin against God.

Amid all the gloom and sorrow the Lord did not leave His servants without encouragement. Night after night numbers, mostly young men and boys, came to the mission house, and said they wished to confess Christ by baptism. They knew the danger, but were, they said, willing to face it, and many were baptised. Some even found courage to visit the missionaries during the daytime, though such were always advised not to do so, as the mission premises were closely watched, and any native found there might be burnt!

News of the wreck of the mission boat, "The Eleanor," now reached Mackay, but without permission from the king or the head chief, he could not go to the lake to see for himself the extent of the damage she had suffered. To obtain this was difficult and trying in the extreme; much valuable time was wasted, as the chief to whom he first applied sent him to the king, and the king back again to the chief. And when, after many delays, the order was given, and Mackay started with a party carrying ropes, boathooks, axes and other things he expected to find useful in the work of repair, he had not gone far before he was met by a party of armed men, who said they had orders not to allow him to reach the port. There was nothing for it but to turn back, and again taking with him a present, seek an interview with the king. The

present was accepted, a fresh permission given, and he again set out to reach the lake.

"The Eleanor" lay on her side, almost covered with water, but after a great deal of very hard work was raised, and drawn up high and dry on the beach, the water baled out, and the boat found very little the worse for her supposed wreck.

There were many points on which the king and his chiefs could not agree, and more than once it looked as if a rebellion was about to break out. The missionaries gave themselves to prayer, feeling almost sure that if the chiefs got the upper hand they had nothing to expect but martyrdom. For once the weak king acted with firmness, he deposed the rebel chiefs, and several who were friendly to the mission were put in their places. "By this act," Mackay wrote, "the king has saved himself and us. God be thanked!"

Mackay's skill as boat-builder, carpenter, printer and in other ways again gained him a measure of favour. The king sent for him, said he was much pleased with a shelf he had put up for his clock, and expressed a wish to be again on friendly terms. The chiefs said, "The white men are men of truth, they do not, like the Arab traders, mix ashes with the salt to make it look more."

Mackay told the king that by being ahead of his subjects in reading and knowledge, he would set them a good example. Mwanga said he had often wished to learn to read, but had always been opposed by his chiefs. Mackay told him he was king, and could be powerful when he liked.

For a little while things went on more quietly. Mackay had many opportunities of speaking very plainly to the king, and told him that the blessing of God could not rest upon his country as long as robbery and murder were allowed. He also urged him to make a law putting a stop to the slave trade. Much might, he saw, be done to prevent the spread of plague and small-pox, from which great numbers were dying, if the people could only be induced to keep their persons and houses clean, and not allow rubbish to stand in rotten, ill-smelling heaps before their doors.

Chapter 20—A Noble Army of Martyrs.

"Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;

When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

The well-known lines I have just quoted must often have been the language of the sorely-tried missionaries in Uganda, for every day King Mwanga seemed to become more cruel and blood-thirsty than before. It was very seldom that a week passed without some of his unfortunate subjects being cruelly put to death. In August, 1885, the King took a trip on the lake, and ordered Mackay to accompany him. The very first day twenty poor natives whom they met were killed. Mackay writes in his diary: "This wicked work must stop. I hope to try by God's help to shew the evil of such murder, and if it continue I must enter my protest and return to the capital."

Not long after a fresh trouble caused deep sorrow to Mackay and his friend, Mr. Ashe. One day they heard that white men with a caravan were entering Uganda by a road that the king called his "back door," and the next the sad news reached them that the whole party, who proved to be Bishop Hannington and his followers, had been murdered by the express orders of the king, who knew that they had brought large quantities of beads, barter cloth, and other things which fell into his hands, and which he had brought to the palace by night, as he did not wish the news of this fresh crime to get abroad.

The missionaries spent much of their time in translating and printing portions of scripture, feeling sure that if they were obliged to leave the country, or, as it often seemed likely, called upon to lay down their lives for Christ's sake, God would still watch over and bless His own written word.

