MEMOIR OF

GEORGE THOMSON,

CAMEROONS MOUNTAINS, WEST AFRICA.

BY ONE OF HIS NEPHEWS.

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.
1881.


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CONTENTS.

MEMOIR OF GEORGE THOMSON.

CHAPTER I.

FORBEARS AND EARLY SURROUNDINGS.

'At Victoria, Western Africa, on the 14th December 1878, died George Thomson, architect, late of Glasgow.' To most who read this intimation in the newspapers of the beginning of February 1879, it would merely convey the commonplace information that the malaria of the West Coast of Africa, so deadly to European constitutions, had proved fatal to one more white man. It might be that some might wonder why an architect had gone thither; but that would be all the attention given to the announcement. If, however, there were any who, having known the subject of the notice, were yet ignorant of the great purpose of his being in Africa, it would tell them that a kind, genial heart had ceased to beat,—a heart that had the fullest sympathy with everything that was noblest in life, truest in science, or most beautiful in art. Those

who, yet more intimate with him, knew what was the great aim of his later life, and what the object was that took him to that deleterious coast, would learn that a noble philanthropic effort to help the cause of missions and of humanity generally had been cut short by Death,—the great frustrator of human designs,—and would know that a life of unselfish devotion to the work of Christ had been brought to a close.

It has been thought by some of those that knew him best, that such a life as his ought not to be allowed to pass away unnoticed, but that some effort should be made to perpetuate his example, by telling the story of his work. It may be that some may be led to go and do likewise,—and there is room; and that others, when they read the story of unostentatious devotion of time, substance, and life to the great cause, may be led to take a more hopeful view of the future of our Christianity and of its missions. If the world is ever to be conquered for Christ, it is only by self-denying effort. If, then, the story of George Thomson's work move any one to equal self-sacrifice, something will be done toward this great end, and the aim of the present biography will have been attained. The real evidence for the existence of any force, spiritual or physical, is its power of doing work. Hence persistent self-denying effort for the spread of the gospel on the part of Christian people, is the one evidence for the truth of Christianity which no criticism can destroy,—the one argument which no sophistry can rebut or render of no avail. It may be, then, that the life of one who was

faithful even to death in his obedience to the divine precepts, shall be regarded as in some degree a proof of the truth of that faith in which he died.

George Thomson was born at Balfron, on the 26th May 1819. The village of Balfron has been little influenced by the later changes that have passed over the face of the country. The nearest railway stations are too far away from it, for its scenery ever to induce the Glasgow merchants to retire thither. It is still very much as it was sixty years ago. As one approaches it from Killearn, the village is seen rising above the haughs that lie beside the Endrick, in successive rows of whitewashed houses peering from amidst dark broad-leafed trees. Away behind the trees, and what of the village is visible from the road, is the stunted belfry of the village church. A broad but somewhat irregular street leads up from the water Endrick through the village, and terminates in a small group of houses which have gathered in front of the 'kirk-stile.' This group of houses is known as the Clachan, and is the nucleus of the present village. The houses arrange themselves in the form of a square, somewhat uncertainly, as if not quite sure of the correctness of the proceeding. In the centre of this square still stands the Clachan tree, now much decayed, which was in old days the favourite gathering place of the fathers of the hamlet, and where were held the village parliaments for talking over the gossip of the day. One can easily guess that there would, in the

first quarter of this century, be no lack of subjects for discussion; for the eyes of the visitor can scarcely fail to catch the chimney of the spinning-mill down in the haugh by the Endrick; and he will remember having heard, in passing through the village street, the whiz and clack of the loom. In those days every spinner and weaver was an ardent politician, and the country was seething with the Radical disturbances. We can imagine the indignant eloquence with which the corruption of governments would be criticised, and the humility with which the speakers would hint that if they only had the power, things would be much better managed.

On crossing the Endrick, the traveller entering Balfron from Killearn may see to the right a cottage with its back to the road, and before it a garden sloping down to the edge of the stream. It was in this cottage that George Thomson was born. From its windows are seen the long heathery slopes of the Campsie Fells; and prominent among these, by its conical shape and its separation from the rest of the range, is Dumgoin, the westmost of them. Behind it, in summer-time, from the cottage door the sun is seen to set in his golden beauty. Continually within and about the cottage is heard the music of running water: the Endrick now gently murmurs at the foot of the garden in summer-time, and again, made tawny and turbulent with the winter spates, is heard rushing and roaring.

John Thomson, George's father, was book-keeper in

the spinning-mill in the haugh to which we have referred already. He had been offered the management of the mill, but had refused it, because some of the members of the firm to whom it belonged were in the habit of coming out from Glasgow on Saturday, and spending Sabbath in looking over their books and talking business. Before coming to Balfron, he had been book-keeper in Carron Ironworks, and had left on account of similar conscientious scruples. After his refusal of the place of manager, the firm, still desirous of promoting him, offered him next the situation of book-keeper in their principal establishment in Glasgow; but he again refused, this time on account of the temptations to which his family might be exposed in a city.

The descent of the man was quite what might have been expected from his character. His grandfather — George Thomson's great-grandfather — had been out with the Covenanters at Bothwell Brig, and was, according to family tradition, imprisoned with his two brothers in Stirling Castle. The lot of the three brothers was somewhat alleviated by the efforts of the wife of one of them. Finding out that the cell in which her husband and his brothers were confined overlooked Castle Hill, where the present Back Walk now runs, her woman's wit devised a way of communicating with them, and yet not rousing the suspicions of the guard. As she paced along the hillside, she began to sing a song which she had been in the habit of singing in happier days, and introduced

into the chorus of it the names of her husband and his two brothers. On their showing that they recognised her presence, she succeeded, probably by means similar to those by which she first gained their attention, in making them understand that they must let down a cord to her, and to this she attached a pitcher containing some tit-bit for the prisoners. From whatever cause, the prisoners were released ere long. John, the eldest of these brothers, and great-grandfather of the subject of the present memoir, retired to a farm which belonged to him, in the hilly district about the upper waters of the Carron. He was unmarried at the time of his imprisonment, but in his old age married a widow, by whom he had one son, who was also named John.

This second John seems to have maintained the characteristic for which the family were noted in the district, that they were 'aye mair for the ither worl' than for this.' He sat under the ministry of Mr. Robe of Kilsyth, whose earnest and devoted labours prepared the way for the Kilsyth revivals of the middle of last century; and among the few books that have come down in the family, is a volume of Robe's sermons. Whatever his fitness for the next world, if his fitness for the present is to be measured by his success in it, it cannot be said to be great. Smitten with a desire to try scientific farming, which was then just beginning to excite attention, on a more favourable soil than the somewhat bare pasture land of the upper banks of the Carron afforded, he sold his property and removed to

a farm on the Kinnaird estate. Shortly after he had settled there, both he and his wife died, leaving a young family, the youngest of whom was his only son John.

This third John was twice married, and had twenty children, of whom the nineteenth was George Thomson. George's mother was Elizabeth Cooper, sister of the then Burgher minister of Balfron. She belonged to Aberdeen, and had accompanied her brother when he came south. In her girlhood she had been a playmate of Lord Byron, when the future poet was staying with his mother in humble lodgings in Aberdeen, after his father had, according to the song, 'squandered the lands o' Gight awa.' Often in after days she recounted her remembrances of the 'laddie wi' the feeties.' Her father was one of a number who originated the first Secession church in Aberdeen; and her brother, afterwards the minister of Balfron, had been the pioneer of Sabbath schools there. Eager for the work, but not very clear as to the method of setting about it, he and two of his friends one Sabbath night gathered all the waif and stray children they could get hold of into a room. When they had got them, in order to secure time to themselves to make further plans, and at the same time to give the children something to do, they asked them each to learn a verse of the Bible, or of the metrical Psalms, or of Watts' hymns,—at all events, something against next Sabbath night. When they next met, while some repeated one thing, and some another, one bright-eyed little urchin, brimful of excitement, burst out with,—

'Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,
Taffy came to our house,
And stole a leg of beef!'

This Sabbath school work Mr. Cooper carried on when he went to Balfron. In connection with this he set up a children's library,—a thing which, though common enough now, was new then. There were thus at work in the formation of George's character, and that of the other children of the family, outside religious influences, as well as those of the home and of the fireside. One inmate of the cottage at Balfron must not be forgotten. James Cooper, Mrs. Thomson's uncle, had been in the navy during the great French war, but was now invalided. In his walks he took the younger members of the family under his especial care. Leading the little toddlers by the hand, he directed their eyes to the flowers and animals about, and excited their interest in them by stories from his own reading. Late in life George Thomson spoke with enthusiasm of the effect his uncle had on him, in teaching him to see the wonders and beauties that are around, but which are invisible to so many.

It is not inept to study the ancestry of any one or the circumstances of his early life, for much of his later character is the result of his descent and his education. Especially was this the case with the subject of our memoir, who in his letters from Africa continually refers to the dens of the Endrick and the coves by Loch Lomond side; and whose memory was so retentive of the objects of nature, that he could say that he never

forgot a flower that he had once seen. Poor little fellow, the Endrick, whose music haunted him to his latest hours, nearly proved his death in his childhood. Playing on its banks, he fell into the water, and, floating down the stream, was just being sucked into the rapid formed by the bridge, when he was rescued. Full fifty years afterwards, looking at the spot, he told how well he remembered his sensations,—there was nothing of fear, but rather a strange pleasure, in the swift, soft motion.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE IN GLASGOW.

THE peaceful home at Balfron was broken up by the hand of Death. In 1824, Mr. Thomson died; and in the following year, the younger portion of the family, with their mother, left Balfron for Glasgow.

Death had been busy with the family before this. John, the eldest son, who had risen to be a junior partner in the firm of Kirkman Finlay, by whom his father was employed, died in Vienna. He had lost his health in Heligoland, where, as the agent of the copartnery, he was busied in contravening Napoleon's Berlin and Milan decrees. During one of the many momentary lulls that diversified the great war, he had, with the passport of an American citizen, gone in search of health to Vienna; there war found him. While the French occupied Vienna after the battle of Wagram, he died of fever, as was first reported. Afterwards, sinister rumours reached home, that the falsity of his passport had been discovered, and the French authorities had treated him as a spy: this, however, was never confirmed. Balfron and Vienna were a long way apart in 1810.