Many of the native Christians had been killed. Some were burnt, others killed by the sword. They witnessed a good confession, and boldly owned their faith in Christ, and the head executioner told the king that he had never killed such brave people. "They died," he said, "calling upon God."

It was well known that any native found on the mission premises, which were often closely watched, would at once be arrested, and perhaps put to a cruel death; yet many, mostly young men and lads, found courage to visit them, some in broad daylight, though by far the larger number came by night. All received scripture portions, and many were baptised.

Sometimes the missionaries thought that the time for them to leave the

country had really come, but without royal permission it would, they knew, be impossible for them to do so. Mackay had made himself far too useful as builder, doctor, worker in metals, carpenter and undertaker, to be readily spared. Though more than once he was told by the king that he intended to kill all the white men in the country, permission to leave was refused. "A great king like me," said Mwanga, "must always have a man of skill to work for him; I will not let you go away, not even if they send seventy letters for you!"

Still, week by week the Christian company grew larger, and on July 25th 1888, the missionaries' journal shewed that two hundred and thirty-seven persons had been baptised. Several Christian couples had also been married. On that date, under cover of darkness, fifty converts ventured from their hiding-places, and met at the mission house, where, at midnight, they united in remembering the Lord's death.

The king called for his fortune-tellers, and ordered them to find out by the use of charms and devil worship if it would be safe for him to kill Mackay. Mr. Ashe had at last been allowed to leave for England, and Mackay was alone.

Some of the friendly chiefs disapproved strongly. "No, you must not kill Mackay," they said, "he is your friend; he buried the old queen-mother, he buried Mtesa, he is a man of great wisdom." The king was angry, and said he would go with armed men and fight and kill Mackay, but the God in whom the lonely missionary trusted kept the wicked king from carrying out his threat.

The Arab traders, who had never forgiven Mackay for exposing their evil deeds and trying to put a stop to the slave trade, made many false charges against him, telling the king that white men would take his country and crown from him. The witch doctors were then ordered to bewitch Mackay and all the Christians in the country; but, as he wrote, "if they are content to stop at this, no harm will be done."

Meanwhile things were not going well with the king. First he had sore eyes, for which, of course unjustly, he blamed Mackay; then his palace was burnt down, and all his goods lost. His gunpowder kegs, which he kept in a straw hut where a fire was constantly burning, blew up, and great damage was done. Many were killed by the explosion, and others wounded. His Majesty then took refuge with his head chief, but he had only been there a few days when the house was set on fire by lightning, and the powder exploded.

The king was now in a terrible fright, and said he was bewitched, and must kill Mackay. Food supplies often ran short, and anxiety, hard work, want of sleep, and frequent attacks of fever told greatly upon Mackay's health. One day, to his great surprise, the queen-mother sent him a present of a fine fat cow, without begging for any gift in return.

Chapter 21—Great Changes.

AFTER many delays, and a great deal of trouble and annoyance, Mackay got the king and his chiefs to consent to his leaving Uganda for a time; perhaps a year or longer. But it was not to visit the scenes of his boyhood, though he stood sadly in need of a real holiday. Constant work, hardship and privation, with frequent attacks of fever, had done much to injure his health; he was often weak and suffering. The Roman Catholic priests who had returned to Uganda would, he knew, rejoice at his going, as it would allow them to have things much in their own hands; but this, he felt sure, would not be God's way of blessing for the country and its people. So he gave up all thought of a visit to the homeland, determined to go only to the south side of the lake, there to see how far it was possible to carry the glad tidings of a Saviour's love to the tribes living in villages along the coast, to whom the gospel had never been preached. He also intended to wait for and welcome fresh missionaries, who were, he had heard, on their way from England.

The journey took many days, and while on the road Mackay wrote to his sister: "Every half-mile or so along the coast we come upon a tiny hamlet of from twenty to thirty round huts, surrounded by a rough fence of cocoa logs, with, of course, a kraal for cattle in the centre. These villages are of great interest from a missionary point of view, they are just so many fields, I will not say 'white to harvest,' but where a great deal of ploughing and sowing needs to be done, and there may have to be long and patient waiting for the reaping time, but come it will. One great difficulty is that hardly two of these villages speak the same language, and as we cannot stop long enough at each to learn more than a few words, we are unable to do much in the way of giving them the gospel."

The printing-press had not been left in Uganda, and Mackay was soon hard at work printing scripture portions and reading sheets, which he hoped to send to Uganda. House building also took up a good deal of his time, for the expected missionaries might arrive any day, and he wanted to be able to give them at least the shelter of a roof.

They came at last, a party of six, one of their number being Mackay's old friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Ashe. It was a great pleasure to the lonely missionary to welcome his brethren, and they had many happy seasons of prayer and fellowship together. Within a fortnight after their arrival two of the party received their home-call. They had appeared in perfect health, but could not rally from their first attack of fever.

One day Mackay received a letter from Mwanga, the king of Uganda, asking him to send, with as little delay as possible, the new missionary who had come with Mr. Ashe from England. Mr. Walker went, Mr. Gordon having already gone to supply Mackay's place as far as possible. The king, on Mr. Walker's arrival, gave him quite a grand reception, and seemed to wish him to think that though as a sovereign he had great power, his desire was to be on good terms with the missionaries.

Mr. Ashe, whose health again broke down, was obliged to return to England, so again Mackay was alone. But, as he said, he had not time to be lonely, so much needed to be done. Crowds of natives came to look and wonder at the wisdom of the white man, and all who could read received some portion of scripture.

A tribal war was going on, and as a large number of boxes, bales and packages belonging to the great African traveller, Stanley, had been sent on to his care, it took much thought and time to find safe places in which to hide them all until the trouble was over.

Great changes were taking place in Uganda. The cruelty and greed of the king had long caused a great deal of discontent, and at last the chiefs took up arms against him, made justly angry by finding that he had intended to ship his body guard to a desert island, and there leave them to die of starvation. The king fled in haste and fear to the lake, followed by a number of his women. Only one canoe was to be had, so most of the women had to be left behind, but he reached an Arab station on the south coast of Speke Gulf.

From there he wrote to Mackay, begging him to come quickly, and take him away from the Arabs, who were robbing him. In the true spirit of Christ-like compassion and love Mackay felt sorry for Mwanga, and more than once sent him barter goods with which to buy food and clothing. After many troubles the exiled king was able to return to Uganda, and at last to his capital and palace.

But how had Messrs. Gordon and Walker been faring in Uganda? It

was months since Mackay had heard of them, and he often felt anxious and longed for some letter or message from his absent friends. One morning the mission boat, "The Eleanor," came in sight, and to his surprise and delight the missionaries were on board. They were thin, pale, sick and almost without clothing, for, as Mr. Walker said, they had just been bundled on board, but without their bundles.

They had a strange, sad story to tell. For a week they had been imprisoned in a wretched hut, where they were kept almost without food, with only a blanket each, and had to lie among filth too horrible to write about. More than once they had expected to be dragged out and cruelly put to death; but the good hand of God was over them, and their lives were spared.

When they were pushed on board "The Eleanor" they had very few clothes, no food or bedding was given them, and they had no protection from sun or rain. They would have been well-nigh starved had it not been for the French priests who were on board the same boat, who, being a little better off than themselves, kindly shared with them what food they had. Mr. Walker had only saved two books, one being his Testament, but these were taken from him and thrown into the lake.

Many Christians who had escaped from Uganda found their way to the mission station, and though the Africans are not naturally fond of work, Mackay did his utmost to shew them that the blessing of God cannot rest on idleness, and some became his willing helpers.

Chapter 22—Friends from Afar.

SOMETHING unusual must have happened, or was going to happen, for though it was hardly daybreak, every one at the little mission station where Mackay had so patiently awaited the arrival of the great African traveller, Henry Stanley, was astir, and every one was busy. A fine goat had been killed and roasted, fresh bread baked, and everything, indoors and out, put in readiness for the guests who might arrive at any time.