Michael, the second son, a young lieutenant in the

navy, had been mortally wounded in a cutting-out expedition; others had died in infancy; and William, the fourth son, had married and remained in Balfron.

The Glasgow into which the family came, was but a small place compared with the Glasgow of to-day. It occupied little more than a quarter of its present space, and contained less than a third of its present inhabitants. Mrs. Thomson and her family occupied a small house in what was then the outskirts of the city. Robert, the eldest brother of the portion of the family that had come to Glasgow, looked after the education of George and the other younger members of the family, so far as he could do so in the intervals of business. But there were other educational influences at work on George's mind. As they lived in the outskirts of the town, Saturday rambles into the country were among the regular amusements of the brothers; and in after days he used to recount his feelings, in those explorations of the course of the Kelvin.

He seems to have known that stream from far up its course with an almost amusing accuracy of detail, acquainted not only with its every bend, but almost with every bush that overshadowed its pools. We subjoin an extract from some reminiscences which he published in a series of newspaper articles.

One paragraph seems to us peculiarly touching, in its revelation of a sympathy with nature, deep and true:—

'Although so uninteresting in appearance now, this little bit of level land was once covered with bonny greensward, and there we first renewed our acquaint-

ance with the wood anemone. One trodden flower had struggled through the hard sod, and had just attained that interesting period of life when the petals are still unspread. We were alone that day, and gazed on the lovely, tender thing with a fondness with which perhaps few will sympathize. It must have been two years since we had then last seen an anemone,—a long period in our young life,—and it reminded us of happier days. We have since then looked upon thousands of anemones brightening the woodlands, stars in the sky for multitude, but that one solitary flower imparted a greater joy than they all,—it was like the desert flower to the weary traveller. We did not leave it,—some careless foot might have crushed it; so we lifted it tenderly, and carefully bore the pearly blossom with us, that it might for a few days delight the eyes of those at home. It was like a glint of sunshine in a dark day.'

In another of these articles, after giving a loving account of the wild-flowers that grew in a little strip of verdure beside a mill-lead on the Kelvin, he adds: 'Now for the eels. What, eels! Yes, gentle reader, we confess that the catching of these slimy, slippery things gave an amazing amount of sport. We have brought with us neither rod nor line, hook nor bait, nevertheless we are quite prepared for the work before us. It is no easy task to catch an eel by the tail, as those who have tried can testify; but here is an instrument to arrest him,—a sort of harpoon or leister in miniature, consisting of an old dinner fork fastened into the fragment of a broken staff, which we have brought along concealed in our

jacket sleeve. With this in our hands, and our knowledge of the manners and customs of eels, we are fully equipped. We now take off our "shoon" and stockings, putting a stocking into each shoe, and tying the whangs together for more easy transport. These, with our jackets, are disposed on the bank under the charge of our "wee brither," who, honest man, pleased with the important trust committed to him, sits complacently in the midst of the stuff munching his scone, and surveying our more exciting operations.' Then follows a spirited account of this primitive eel-spearing, too long to extract.

Thus was fostered that intense love of nature, which was only less prominent in his character than his religious devotion.

Before three years were over, the hand of Death again broke up the household: five of the family died within little more than a year. George's mother, his eldest sister, and three of his brothers, died between 1828 and 1830, and thus five of them were left little more than children,—the eldest of them, Ebenezer, being little more than sixteen. During that time of family distress, George, then a little boy of ten years old, went to his first situation.

After staying four years in Balfron, the eldest surviving brother came into Glasgow, and settled ultimately in its outskirts at Hangingshaw. With him the younger members of the family were now domiciled.

Night and morning the three lads paced the distance between the city and their home, all the while with

eyes open to what might be seen and heard in the woods and hedgerows. About this time they read White's *Natural History of Selborne*, and that ever charming book gave a deeper point to their old uncle's teaching, and at the same time gave to their observations more at least of the appearance of scientific accuracy. They got note-books, and recorded when they first saw the swallows in the spring, or last saw them in the autumn. They made observations on the habits of slugs and snails; collected all varieties of caterpillars, and fed them till they passed into the chrysalis state, and thence out to the world again as moths or butterflies. The study of White embued the brothers with the conviction that what was not beneath God to make, was not beneath man to observe; and, further, that any observation worth the name, must be careful and continuous.

While thus the thoughts of the brothers were occupied with nature, the minds of the two younger were directed simultaneously into another channel. Mr. Foote, an architect, had seen some drawings of Alexander Thomson, and, being struck with the signs of talent they showed, offered to make him an apprentice to his own profession. Mr. Foote was one of those rare men to whom architecture is a profession, and not a mere business. Nothing is so fitted to fire young men as enthusiasm; so the enthusiastic master soon had an equally enthusiastic and apt pupil. Like other enthusiasts, Alexander was continually bent on making converts; he strove to impress everybody with the

correctness of his own and his master's views of art generally, and of architecture in particular. His brother George was his first convert, and was soon infected by the desire to be an architect. No benevolent Mr. Foote was found in his case: premiums were demanded instead of wages offered, and the finances of the little household could not stand that. But this desire made him devote himself to drawing, whenever and wherever he got the opportunity,—trees and horses, next to the human face and form, being the especial favourites of his pencil. There are note-books filled with strange freaks in the way of face, that exhibit every degree of grotesquery and every phase of character that faces are capable of expressing; horses in every attitude, and going at every pace; trees of every kind, in summer foliage or winter bareness. This practice trained his eye to yet greater exactness of observation in regard to every object which he saw. Let any one not previously in the habit of drawing from nature, try to draw from memory what he has seen,—let it be the face of even his nearest and dearest,—he will learn by failure how far from complete has been his observation.

While they were at Hangingshaw, of course their elder brother William had great influence over the younger members of the family. He was one of those *lusus naturæ* whose high endowments raise expectations which their future does not fulfil. In Glasgow University he had a splendid career, especially in classics; while during the summer, when he was at home, he took his part in labouring on his father's

croft, and in cutting peats with his brothers and the sons of the other villagers, and even in these employments he is said to have excelled. To the classical languages he added French and Italian; and the first of these he taught a Highlander resident at Balfron, in payment for being taught Gaelic by him,—a zeal for that ancient language which Professor Blackie could estimate at its proper value. He was destined for the Church, and learned Hebrew and Chaldee in the course of his preparations, and added afterwards to these Arabic and Syriac. He might have had a brilliant career, but love led him to marry earlier than worldly prudence would have dictated. He had to abandon his ecclesiastical hopes, and devote himself to the more humble work, as it was then reckoned, of teaching. His busy brain could not be at rest: he had a taste for mechanics, which exhibited itself in continual investigations. From papers left behind him, he seems to have anticipated the discovery of the screw propeller. While at Hangingshaw, he occupied himself in studying gunnery, and invented a form of gun which he called a Govanade. William's brothers were all more or less interested in these experiments. George, for one, afterwards pursued a course of investigation to find out the best form of explosive bullet,—a direction of study in singular contrast with his after life. Like most young men at the time, William Thomson was greatly moved by the struggle for freedom which the Poles had maintained at the close of last century, the last throes of which were felt far into the present.

He was consequently drawn into association with refugees from the oppressed nationalities, and among these was intimate with a Mr. Cerf, a converted Polish Jew, who had become missionary to the Jews in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Mr. Cerf introduced the family to the famous 'Rabbi' Duncan among others, and also to a number of Syrians and Egyptians that had been sent for educational purposes to Britain. This wide acquaintanceship with waifs and strays of different nationalities gave George Thomson a cosmopolitan sympathy which made him more ready to be moved to missionary enterprise, and more likely to be successful in it. Success in mission work is only possible to sympathy the most perfect with those who are its objects.

During his residence with his brother, George Thomson was threatened with consumption, the great youth-killer. In after days he used to speak of the serious thoughts caused by the possibility of an early death. It would seem that then he passed through the great change, as emphatically it may be called. Few men were less prone than he to merely 'goody-goody talk,' or to the obtrusion of his purely personal experiences, yet from hints in conversation one could deduce that he regarded that as the time of a new beginning to his life. At this time he solemnly consecrated himself to God, determining, if ever circumstances should permit him, he would devote himself to the work of missions. His brother Ebenezer had made at that time a similar vow, and possibly his example might not be without its effect on George.

In the year 1834, William Thomson, with his wife and children, removed to London, while his three brothers and the two sisters that stayed with them preferred to remain in Glasgow. So far as age permitted, they devoted themselves to church work in connection with Gordon Street (now St. Vincent Street) congregation. The robust common sense and personal kindness of Dr. Beattie, then the minister of the church, made a profound impression on the Thomsons. The way in which their activity could be most easily employed was in Sabbath-school teaching,—a mode of work in which they might be said to have a hereditary interest. This connection with the Sabbath school of Gordon Street Church was never broken till George Thomson went to Africa.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF THE CONNECTION WITH AFRICA.

WHILE staying with their elder brother, the three younger brothers went through a course of reading that bore not a little on George Thomson's future work. It was a series of accounts of African explorations, from those of Bruce and Park, to the expedition of the brothers Lander up the Niger. While these were filling their imagination, along with them were read the biographies of the great missionaries, Henry Martin, Brainerd, and John Williams, with the experiences of Robert Moffat among the Bechuanas. But now an event occurred which gave a deeper meaning to this reading, and had in its result a profound effect on George Thomson's future career. His brother William determined to go to Africa as a missionary. While in London he had an accident, which, though slight at the time, afterwards threatened permanent disablement, if not death. His recovery, despite the fears of the doctors, seemed to him so special a manifestation of divine goodness, that it demanded from him some specially marked evidence of gratitude. The Church of England Missionary Society was at that time in

want of a linguist at Sierra Leone, to translate the Bible into the various native tongues with which, in their operations there, they came in contact. He offered his services, and was accepted. So in 1837, William Thomson, his wife, and family, consisting of two sons and a daughter, sailed for Sierra Leone, then known as the Englishman's grave. With that commenced George's special connection with the West Coast of Africa, and interest in it.

Elizabeth, the youngest of the family, was taken away by death, and the eldest of those at home, Ebenezer, married, so the household was diminished to three members. Their course of life seems to have continued uniform, save that now George gained his wish in becoming an architect. He went to the office of John Baird, senior, where already his brother was principal draughtsman. More and more did he become artistically the disciple of his brother Alexander, afterwards known in Glasgow as Greek Thomson. At the same time was he still more engaged in congregational work, through the influence of his brother Ebenezer, who had, when little over twenty-one, been made an elder.

The year 1843, so famous in Church history for the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, had a melancholy interest for the Thomsons as a family. William Cooper Thomson and his wife died that year in Africa. While he had fulfilled what was expected of him as a missionary linguist, his eagerness for the welfare of the Africans led him to occupy himself with other plans,

which seem to be anticipations of those of his brother. With the consent of the mission authorities, he purchased a small island, and commenced planting, in order to teach the natives European modes of cultivation. His efforts were, however, not very successful. Indolent and wasteful, enervated by centuries of degradation, the negroes resisted his teachings, now with passive immobility, and now with active mischief, stealing his tools, and tapping his palm trees for palm wine. On one occasion he ran a risk of having his zeal for the advancement of Africa rewarded by the murder of himself and his family. A runaway Eboe slave, who had taken refuge with him, was assisting Mr. Thomson in manning a boat in which himself and his family were. They had come near an Eboe 'factory,' when out the Eboes came swarming, bent on recapturing the runaway, careless of the danger to those who harboured him. In order to obtain their object, the Eboes attempted to upset the boat, but in their eagerness, as they were swimming about, no one considered what his neighbour was doing, and so they clung in about equal numbers to the opposite sides of the little craft. To enable them, tiger-like, to seize their foes with their jaws, the Eboes file their teeth into triangular fangs. So the fierce black faces, hideous with their serrated teeth, flashed out of every wavelet, and, clinging to the sides of the boat, glared over its bulwarks. Mr. Thomson, hatchet in hand, threatened each one that, varying the mode of attack, attempted to board them. Meanwhile the runaway, armed with a boat-

hook, devoted his attention to his former master, and dealt him several shrewd blows on the head with such effect, that he had to be helped on shore, bleeding profusely. As the attack, however, still continued, it soon became evident that, since the assailants could not be expected to persevere in rendering abortive their efforts to upset the boat, resistance could not be prolonged much further, so the slave was told that he must seize his opportunity and make for the shore. A rapid threatening charge of hatchet and boat-hook simultaneously made all the assailants momentarily disappear. Seizing a knife in his teeth, the runaway leaped overboard, and swam for his life; he gained the shore, after having to stab on the face one of his Eboe pursuers, who was about to grip him in the shoulder with his serrated teeth. The runaway afterwards rewarded the kindness of his benefactor by stealing a gun from him.

About the end of the year 1841, disturbances began in the interior, inland from Sierra Leone.[1] As these interfered with the trade of the colony, Government was constrained ere long to take action in the matter. It was determined that an envoy should be sent, with full powers to treat with the various belligerents. William Thomson, from his knowledge of Arabic, the sacred language of the Mohammedans in the interior, and his acquaintance with so many of the native tongues, was pointed out as the most suitable person for this office; and the Colonial Government requested from the Missionary Society the benefit of his services. This was

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

granted, with the proviso that he should be allowed to attend to the interests of the Society as well as those of Government while engaged in this service. Believing in the negroes firmly, and confident in his own unlimited patience, he believed that he could win his way far into the interior without any demonstration of force. He started on his journey accompanied by his son William, a boy little over thirteen, a French mulatto named Louis Monaquais as body-servant, and a number of men as bearers of the goods which were to be given as presents to the various potentates through whose territory he might pass. At every stage he was liable to suffer from desertion of bearers. This was prompted by the native chiefs, under the hope that he would leave to them the goods which he could convey no further up the country. After a delay which might extend even to months, he usually compelled them to supply his wants, by threatening to leave behind him the presents intended for the Imam, the great Mohammedan potentate of that region; adding significantly that he (the Imam) would send for them. The threat always in time produced its effect, although, before they were allowed to go on, Mr. Thomson and his party had sometimes to endure great privations. His son used to tell how he at times had to soothe, by smoking, the pangs of hunger. Despite all manner of threats of assaults, and mysterious warnings of dangers possible and impossible, with which the natives endeavoured to make him abandon his journey into the interior, William Thomson held on his way, securing his advance by treaties with

the successive chiefs through whose territory he passed. At last he reached Timbo, the capital of Footajallah, where, after long delays, he got the Fullah chiefs to sign a treaty, and was ready to proceed further inland. That night he died. It was afterwards recalled that the natives of that region had a superstitious dread that the white man would take their country did he reach some city vaguely indicated in the interior,—a dread which perhaps some of the white men's doings have not tended to lessen. It was remembered that before his death his servants had all without warning deserted him, and that after the signature of the treaty he had partaken of the chief's hospitality. Hence the suspicion was that he was poisoned. While the father lay in the article of death, letters were brought from the colony that announced to the son that his mother was dead, and that his brother had left the colony for home. His sister had been already sent home some years before. So the boy, then only fourteen, was left alone in the heart of Africa with the murderers of his father. Only the mulatto Louis had remained, and with his help the boy dug his father's grave, and made his way back again to Sierra Leone. On his way he was kindly treated by all the potentates with whom his father had been in treaty. When he arrived in Freetown, arrangements were soon made to send him home to Scotland, where he joined his brother and sister in 1844.

During the six years of his brother's work in Africa, George Thomson, with the rest of the family, were continually kept alive by letter to the needs of the 'dark

continent,' and to what was being done to meet those needs. Mrs. Thomson had brought her little daughter home to school, and then visited her husband's relatives, and that, too, was fitted to keep up interest in Africa. Now, however, when the family of William Thomson were domiciled with their aunt and their uncles Alexander and George, this interest was at once increased and perpetuated. Constant association with young people whose childhood had been passed in Africa, and whose memories were always vividly recalling the ways and customs of the land they had left, tended to quicken and foster in George Thomson's mind the germs of the purpose of devotion to mission work implanted long before by his reading and personal experiences. This effect of his intercourse with his nephews must have been heightened by the younger of them, William, who had accompanied his father in his disastrous journey into the interior, expressing his desire to be a missionary to Africa. Circumstances were against the gratification of this desire at first, and his uncles thought that before any decisive step should be taken he should reach greater maturity, in order that the decision of the man might ratify the impulse of the boy. At this time no Scotch Church had any missionary agents in West Africa; but soon the Secession Church, whose flourishing mission in Jamaica brought her specially in contact with natives of that part of Africa and their descendants, bestirred herself in regard to it. The Rev. Hope M. Waddel was in 1846 sent to make investigations as to the most suitable

place for planting mission stations. In the following year, the Secession Church, which now by its union with the Relief formed the United Presbyterian Church, inaugurated its new position by fully organizing the African Mission. All this fanned into new flame William's zeal for mission work in Africa. As the year 1847 had been marked in the family history by the death of the eldest surviving brother, Ebenezer, and the marriage of the other, Alexander, the uncle and nephew were thrown more exclusively into each other's society. William Thomson, whose efforts were now being directed to fitting himself for African mission work whenever opportunity should offer, found in his uncle an always sympathising friend. It is characteristic that, though George had, as was afterwards learned, always cherished the hope himself of being a missionary, he never let it even be known,—home duties were too pressing and obvious.

CHAPTER IV.

HOME LIFE AND EMPLOYMENTS.

DURING the time that the West Coast of Africa and mission work there were exercising an increasing influence on him, George Thomson's mind was in various other directions gaining knowledge, which was ultimately to be fruitful in his work, and consecrated to it. A friend of his tells of a visit which George paid to him in Stirling. He had been sent to do some measuring work in the High Church there, and arranged to take a holiday in order to see more of the district. Sabbath intervened, but no persuasions of his friend, nor seductions of the country, now beautiful in the green of early summer, could lead him to wrong his conscience by walking merely for pleasure on that day. A compromise was agreed to,—he and his friend went to church at Dunblane, some six miles off. On the other days they traversed the neighbouring Ochils twenty miles or so at a stretch, and George used in after days often to refer to the effect that the scenery of these hills had on him. His keen eye and memory, retentive of everything it had once seen, was strikingly exhibited in regard to these walks. A row of Scotch firs that rise

picturesquely over the village of Blairlogie, struck him much,—they formed so effective a feature in the landscape. More than a quarter of a century afterwards, he revisited the place, and noticed that two had been cut down in the interval. His devotion to natural history was noticed by his friend at this time, though but scantily appreciated. One of the objects to which he was directing his attention at that time was—following Kirby's advice in regard to rare caterpillars—to find out, where that was possible, what they fed on, and rear them. On one of these walks he made a capture, and on returning to Stirling imprisoned it under a wine-glass; then, in the hurry of the following morning, when he returned to Glasgow, he forgot it,—an untoward event which has happened to many other ardent naturalists both before and since. His friend's reverence for natural history was not increased, when he found, weeks after, the poor creature under the glass dead of starvation. Addressed to this Stirling friend is a letter, now before us, in which he refers to these rambles among the Ochils. The first part of the letter is occupied with an apology for his delay in writing, and the next part with a sly apology for day-dreaming and laziness generally, ending with the suggestion that thinking of him (the Stirling friend) was partly the cause of this delay. 'He'—viz. the procrastinator—'is thinking of thee; it may be that he is wandering with you along the summit of the green Ochils, gazing at times on the glorious landscape that there lies spread at his feet, or scrambling among rocks and bushes at the

bottom of some glen; or again, panting up the steep hill-side, and hurling the loose fragments of rock from the spots where they have rested since the uprearing of the eternal hills. See how they spank away — one leap after another—till at last with one mighty bound they leap out of sight! there is a short pause, and then they are heard crashing and thundering at the bottom of the Alva Glen, just above the Deil's Pot.' There follows a cleverly-drawn portrait of himself, 'the procrastinator,' swinging in a chair; before him in the clouds is a splendid castle in the air, while over him are hovering winged Fancy, who is pointing to the structure, and Time, who has turned his back upon it, and, looking rebukingly on the procrastinator, points to the distant future.