Again and again watchers were sent to a hill at no great distance, from which a good view could be had, and when at last the news came that though still at some distance, the long line was really in sight, Mackay put on a white linen suit, and sun hat, and went off to welcome Stanley, his friends and followers. They were a large party, consisting of Mr. Stanley, Emin Pasha, with his daughter, and about half a dozen

other gentlemen, while their following of soldiers, baggage-carriers, drivers and others, numbered nearly eight hundred.

For many days they had forced their way along, sometimes wading knee-deep through swamps, sometimes through forests where the trees grew so closely together that it was dark even at noon-day. Food supplies had often run short, and they were all very tired. So for nearly three weeks they rested. To the missionary, who for months together had worked single-handed in the midst of heathen darkness and superstition, the society of Mr. Stanley and his friends was a great pleasure. They had much in common, for the man who had found Livingstone had learnt to love and value his Bible.

"How was he led into the light?" some of my readers may ask. I will tell you in as nearly as I can remember his own words. "I was down with fever," he wrote, "and lay in my tent very sick and lonely. I badly wanted something to read, but most of my baggage had been left on the road, and all that could be found was an old English newspaper and a Bible. I tried the newspaper first, but soon grew tired of it; then I took up the Bible. I read it that day as I had never done before; and alone, in the heart of that African forest, I remembered my Creator, and as I read the New Testament peace came to my soul."

Stanley strongly urged Mackay to leave his work for a time, perhaps a year or so, and return with him to England. He had been so long at his post, had suffered so much from fever, and was looking so ill and worn, that he really ought to have a rest. All this was true, friends in the homeland were writing by every mail pressing his return. But he could not be persuaded to go. The long, dark night of cruelty and persecution in Uganda was, he believed, nearly over; the gospel was winning its way, there were many inquirers; and until some one came out to take his place and carry on his work, he was not at liberty to go.

And so the parting came. Good-byes were said, and Mackay, who had walked for some distance with the caravan, returned to his mission station. Stanley soon after arrived in England and found himself a popular and much-talked-of man. He was received by royalty; honours were heaped upon him. Perhaps Mackay little thought how very soon higher honours and richer rewards were to be his: the home-call and the Master's words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Busy days followed. A great deal had to be done to get the mission boat, "The Eleanor," into good working order, for though new boilers and other parts had been sent from England in numbered sections, it

had been impossible to get them together before. They had suffered greatly from rust, and some parts were so bent and damaged as to be quite useless; nails and screws had been lost or stolen.

All through the winter of 1889 and the first weeks of 1890 Mackay was toiling from early morning till sunset at his forge, or turning-lathe. His evenings were, with the help of two or three native converts, spent in translating or printing portions of scripture; at noon, while his workmen were at dinner, he had a reading class for boys. "To be always at work was," he said, "the only way to keep well in Africa."

Nearly all the chiefs or headmen in Uganda were professing Christians, and there was good reason to believe that many were really "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." They wanted preaching-places and schools opened all over the country, and Mackay wrote to friends at home, asking if there were no godly, devoted young men who were willing to go out as missionaries to Africa, love the people, live among them, for Christ's sake "endure hardness," and so have the joy of leading precious souls to the Saviour.

"In Germany, and some other countries of Europe," he wrote, "every man is trained for military service, and expected to be a soldier; and are not all Christians Christ's soldiers? And where can soldiers be more needed than out here, where the fight is so fierce and the soldiers so few?

At last the gospel appeared to be taking root in Uganda, and on every hand there were cheering tokens that the long time of weeping was about to be followed by a morning of joy, and though Alexander Mackay was very tired, still his home letters were brightly written, and often all aglow with faith and courage. One of his great desires was for the construction of African railways. Good railways would, he felt sure, not only help missionaries who were obliged to take long journeys to reach the places where they were most needed, but also do much toward putting a stop to the slave trade.