While, in general, life passed with George Thomson very quietly, the turmoil of the Continent, as re-echoed in this country, showed a side of his character not dreamed of by most of his friends. The French Revolution of 1848, like a shock of earthquake, was felt with more or less force all over Europe; riots took place all over Britain,—among other towns, in Glasgow also. Of course every order-loving citizen was on the side of the authorities in their efforts to quell the riot, and many enrolled themselves as special constables. George Thomson quietly went to business as if there was no disturbance actual or imminent, but on his return home in the evening he fell in with a troop of rioters engaged in the work of destruction, and, tripping first one and then another of the miscreants, marched them off to the

police station. The police got the reputation of devoting their whole energies to defending their own offices, and leaving the city to take its chance. When they had got the prisoners, these peaceful guardians of the police stations commenced abusing them. What George Thomson did or said we know not; but long afterwards, whenever he spoke of it, the thought seemed to rouse him to a white heat of suppressed indignation, a mood unseen in him before.

In the year 1850 he was made an elder in Gordon Street Church, and soon after became session-clerk. This brought him specially in contact with the ministers who, one after another, were, in divine providence, set over that congregation,—Dr. Beattie, Mr. Middleton, and Mr. Rennie, its present pastor. It may have been that as a congregation, Gordon Street (now St. Vincent Street) was exceptionally fortunate in its choice of ministers; certainly it has prospered under all three. Yet, as there always are, there were some few discontented individuals, but George Thomson was never among them. He always strove to bear up his minister's hands in everything, so far as in him lay. Though thus by his office brought more directly into relation with ecclesiastical affairs in general, his interest was mainly devoted to mission work, and mission work in Africa,—so much so, that he seemed almost jealous of the denomination to which he belonged occupying itself with any other field.

Shortly after this, the congregation got the benefit

of his professional skill in designing a pulpit, to succeed the old sentry-box in which Dr. Beattie had so long preached. A number of the ornaments were cast in stucco, and then painted; these were all shaped and prepared for use either by himself or his sister. In the year 1856 he became associated in business with his brother Alexander. He had a large share in the execution of St. Vincent Street Church. When Dr. Beattie's congregation removed from Gordon Street to St. Vincent Street, they entrusted to George Thomson the duty of making the plans for the new church. It was in reality, however, a joint work: while he supplied the general plan and main features, the detail was his brother's; as he admitted himself throughout his brother's disciple, it was easier to secure a harmonious union of each part to the whole. He had the most complete confidence in the ultimate success of his brother's theory of architecture, and belief in its correctness. Alexander Thomson's principle was that the architecture of the present ought to be the summation of the *principles* of the architecture of the past, not the imitation of its *forms*. Hence, while classic architecture, especially that of Greece, represented subordination to law, and that of the Middle Ages represented freedom, the architecture of the present must unite the two in free subordination; that in some sort, picturesqueness, the symbol of freedom, should, without losing its character, become subject to law. It was this principle which led him to devote himself to Greek architecture as the supply-

ing basis of law, into conformity with which everything else was to be brought.

While he entered with zeal into his profession, other objects occupied him. His delight in country life led him to associate himself with a number of friends who, devoted to amateur gardening, had taken a piece of ground and divided it into plots. In his plot, while he reared, like his friends, flowers and vegetables, he at the same time carried on all manner of experiments on acclimatization, thus unconsciously training himself to judge of climate by its vegetable products. His scientific efforts took a wider range when circumstances compelled him to abandon his garden plots, and one that was even more conducive to the ultimate aim of his life. He betook himself to the study of botany, especially of the ferns and mosses. His name is several times referred to in Hennedy's *Clydesdale Flora*, as the authority for some special *locus* of this or that rare fern or moss.

After some time, he added a new study to that of botany. At a meeting of the Young Men's Society of St. Vincent Street Church, an essay had been read which evidenced the writer's whole-hearted belief in Darwinism; several criticisms followed, which showed a similar bias on the part of the young members, and at the same time scant respect for the authority of Scripture. While by no means rabid against Darwinism, Mr. Thomson held that it was not proved, and that the attempt to prove it involved assumptions as to geologic time which he felt were false.

The glacial period took his attention, and hence he devoted a great deal of time in reading up the opinions of such authorities as Professor Geikie and Sir Charles Lyell. Along with these he read books relating the effects of great floods, such as Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's *Moray Floods.* With these he combined careful study of the boulder clay and other traces of the glacial period and the northern drift. In pursuance of this, he made many observations on the stratification laid bare in digging foundations for houses or in making cuttings for railways, carrying off parcels of the earth in order to pass it under microscopic review. In a letter to his nephew, the Rev. James Parlane, he gives an account of his inquiries which may be interesting:—

'Well, I have on several occasions come on beds of what seems to me to be the laminated clay referred to. They corresponded in character and position with that described by Geikie and Jamieson, but in two cases I found it to contain small bits of wood or twigs. Recently, however, when at Moray Place, on passing along the course of a deep sewer which was being formed, and where the clay was thrown out in large blocks along either side, I had the curiosity to open up several of them, which had become somewhat dry, and showed indications of splitting at the laminations. The surfaces thus exposed were generally most beautifully smooth, and covered with fine dust, which formed the separation of the thin layers of clay. On one of these surfaces I accidentally observed the trace of something, very faint, yet indicating an organism of

some kind. At first I thought it might be the impression of a long ribbon-like leaf, but there was no variation in the width such as might be expected. I called Alexander's attention to it, and, after looking at it, he expressed the opinion that it might be the track of an insect, and sure enough there can be no doubt of it. There are two wavy lines of dots about half an inch apart, and quite regular in distance throughout; the dots consisted of slight depressions on the surface, and on examining the opposing surface, it was found to have a perfect reverse of the other *raised dots.* Along the centre of the track there is a faint trail, as if the abdomen had just touched the surface. On further search, I found a surface marked with a ripple, such as would be formed by a very thin sheet of water running over it. On another occasion I found numerous ripple marks, of various degrees of delicacy, indicating different conditions or depth of water, also a small shell half imbedded in the clay, on its back. Over the mouth there is a circular film-like form, and similar markings at a little distance, which appear to me to be impressions of bubbles emitted from the shell, which had formed and slid off from it; but, more wonderful still, I found a surface bearing impressions of *rain-drops.* A third visit rewarded me with a great variety of markings indicating the action of surface water, and that the clay, in a viscous condition, had been flowing downward from higher ground and filling up the hollows. I obtained also other impressions of foot-marks of some small animals, probably lizards; and

also the remains of a fern leaf, and the skeleton of some other large leaf. On my second visit I got also a small twig, very perfect, with the bark and pith clearly shown.

'*5th July.*—Since writing the above, I have examined similar lumps of clay in another locality, and find the same indications of surface deposition. No traces of animals, but some ripples and a great abundance of vegetable fibres and small twigs,—not roots which had penetrated downward from the soil above, but detached fragments, and so slender that they could not have endured long-continued water action, or even the wear of time at the bottom of the sea. They must have been very quickly embedded and covered up by rapidly succeeding layers of mud and clay. You will observe, however, that the millions of years of our geologists may safely be reduced to the action of a heay rainfall during a week or so.'

While we are personally much inclined to agree with the above views, had Mr. Thomson found time to publish them, we sadly fear his fate would have been like that narrated in the chapter of *Theophrastus Such*, entitled, 'How we encourage Research.' Scientific men often taunt theologians with their narrowness and their opposition to heresy; but the fact is, if any scientific 'dogma' is impugned by one who is neither a professor nor the favourite pupil of a professor, his chance of getting a fair hearing is small, and his liability to have his views first misrepresented, and then appropriated without acknowledgment, is great.

CHAPTER V.

GRADUAL NARROWING OF THE CIRCLE.

In the year 1849, William Thomson's great desire was gratified,—he became a missionary to Africa. In that year he accompanied Mr. Waddel to the newly established mission in Calabar. Short as had been the history of this mission, it had already lost one, a victim to the climate. Mr. Jamieson had gone from Jamaica to Calabar when Mr. Waddel returned from thence in 1848, and, within little more than a year, died. Mr. William Thomson went out first as a catechist, and his inherited talent for languages soon enabled him to talk the Efik with the same accent as the natives, and this made his work specially successful and specially interesting to himself. His letters meantime enabled his friends at home to form some idea of the difficulties under which missionaries laboured in such a climate, and surrounded by such natives. After a stay of five years, William returned to Scotland to prosecute his studies with a view to ordination, and during the four years of his stay at home thus occupied, he stayed with his uncle. On this account George Thomson's house became more and more a centre for all missionaries to West Africa.

Missionaries in every sense,—past, present, and future; in every stage of their development,—the young, hopeful aspirants, looking forward to work to be done; the missionary home on sick furlough, his depressing cares forgotten, looking back to what had been done, and forward with sobered hopes to what was to come; and the veteran, who, having spent his strength, had permanently to give up the struggle and retire. All the friends of those who were in the mission field were welcome in his house; thus a wide circle of acquaintanceship was formed, whose common centre of interest and whose topics of conversation were the contents of letters from Africa, which too often told of sickness or of death. By this means, Mr. Thomson was not only acquiring information afterwards to be useful to West Africa, but more important was the constant presence before his mind of the nature of the work in Africa, and the hindrances to which that work was exposed from agents in the full tide of their usefulness being laid down with sickness. Often he secretly sighed to himself over these constant difficulties, without being able to see any distinct way out of them. Always were his hopes raised by the efforts made to get up the Calabar River into the region above the mangrove swamps, and always dashed again by the obstacles the natives of the lower banks of the river put in the way of any permanent occupation of these healthier districts. His active mind and inventive turn made him continually brood over means of overcoming these difficulties. The plans he thought of he would unostentatiously submit to the missionaries, only

to find out that, either on account of obstacles he could not know of, or more frequently simply because there was no one to do what was wanted, they were impossible.

But soon the African problem received a painful point for George Thomson. His nephew William, having married, returned in 1858 to Old Calabar, and in the end of the same year the tidings came home that his bright young wife had fallen a victim to the climate. As five years was the term that missionaries to Calabar were expected to stay out before returning home, after his bereavement William Thomson laboured on for this period, through health and sickness—sickness at times nigh unto death. Having suffered so severely from the unhealthiness of the lower regions, William strove to get into the higher districts. As, from various causes, Ikunetu, the village at which he was stationed, was liable to be emptied of its inhabitants, he had to pursue them to their plantations, and thence he was led to extend his rides a considerable way into the interior, with a view to finding sites suitable for mission stations. His actions excited the suspicions of the native traders, who thought their monopoly was endangered if the 'white man' established himself in the interior. They had been accustomed to have a double profit, first on the oil they bought in the interior and sold to the white traders, and then on the goods which they bought from the white traders and sold into the interior. If the white man traded directly with the natives of the interior, all this was gone. Hence they made a great opposition to any attempt to go up the country, and,

wisely or not, the missionaries so far yielded as to promise not to do so, unless they first informed the native authorities of their intention. Though the effort to go up the country has been renewed since then more successfully, for the time it ceased.

At first the idea was prevalent that Calabar was exceptionally unhealthy, even for the West Coast of Africa, and that thus a great initial blunder had been made in placing a mission there at all. In this perhaps George Thomson might have been inclined to concur, but he soon had the opportunity of getting much wider information as to the state of West African missions generally. On account of special facilities which an African company trading from Glasgow offered, several of the agents of the American Missionary Society came to Glasgow on their way out to stations occupied by them in equatorial Africa. Through William Thomson, Mr. Bushnell, the veteran father of the Gaboon Mission, called on George Thomson, and then became his guest. Others followed, until he had open house for the American brethren. These, amiable and interesting in themselves, became often objects of painful interest on account of trials they had to encounter. Intercourse with them proved that the unhealthiness of the Calabar stations was no greater than that of those at Gaboon, Corisco, and Benita. It was sad to meet and become intimate with (to mention no more) such a man as the Rev. George Paull, only to hear that, after zealous work, and a long struggle against sickness, he had died, when a timely removal

for a little while to a more healthful region might have restored him. Other cases there were quite as sad. The wife of Dr. Nassau, after struggling against illness, hoping against hope that she would be able to hold out until her husband might accompany her home, when it was seen to be vain for her to struggle on, was obliged to make up her mind to attempt the voyage alone. The nearest port to Benita, where the Nassaus were stationed, is Gaboon, sixty miles off, and the only conveyance to it an open boat. Her husband accompanied her with the view of seeing her aboard the steamer, but there, in the midst of that stormy sea, Death took her,—and her husband, bowed down with sorrow, had to return solitary to his work. She might, and in all human probability would, have been spared, could she at an earlier stage of her illness have been removed to some health station at no great distance. In the case of the American missionaries the need was more clamant, for the distance between America and Gaboon, greater practically by the breadth of the Atlantic than the distance between Old Calabar and this country, made their periodic furloughs rarer, even in normal circumstances, and at the time of which we speak the terrible civil war was raging, and the lives as well as the funds of American Christians were sacrificed for other ends.

George Thomson's nephew returned from Old Calabar in 1863, so again was he brought into the most intimate personal connection with African missions. After a short stay at home, during which he availed himself of his opportunities of study, William again went to Africa,

having again married, only to return, however, after two years, utterly broken in health. During all this while the Calabar Mission had suffered severely,—the Rev. Zerub Baillie, with his wife and child, and his brother John Baillie, all fell victims to the malaria. Earlier, Mr. Wylie and Mr. Sutherland, two promising young teachers, had died; while others, like Dr. and Mrs. Hewan, had to give up mission work with constitutions weakened by their stay in Old Calabar. In some cases there may have been exceptional predisposition to the country fever; yet even in these cases there might have been a chance given of recovery, sufficient at all events to enable the patient to return home to fill some other sphere of usefulness. It seemed obvious, then, that if some place could be found, not far from the seat of mission work, yet in itself healthy, great good might be done. The ailing and fagged, but not yet seriously ill, might recruit before the terrible miasma had gained the mastery, and might be borne up by being removed from the depressing sights and events that too much make up the tenor of a missionary's life in West Africa. It may be thought that the Missionary Society, through its board, might have taken action in this direction. The fact that the British Government has in India and elsewhere health stations, while, over and above, there are in times of peace periodic seasons of return home, might have emboldened them. A council of war, it is said, never fights, and a board can rarely come to a decision that takes it quite out of its beaten track. The fact that they have to do with the

funds of others, makes its members careful to do only what will give some distinct result to show for what has been spent. But the experiments that would have been necessary in order to setting up a sanatorium would of necessity cost money, which for long would have little appreciable result. Nothing new is ever done without the usual apprentice-fee of blunders,—and no board of delegates can risk that. Gradually was George Thomson led to the conclusion that such an undertaking as setting up a sanatorium could best be done by an individual on his responsibility, and at his own expense. Then it dawned more and more clearly upon him, that he who could undertake such a work as this must have had something very like his own training. He saw that the person, whoever he was, who was fit for this work, must know about building, in order to superintend the mere erection of the structure, and also be to some extent acquainted with natural history, in order to select a suitable site for it.

Thus the more he thought of the work to be done, the more he seemed to see the circle narrowing round himself,—the more he seemed to hear the voice of Providence saying, 'Thou art the man.' The occasion of his final determination was the burning of a warehouse which belonged to him and to his brother. Occurring at the time it did, rather than at any other, he and his brother were saved from a very considerable monetary loss that might have meant ruin. He regarded this as a call to remember his old vow of consecration to mission work; and his knowledge of the necessities of

Western Africa led him to devote himself to creating a sanatorium there. He did not at once make his intention known, but worked steadily towards it in everything he undertook. He told his determination first to one of his nephews, who he hoped might accompany him, but was unable to do so. Gradually he broke it in different ways to his relatives. His views and plans are best stated in his own words in writing to his nephew, the late Dr. William Cooper Thomson, who, after leaving the mission field, had become a doctor in Liverpool:—

'194 DUMBARTON ROAD,
GLASGOW, 1*st February* 1870.

'MY DEAR WILLIAM,—As to this African business, you know that my interest in Africa is not a thing of recent origin, and I daresay you may have guessed long ago that I had a strong desire to engage in some kind of mission work there. This desire has not been weakened, but rather strengthened, as time has gone on, and the claims of others have alone prevented me from, ere this, gratifying it. For long, I confess, a sort of Robinson Crusoe feeling was the prevailing motive or impelling power; and although the desire of seeing strange countries is not altogether gone, I trust my aim is much higher now. Some years since, in a season of great darkness, I sought deliverance from God, committing myself and all my concerns to Him, and vowed that should He in His good providence clear up the way, I would give myself to His work in Africa. My prayers were answered in such a way that I could not

but acknowledge His hand; and now I feel that the time has come for me to put my vow in execution. Indeed, I cannot remain at home, and look for happiness. No amount of home comforts or prosperity could now give me peace, unless He interposes to hinder me; and I thus am given to see that my vow has not been required. You will thus see that, so far as my making an honest and conscientious attempt is concerned, the question is settled.

'What remains to be considered is, the best way of going about the thing, and as to that I shall be glad to have the benefit of your experience; but even with that, and all the information it is possible to procure from others, it will be needful to make a personal investigation before coming to a final determination.

'You will admit that the West Coast missions have as yet been carried on at great expense of money, health, and life, and, as a consequence, not very efficiently; it is surely time now to try whether some change in the system might not be of advantage, or if not a change, at least some addition, that would tend to secure the results already attained and render them permanent and progressive.

'I think you will also admit that missions to the rude tribes of Africa are, humanly speaking, not likely to be successful without a change being wrought in the social condition and habits of the people. In some circumstances, this department of the work might naturally fall to be attended to by the missionary; but you know how difficult it is to do so amongst the tribes

on the coast, in consequence of the selfishness of the trading interest, both white and black. The position of the missionary seems pretty well understood by both, and any divergence from his proper work lays him open to suspicion or misrepresentation, and mars his usefulness; and it is right that he should take a stand as far as possible removed from being suspected of selfishness. Trade is one thing, and preaching the gospel another,—the latter is purely disinterested, or at least ought to be; the former, it would seem (but why it ought to be so is another question), almost, if not altogether, purely selfish. Now it has long appeared to me that there is a missing link which might be supplied.

'I think it is quite a legitimate and possible position for a Christian to occupy, to be able to say to the natives on the one hand, "I come to trade with you," and on the other hand to say to the white trader, "I have as good a right as you to engage in this trade,—I do so on my own responsibility. I am no paid agent of any society, and am at liberty to do with my own what I will, and devote the profits of my industry to the cause of Christ, as freely as you choose to deal with the profits of your trade." And what is true of trading, is quite as much so of any other occupation—such as planting, for instance—that may appear suitable.

'In my note to M——, I stated the object I had ultimately in view, but the means by which it is to be attained have yet to be ascertained, as well as the most fitting locality for a sanatorium. These are matters

which I have been turning over in my mind, and regarding which I shall be glad to have your opinion. After discharging all claims upon me here, I hope to have as much left as will take me out and maintain me there for a year or two, and possibly means of gaining a little may be found, and enable me to visit various localities about the Bight of Biafra.

'The most likely occupation that presents itself to me as yet, is that of planting; and it occurs to me that a cinchona, cinnamon, or camphor plantation might prove profitable in the course of a few years; and meantime a house could be erected, and provision grounds laid out and cultivated with the aid of two or three Kroomen. I believe that the Spanish authorities at Fernando Po were at one time disposed to give land to any one who would undertake its cultivation; but while Clarence Peak offers many advantages, I am rather disposed to look towards the Cameroons Mountains, as being on the whole the most suitable place. I shall, however, be guided by circumstances, and it may be that some locality more suitable than either may be found. It may be that at first it will be necessary to engage in a little trading, but *that* I mean to avoid if possible, and rather aim at plantation work, if ground can be had. This is the only means which presents itself to my mind as at all likely to attain the end in view, namely, of establishing—1*st*. A refuge for missionaries whose health has been impaired; 2*d*. A training institution for native evangelists, similar to what has been found so successful in Samoa; and 3*d*.

The gathering together of a native Christian community, separated from the evil influences of heathenism.

'From what I have said, you will be able to see the drift of my scheme, and I shall be glad to hear from you thereanent.'

His course of action determined on, it henceforth occupied all his thoughts, and everything that occurred afforded an additional reason for prosecuting it, as an illustration of what might, could, would, or should be done in the matter. In proof of this, we may quote a fragment from a letter addressed by him to his nephew, the Rev. James Parlane, Burntisland:—

'GLASGOW, 21*st June* 1870.