Chapter 23—Called Higher.

"BUT one morning early in February, 1890," so wrote his sister, "the clang of the iron hammer was hushed; the glare of the furnace had faded, the last blast of the great bellows had been blown, and all was still and silent." Where was Mackay? Only the day before he had been busy in the workshop. In the evening he had helped his fellow-missionary, Mr. Deekes, whose health had completely broken down, to

pack and make arrangements for his return to England. He had, he said, a cold, but it was only a cold, which be thought he had taken through getting over-heated, and then working knee-deep in water to finish some needed repairs on "The Eleanor." But the next day he was down with fever, and on the following day he was delirious. It was no common attack, and the worst was feared. His boys, who loved him dearly, were quiet and tearful. They moved about with silent foot-steps and sad faces, and whispered to each other, "Will he die?"

They did what they could for him, but it would have taken a journey of hundreds of miles before a doctor or nurse could reach him. He was only ill four days, and then the home-call was given, and he passed peacefully away. For him all was well: no more toil, no more pain, no more sorrow, but the presence of the Lord he had loved and served so faithfully.

During his short illness he did not appear to suffer much pain, but was delirious nearly the whole time. He often spoke of Mr. Stanley, who he seemed to think was still his guest, and asked again and again if he and his party were being made comfortable. All his remarks during the four days he was ill were made in English. In his delirium more than once he threatened to leave the house and sleep in the forest.

His brother missionary, Mr. Deekes, wrote to his friends in Scotland: "I had a coffin made from planks he himself had cut for the boat, and at 2 p.m. we buried him by the side of one who had already fallen on the mission-field. I tried to read some passages of scripture, and offer a few words of prayer, but quite broke down through grief and weakness. Our boys, with a number of native Christians, stood round the grave and sang, with tears rolling down their cheeks, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name,' in Luganda, and we returned to the house. Never shall I forget that day and many others that followed it. God, and He only, knows how I miss my friend. Those were sad days. I dismissed the porters who had been sent to carry my loads to the coast, and prayed that God would give me strength to hold the post till others could arrive to carry on the work; and so far my prayer has been answered, for my health is much better, and more missionaries are, I hear, on their way to Uganda, and may arrive in about three weeks."

We may say of Alexander Mackay, that

"He laboured awhile 'mid burning sands,
When the scorching sun was high;
He grasped the plough with a fevered hand

Ere he laid him down to die;
But another, and yet another,
Has filled the deserted field,
Nor vainly the seed they scattered,
Where a brother's care had tilled."

We may not understand why one so fitted for and devoted to the work of carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to the tribes, living in what, not many years ago, was the darkest part of dark Africa should have been so early called from the service of earth to the rest of heaven; but we are sure, quite sure, that God knows best. He makes no mistakes, but doeth all things well.

The work of God in Uganda went on. Long and patiently Mackay and his fellow-labourers had toiled, sowing the good seed; many were the hearts in which it took root, and with the blessing of the Lord brought forth much fruit. The work of translating the Gospel by John, on which he had been engaged the night before his fatal illness came on, was completed by a fellow-missionary, and many of the portions of scripture he had printed found their way into far-away places, and were the means of leading many souls to Christ.

To-day there are schools and preaching-places in almost every town and village in Uganda. Whole tribes have thrown away their idols, and said they wanted to love and serve the true God. Nearly all the children in Uganda go to Sunday-school and sing the same hymns (translated into Luganda) to the same tunes we have at home.

Abler pens than mine have told the story of Alexander Mackay, but if through reading it one dear boy or girl is led to see the beauty of an unselfish, useful life, it will not have been rewritten in vain. Remember he was only a schoolboy when he yielded his heart and life to the Saviour. We may not all be called to do some great work, but every life is full of opportunities; we can all do something to help or comfort others. Little things, if done from love to Christ, are precious in His sight, and may have results we never thought of or expected. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."