'Rev. Mr. Menard from Corisco came this morning; he reached Liverpool about a fortnight since, went to Ireland, and left his motherless infant daughter with his relations there, and is now on his way to America. Mrs. M. died after giving birth to her second child. Poor fellow! he is sadly shaken with grief and sickness, and it is almost certain that he cannot return to Africa. His eldest child had to be sent to America to save its life,—Mrs. Bushnell, kind lady, taking charge of it. You see what necessity there is for the scheme I have in view. Humanly speaking, all this train of evils might have been prevented, and the services of a faithful missionary continued. I hope the way may be opened to me soon; but we are in God's hands, who knows what is best.'

CHAPTER VI.

VOYAGE TO AFRICA, AND SEARCH FOR SUITABLE SITE.

By May 1871, Mr. Thomson had all things in train to leave home for Africa. He took good-bye with the session of St. Vincent Street Church, with whom he had so long laboured. A meeting of friends was convened to wish him God-speed. And so, with good wishes and many tokens of how deeply he was esteemed, he prepared to leave his fatherland on his self-sacrificing mission. It was peculiarly opportune that, when he had purposed going out to the West Coast, a number of American missionaries arrived in Glasgow, purposing the same destination and the same ship as he had thought of. Most of them were new to mission work, and some of them very young. They were under the guidance of the African veteran, the kind Albert Bushnell, and were all full of hope, and eager with youthful enthusiasm. Some of them were personally interesting, —one had been a Federal officer in the great civil war, and who, having returned to the studies he had left for the war, had devoted himself to the work of African missions. The voyage out proved a pleasant one. An unwonted feature added to those usual in that voyage,

was a visit to Lisbon. In several of the letters written during the voyage, occur sketches of the long, low, densely-wooded shores of the African continent, and many descriptions of the natives who came on board at the various ports. The splendid forms of the Kroomen drew forth his admiration. Of one man, named Grando, he said that his back was like the Theseus. Altogether, he was so struck with the figures of the men, that he thought that sculptors would do well to supplement their study of classic models with a visit to Africa.

After a fairly prosperous voyage, Mr. Thomson arrived in Old Calabar. Though he had, by reading, formed a decided preference for the Cameroons Mountain as a site for the proposed sanatorium, he determined to be guided by the missionaries of the various localities, and examine carefully every district that they might suggest as an alternative. The Calabar missionaries thought Uwet might be suitable for the purpose he contemplated. To see it, and at the same time see something of mission work, he accompanied Mr. Edgerley in a missionary tour up the country, in which Uwet was to be included. After a truly early breakfast, at three in the morning, the party started on their journey on board the *Mersey*, a boat presented to the mission by the United Presbyterian congregations in Liverpool. Mr. Thomson thus relates his first impressions of travelling on an African river:—

'The usual impressiveness of travelling in the darkness was heightened by the perfect stillness, in so far

as motion was concerned, of all things around us,—not a leaf seemed to quiver, the palms and other trees stood up dark and still against the grey sky. Of sound, however, there was plenty: the atmosphere was filled with it,—sounds of all kinds,—soft, sharp, shrill, hoarse, and horrible. But only those who have been in the tropics for a short time can realize the strange hum of mingled sounds that rises with the approach of night, and ceases not till dawn. Persons who have continued to reside in warm countries soon lose all consciousness of this nightly concert, but it is very obvious to newcomers.'

Getting out into the broad expanse of the Calabar River, they continued their voyage, and visited several native villages, in all of which they were very hospitably entertained. He did not mention it in his letters home, but it was afterwards learned that the travellers underwent considerable hardships when they left the comfortable boat and proceeded on foot; but hardships of a kind that, though trying enough at the time, always tend to provoke laughter on narration. As the rain was falling in torrents as they were trudging along, they soon were thoroughly wet. Only one man of them had taken the precaution of bringing surplus clothing with him. When the whole party thus, in a soaking condition, had reached a resting-place, the wallet of this single wise man was ransacked, and its contents divided out so far as they would go, one garment being considered ample for one individual. So the party seated themselves round the fire in the

native hut, arrayed in a picturesque variety of costume, —one clothed merely in a night-shirt, another in a pair of drawers, and a third rejoicing in bath-towel and a waterproof. Their misfortunes were not yet over, for, in laudable anxiety for the comfort of their guests, the negro hosts of the party put their shoes so near the fire, that next morning the leather broke off like biscuit, and so they had to make the best way they could barefoot. Uwet did not seem to Mr. Thomson a suitable place for his purpose, probably because not far enough above the region of the malaria. One memorial of this visit may be here referred to, which proves Mr. Thomson's devotion to natural history. A letter to his nephew, Dr. Thomson, runs as follows :—

'11*th July* 1871.

'MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I take advantage of the opportunity afforded me by John Holms, of sending you a little beastie, which appears to me a curiosity. It was found at Uwet, and Mr. Goldie gave it to me. It is a young one; the natives say that it grows as big as a goat, but this specimen does not make rapid progress. It is not known at Calabar. Mr. Goldie had not seen it before, although he tells me that Mrs. Anderson had two. The Krooboys know it, and call it "Weah." The Uwet people call it the "antelope of the skies," which indicates its habit of living in trees. It is extremely docile, but is most annoyingly fond of silk,—silk gowns and umbrellas seem to be its natural food.'

It was sent to Mr. Murray, the naturalist, but has not since been heard of.

On his return from this expedition he had another experience of African life. The king of Creek Town was sick. No one could tell what was wrong, till some prying member of the king's household found an egg in the nightcap of a man named Abassi. That meant mischief. The man was accused of 'having ifot' for the king,—that is to say, of having bewitched him. Recognising his danger, the accused fled to the mission-house. The authorities of the town solemnly demanded that he should be given up to them. Mr. Goldie agreed that he should stand his trial, but determined to accompany him, to see that he was fairly tried. In this he was joined by Mr. Thomson. After a number of speeches were made on various sides, some of the chiefs, having long reached the notion that this witchcraft was mere delusion, opposed any action being taken, but a large number demanded that the accused should be tried by the 'esere poison' ordeal. On this Mr. Goldie rose up, and protested against the chiefs compelling any one to drink as a breach of treaty. And then, to quote Mr. Thomson's words, 'on this being interpreted, the armed men raised considerable murmuring; but Mr. Goldie beckoned Abassi to him, and, taking hold of his right hand, walked off deliberately towards the entrance. I followed immediately behind, with my butterfly net. There was considerable agitation amongst the king's people, and a rush was made to the street. As there seemed some disposition to lay hold of Abassi,

I got hold of his left hand, and we moved slowly along through the now excited crowd. By and by some of them attempted to remove my hand, but I held on the more tightly; then a number of hands, thrust forward from behind, laid hold on Abassi's waist-cloth. This somewhat impeded our progress, but Mr. Goldie cleared away the hands by a sweep of his cane. We got on a little further, when the same thing was repeated, and Eyo Hogan, who had been called for by Mr. Goldie, managed to get them to desist for a minute or so. Meantime we were making progress towards the mission precincts; but the crowd was getting wild, and more resolute. Here Mr. Ashworth came rushing wildly to our aid on his stocking-soles, his hair streaming, and his eye in a frenzy, for it had been reported that Mr. Goldie was being killed. This enabled us to get on again; but it was hard work, until Mr. Edgerley and Dr. Robertson came rushing to the rescue. Owing to the confusion, I cannot recall all that passed; but I remember seeing the Doctor sending one fellow heels over head into the ditch at the side of the path, and Mr. Edgerley seizing a gun, and wrenching it from its possessor's grasp. This was the hottest of the struggle. We were just close by the gate-post which marks the mission precincts, and once there the fugitive would be beyond their power; and this made them all the more desperate in barring our way. The younger Kinloch happened to be in town at the time, and ran to see what the row was; and, seeing the Doctor engaged, he did not ask which side was the right one, but struck in

like a man and brother. And so, with God's blessing, we managed to get Abassi inside the boundary; and the discomfited warriors, after collecting along the path which leads toward the market-place, and giving due expression to their disgust, went off.'

The action of the younger Mr. Kinloch indicates the attitude in which most of the traders stand to the missionaries: although by their constant introduction of rum they are debasing the people the missionaries would elevate,—although by their example, which is in many cases far from good, they are neutralizing the teaching of the missionaries,—yet in any dispute they usually side with them against the natives. If they cheat the negroes, the negroes in return endeavour to equalize matters by cheating them. Hence there are continual disputes, which must be settled by the consul, or by a court of equity, formed by the traders themselves, in which the competing interests of the different traders secure generally that substantial justice is done. These courts of equity are often appealed to by the missionaries when any act of special flagrance is proposed by the native authorities. Poor fellows! these traders are exposed to many temptations in that depressing climate, and are many of them cut off at an early age. Mr. Thomson, in planning a sanatorium, hoped to benefit them as well as the missionaries.

In the month of August, Mr. Thomson left Calabar to pursue the search further south, and went to Gaboon, where the American Presbyterian Church has its mis-

sion stations. He found Baraka, Mr. Bushnell's station, much more pleasantly situated than he had feared. There was undulating ground and running brooks, but still there was the terrible fringe of mangroves, with the swamp beneath, and the inevitable malaria. On the coast, then, and so far up the rivers as the tide extends, it was out of the question to think of placing a sanatorium. The country is so flat, and the flow of the rivers is so gentle, that the effect of the tide is felt many miles up. But distance from the coast means contact with tribes uninfluenced by the gospel, and probably inimical to those on the coast, and so liable to make the safety of the invalids somewhat problematic. He next visited Benita, where Dr. Nassau was stationed. There, desirous of seeing something of African life, he joined an expedition of Dr. Nassau's planning. 'A few days after coming here, we made an excursion to shoot the wild oxen. Leaving this by boat for a town some miles northwards, where we remained part of the night, and after spending a few hours in a plantation, but watching for elephants, we took to the boat again, and went on some miles further. Landed; kindled a fire; had a short sleep; woke up and got some food, and got through the forest to the prairie just as the day was dawning. It was a fine sight, after emerging from the darkness of the forest, to look over the far-stretching plain, with its islands of trees, around which hung morning mists, slowly gathering up in soft folds, and gradually dispersing as the light increased.

'We soon found fresh tracks of the game, and could

dimly discern through the grey light the forms of two or three cattle a long way in front, and one or two at a distance on the left.

'We now divided our party, Mr. Gillespie and one of the men taking to the left, while Dr. Nassau, Mr. Murphy, myself, and two men, went towards the front, keeping in the lee of projecting parts of the forest. After proceeding cautiously along for some time, we looked out again, but could see no cattle, and were disposed to think that they had made off, or that we had mistaken some low bushes for oxen; but after dodging along for some time, Dr. Nassau motioned to us who were behind, and then pointed forward, and there, sure enough, were four oxen lying quietly among the grass, quite unconscious of our proximity. As they were still beyond range, we crept cautiously on to a patch of low bushes which screened us from view. After looking at them for some time, we observed Mr. Gillespie approaching round a clump of trees on the left,—he had also observed them, and was rapidly coming on in a crouching position. Just then one of them got on his feet and looked lazily about. Fearing that Mr. Gillespie, who had no shelter, might be noticed, we urged the Doctor, although at a long range, to fire, which he did. One of the animals showed his heels in the air, but got up at once, and off they all set at a heavy plunging gallop, one of them considerably behind the others, towards the forest on our right. Mr. Gillespie now let fly also, and the Doctor fired other four shots before they disappeared amongst the trees.

We followed on their track as fast as the very rough ground would permit, but could only find traces of their course a short distance, and so lost our game. We wandered about for long, but could not find the wounded animal. After going on for about half an hour or more, we heard the loud angry trumpeting of an elephant right ahead of us, which sent a thrill through us, and made us look about for suitable trees, but they were either too large or too small; and so, without saying anything to each other, we instinctively and instantaneously came to the opinion that prudence was the better part of valour, and rather declined having an interview. We were in reality not prepared to meet the charge of an enraged elephant. Dr. Nassau's rifle carried too small shot to have much effect on such a large animal beyond raising its wrath, and Mr. Murphy and I had only a pistol apiece. We could hear the great beast, or beasts, crashing the trees a little in front of us, and were very desirous of obtaining a peep at them, but were prevented by the underwood.

'We now became anxious about our companion, of whom we had heard nothing for a long time. To be alone in an African forest is not a very pleasant position to be in. There was a perfect maze of well-defined paths, but these were formed by elephants and wild cattle, and rarely trod by foot of man. There were no towns near, and one might wander about for days without coming on a human habitation. After firing many shots, and receiving no answer, we became still more anxious, and made many good resolves for the future.

We pushed on again, and at last reached the open prairie, and, after again firing and shouting, were delighted to hear the report of a gun not very far off, and in a few minutes we were relieved from our suspense by seeing our friend emerging from the forest as cool as if nothing had been wrong. He had heard our first shots, but, being at the time following the oxen, had refrained from firing in reply, lest he should frighten them. They were too much on the alert, however, to permit him to approach near enough to have a shot at them, and so he at last gave up the chase. We were right glad to be all together again, and, as the day was wearing on, we made our way to the beach, and sent off some boys to bring our boat along, and after a walk of some miles we reached the town where we had been the previous night, just as the boat came to shore. After a short stay we set off again, and reached home pretty tired and hungry, very thankful to sit down to a good though late dinner, and quite prepared to enjoy the luxury of a comfortable bed.'

This expedition and the exposure connected therewith had, however, been rather too much for him, and consequently he was laid down with an attack of fever and ague. He was treated for it somewhat severely, and recovered. We presume that he felt that Benita was not suitable for his purposes.

CHAPTER VII.

ASCENT OF CAMEROONS AND OF CLARENCE PEAK.

To the traveller sailing along the monotonous African coast, after passing one pestiferous river after another, each with its fringe of deadly mangrove swamp, there appears at length the grateful sight of mountains,—low down on the horizon, it is true, they are at first, but still from the first indubitable mountains. Unlike so many that have been passed already, dimly descried away in the distance far inland, rising faintly over an ocean of tree life, these are nigh the sea. As the voyager approaches, it is seen that one of the mountains is on an island, while the other is on the continent: the one is Clarence Peak on Fernando Po, the other is the Cameroons Mountain. If we are to believe Captain Burton, Hanno in his famous *periplous* saw the latter of these, and named it something which his Greek translator has rendered Θεῶν ὄχημα—Chariot of the Gods. They were filled with terror, we are told, at its pouring forth lava, smoke, and flames. Captain Burton thinks that it was this volcanic eruption with its rumbling thunder which led Hanno so to name the great mountains. What most strikes the modern be-

holder, in the rare occasions when the summit can be seen, is the patch of indubitable snow that glistens away up against the sky. All the climates—those from the tropics to the poles—may be found on this one mountain, whose height is said to be over 13,000 feet. Captain Burton's 'Abeokuta' had given Mr. Thomson a predilection for Cameroons, as we have already said,—a predilection which the descriptions of it from the missionaries had strengthened. He had from the first regarded Clarence Peak as the best alternative site for his sanatorium, but to which the preference ought to be given, could be settled only by personal observation.

Of Mr. Thomson's visit to the first, we subjoin the following account which was published in the *Glasgow Herald*:—

'RIVER CAMEROONS, 20*th December* 1871.

'MY DEAR ALEXANDER,—We have made our long-looked-forward-to ascent of the great Cameroons Mountain.

'Dr. Nassau, and Messrs. Kops and Murphy, of the American mission at Benita, entered warmly into my scheme, and agreed to recommend to the other missionaries at Gaboon, that the mission yacht *Elfe* be placed at my service, and that the Rev. Mr. Gillespie be sent with me to render assistance. Dr. and Miss Nassau being about to proceed to Gaboon, to get the homeward-bound steamer from the south coast, I accompanied them to make the needful arrangements.

Rev. Messrs. Bushnell and Gillespie having concurred in the proposal, Mr. Gillespie and I sailed from Gaboon on the 28th ult., touching at Benita for two days or so, where we made up our stores for the journey, these being kindly supplied by one of the brethren there.

'We reached Cameroons on the 4th inst., and were very kindly received by the brethren of the Baptist Mission (Messrs. Saker, Smith, and Thomson), who gave us much valuable information. We met here also Mr. Medley (of the firm of Bennet, Medley, & Collings), who was induced to join us in our proposed ascent of the mountain. We were glad to make the acquaintance of this gentleman, from what we had heard of him and found him to be; and also in that he may be of the utmost service to us in our contemplated operations, his firm having determined to open a factory at Victoria, his partner (Mr. Collings) being there now to look after the clearing of a site for the building. We determined to start as soon as arrangements could be made, and, to reach our destination the sooner, to proceed by boat through the creek, leaving the *Elfe* at Cameroons to await our return.

'On the night of Wednesday the 6th, we mustered on board the yacht, and, after endeavouring in vain to get an hour or two of sleep, we set off at 11 o'clock, and proceeded down the river, which is at the anchorage of great width, and soon spreads out until the banks are seen like dark streaks on either side. We held along the north shore, and turned into a large bay, from

which the creek runs and emerges close to Bimbia. I was not in a fit state for the journey, and would have delayed had our time been less limited; but as we had not a day to spare, I held on, hoping to be well when the land journey commenced. I dropped asleep for a short time, and awoke just after we had entered the creek. It has a most depressing effect on the mind, journeying through these dismal places, especially when this is protracted for hours, and, as in this case, in the darkness of night, which adds tenfold to the daylight dreariness. Imagine a wide canal hemmed in on either side with trees of about forty feet in height, all of the same featureless character, with no gleam of light behind them, standing up out of the fat black mud, motionless and still, extending for many miles, with scarcely a break to vary the dull uniformity; add to this the heavy fœtid smell exhaled from the marshes, and you may form some notion of an African creek in a mangrove swamp.

'The daylight came, but it did not bring the joyousness of morning,—no stirring of the leaves, no songs of birds, save the harsh scream of a parrot or two passing overhead. There were few signs of animal life of any kind whatever, and the vegetation was of the grimmest character, except that a fern was now and again to be seen at the margin of the water, or clinging to the branches of the trees. The men, too, seemed wearied and depressed with their night's work, and rowed without spirit or energy, reminding one of the "Ancient Mariner's" crew. We were also tired enough, being

crowded together amongst our luggage, and unable to change our position.

'Towards 10 or 11 o'clock we were somewhat cheered by the widening of the creek, and by indications of our approaching its junction with the Bimbia River, into which we glided ere long. The scene became quite changed now. Instead of the dull mangroves, there were now pretty rocky promontories, covered with a great variety of trees and bushes, on our right; and by the time we entered the sea, which we did soon after, all our languor was dissipated; for now our eyes were gladdened by the sight of forest-clad hills of the most picturesque character sloping down to the water's edge, with dark precipices, against which the restless waves broke into white foam. A grassy knoll, or a bit of sandy beach, would have heightened the interest; but this was to some extent atoned for by the gorgeous hues of the foliage, which was of the richest autumnal tints. The prevailing colour, dark green, was mixed with patches of light green, pale yellow, orange, brown, red, and large masses of deep purple, stretching away far up the hill-sides, hill rising above hill, and promontory beyond promontory.

'As yet we had seen no trace of human dwellings or cultivation; but now Mr. Medley called attention to a pretty little island on our left, partly cleared, on which stood a solitary house where a former agent of his firm had resided. They had now ceased trading there, and the house was in charge of some one in their employment, merely to keep it from going to ruins. The man

in charge made his appearance as we passed, and gave us a salute with a handkerchief, but we did not stay to speak with him. The scenery here is uncommonly interesting, and it would have given us pleasure in ordinary circumstances to have lingered a while to enjoy its beauties. The day was advancing, however, and we had a long distance to pull before reaching Victoria. Mr. Medley endeavoured to hasten our speed by promising the crew rest and refreshment at the German factory at Bimbia, but with little effect. They seemed quite indifferent from sheer exhaustion. We were about four hours longer than usual in making this distance, most probably owing to our crew being composed of three several lots of Kroomen, a thing to be avoided if possible, and some of them we found were inexperienced oarsmen.

'Before reaching the town of Bimbia, or the place where the few scattered houses occupied by the Bimbians are situated, we had now only to round one more promontory, and were glad at the prospect of being soon relieved for a time from our long confinement, and ere long we found ourselves in a snug little bay, with a shingly beach, the land rising gently all round, dotted with small groups of houses nestling prettily amongst the cocoa-nut palm trees, which are abundant here, and the never-failing plantains, with their great, broad, bright green leaves. We were much pleased with the whole scene, the centre of which was the long-looked-for factory, tidy and bright with whitewash and lively colours.

'A cloud, however, was gathering which we were not aware of. While we were heading towards the beach close to the factory, a large canoe, with fifteen or more stalwart fellows, slowly drew near, and came so close that one of our oars struck the back of the negro steering the canoe. On nearing us, they had accosted us with the usual friendly salutation of "Good morning," after which they had eyed us very narrowly, and a good deal of loud talking was carried on by several great brawny fellows, who stood upright, and seemed to direct the others. As there was no appearance of arms amongst them save a sheathed sabre, which one of them lifted and laid across his knees, we were not much disturbed, although we did not quite like their looks, and began to doubt their friendship. But again their canoe was thrown in our way, so as to cause our oars to strike some of their paddles. This give rise to a good deal of loud talking, and what appeared to be threats and taunts were thrown at our crew, who made some replies about "plaba" being "set;" still we did not hesitate to make for the shore and drop anchor.

'We were now carried on to the beach, and walked leisurely up to the factory,—a distance of about 100 yards,—and had received welcome from Mr. Deedi, the agent in charge, when, on looking back, we were a little alarmed to observe the state of matters. There was now a large crowd of savages collected close to our boat, a few of our men were still in her, and our personal attendant, Rawku, whom we had brought

from Benita, was sitting on the gunwale. A rush was now made at the boat by some of the more daring of the Bimbians, armed with cutlasses and great bludgeons. One of them gave Rawku a tremendous whack with a heavy stick. This roused his wrath, and he seized Mr. Medley's gun, but before he could get it quite freed from the cover, it was wrested out of his hands, and in a twinkling our men were driven from the boat, some receiving heavy blows, and one a great gash on the head from a cutlass. Having got possession of the boat, they rowed her round a point of land and out of our sight, taking with her all our provisions, goods, and chattels; but worse than all, on turning away from the principal scene of action, I observed Rawku struggling, waist-deep in the water, with a great powerful savage, who was too much for him, and, besides, had obtained the advantage of being behind him and getting hold of his arms. Poor Rawku struggled hard, and cried on Mr. Gillespie for help. He seemed for a little to be gaining somewhat towards the beach, but he either lost his footing, or was pushed forward, so as to be overhead in the water for so long, that I began to fear that the rascal behind meant to drown him; this, however, was not the intention. A second fellow came to the aid of the other, and Rawku was bundled into a canoe, and was soon beyond our ken.

'All this was the work of a few minutes. We were taken by surprise; having always been respectfully received in our previous journeys, we had not expected

such a rough reception now, especially at a trading station. Even after the attack on the boat commenced, we were assured by Mr. Deedi, the agent, that nothing serious would be done, but were warned not to show our arms. As for myself, I had little of the sort to display, my only weapons consisting of a butterfly-net and a pocket-knife. Mr. Medley had been possessed of a double-barrelled rifle, but that, as you already know, was now in the possession of the enemy. Mr. Gillespie, it is true, had a pair of revolvers, but unfortunately — or rather fortunately, as it turned out — when poor Rawku cried for help they were found to be unloaded, and before Mr. Gillespie, in the excitement of the moment, could get them ready for action, Rawku had been taken we knew not where.

'Having disposed of the boat, and taken Rawku prisoner, the Bimbians now turned their attention to us, and speedily the factory was besieged by a crowd of yelling savages, armed with guns, cutlasses, knives, and bludgeons. We were assured by Mr. Deedi that there was nothing to fear, but our confidence was not increased when, in spite of all his remonstrances, and the efforts of himself and his assistants, the crowd ultimately forced their way into the court in front. Mr. Deedi was greatly enraged at this movement, for they had not only broken through the enclosure of his court, but had thereby shown their disregard of the compact between the headmen and the traders as to the inviolability of the premises. So far as I could gather from the noisy

discussion carried on in broken English, the Bimbians, while admitting his right to occupy the factory for the purpose of trading, objected to his right to give us shelter in it; and, had we done them wrong, their view of the case might have been about correct. Mr. Deedi maintained his point, however, and managed to prevent their coming on to the verandah, where we were standing. Being ignorant of their language, we could not make out what they wanted to do with us. We supposed that their excitement arose from the fouling of our oars with the canoe, and Rawku's attempt to use the rifle; but as both of these arose from their own action, it appeared to us that these were mere pretexts to cover their violence.

'As a number of them could speak the broken English common on the coast, we made an attempt to address them, upbraiding them with their inhospitable conduct towards peaceful strangers. Our oratory, however, was evidently lost upon them: they gathered close to the verandah, and several of them struck at us with their bludgeons. The owner of the sabre struck Mr. Gillespie with the broadside of his weapon, and I was struck on the face with a small stone; even Mr. Deedi himself did not escape. It was evident that all this was done more with the intention of insulting or provoking us than of doing us bodily harm, and some of the older men endeavoured quietly to hold the others in check. We then went inside the house, but, owing to the large breadth of glass in front, we were still exposed to view, and some of them continued to threaten

us by their gestures. One youth seemed to have taken a special fancy for me, following me with his eyes wherever I went, occasionally beckoning me to come out, drawing his knife across his throat, and then opening and shutting his mouth as if eating. All this insulting conduct was hard to bear, but as we were under the protection of Mr. Deedi, and as they held our man in possession, we had to submit.

'Although we were inside the house, we were still exposed to their gaze, and it was thought better to retire to a dark room, where we could not be observed, Mr. Deedi very shrewdly remarking that the natives, not having us under their eyes, would be at a loss how to act, and might suppose that we were preparing some mode of defence beyond their comprehension. In this room we found Mr. Medley and the Kroomen, who had discovered it some time before. It was humiliating to be thus compelled to hide from the foe; but although not perhaps the most heroic, it was assuredly the wisest course in the circumstances. We now committed ourselves in prayer to the protection and guidance of the Almighty, and then talked over our means of defence, should an attack be made on us. Mr. Gillespie had his pair of revolvers ready for use at a moment's notice; and also remembering that Mr. Deedi would have a stock of trade guns and ammunition besides his own private weapons, we were therefore in a position to make a stout resistance should matters come to the worst.

'Meantime the noise of the rabble without con-

tinued; sometimes the shouting and sound of rushing feet made us feel as if the attack was determined upon, and about to take place. After a considerable time of supsense, the noise became less, and gradually ceased. Mr. Deedi opened the door of our prison, and informed us that we might now come out, as he had succeeded in coming to an understanding with the rascals. We were of course not a little pleased to be relieved from confinement, and to find our boisterous friends all dispersed. Mr. Deedi had informed us during the course of the disturbance, that Mr. Collings, who had preceded us the previous week, had been badly used also; like us, he had brought his boat to anchor at the same place, in order to rest and refresh his men, and as soon as the boat was cleared of her crew, they had seized and carried it a long way up the hill, expecting in this way to prevent his going on to Victoria. No personal injury or insult had been offered to him or his men, and he went about amongst them with the utmost freedom,—a freedom which he employed in denouncing their conduct, and threatening them with a visit from the consul, and likewise expressing his determination of building the factory at Victoria. The Bimbians have no personal ill-will to our friends Messrs. Medley and Collings, who have been trading with them for some time; but they have become possessed with the idea that no trade should be carried past their town, and claim sovereign right, so far as trade is concerned, over the whole coast from Bimbia to Old Calabar. They are therefore determined that no factory shall be

erected at Victoria. The Bimbians were baulked, however, in preventing Mr. Collings from reaching his destination.

'A messenger having been sent to Victoria by the bush path, the Rev. Mr. Pinnock came round next day with his boat and took him off. And so we became involved in this miserable dispute simply because Mr. Medley happened to be with us. They must have seen our boat in the distance, and were ready waiting for us by the time we rounded the point of the cove, where the German factory is situated. The canoe had evidently come out to reconnoitre. They had got Messrs. Medley and Collings' boat already, and the boat we were in belonged to the firm who owned the factory. There was Mr. Medley, however, one of the offenders; but who were the other two white men along with him? This, doubtless, was the question which gave rise to the very loud and earnest discussion amongst those in the canoe previous to their bringing their craft in the way of our oars. We now learned that Mr. Gillespie and I were assigned the honourable distinction of mason and carpenter, come to erect this obnoxious factory, and so we became equally obnoxious in their opinion, and now was the time to strike a decisive blow. Thus we came to be so rudely dealt with, affording a new illustration of the danger of keeping questionable company.

'After the crowd had dispersed, Mr. Deedi and Mr. Gillespie went to inquire about Rawku, and found him

very comfortably located in the house of his captor, who had been very kind to him, and had made him a present of a fathom of cloth. They also learned that the affair had been a mistake, having been done in ignorance of what we were, and the object we had in going to Victoria; regret was also expressed on account of the treatment we had received. Mr. Medley's gun was given up at once by the person who had taken it; and the assurance was given that the boat, with all that belonged to us, would be returned forthwith. We had scarcely learned this good news when the boat was seen rounding the point, manned by a jovial crew, with Rawku in their midst, looking extremely well pleased. They anchored her at the spot from which she had been taken; and the various articles belonging to us, down to the veriest trifle, were brought up to the factory and handed over to us in due form by the leaders in the capture. We made a cursory examination of them, and found all correct and in good condition.

'All was now good-fellowship and shaking of hands. Pipes and tobacco were produced; and the two principals and I sat down together to have a smoke and a chat. It was rather a difficult job to make ourselves understood, but we managed to get on very pleasantly, considering. The name of the ringleader I ascertained to be Young Dick Bimbia. His father, he said, had been called Dick Bimbia, and so people called him Young Dick Bimbia. It was he who captured Rawku, and no wonder that he could not effect his escape, for

Young Dick is a man of enormous muscular development. The upper part of one of his arms is one great scar, the consequence of an explosion of powder, but nevertheless he is said to be the most powerful man of the tribe. The name of his companion, he said, was Nako, but that was all I could learn about him. As we were desirous of getting something to eat, Mr. Deedi gave our two big friends a few heads of tobacco, and hinted that we wished to be alone. This they readily acceded to, but before going asked me to give them "book," acknowledging that we received back all the things that had been taken from us. We readily concurred in this request, and gave them a certificate to the effect that all our property had been returned by them uninjured, with an expression of regret for the mistake into which they had fallen. This document was signed by Mr. Gillespie and myself, and handed to them for future reference.

'A large crowd of noisy fellows had meanwhile collected again in the court in front of the factory. The noise and shouting was about as great as before, but of quite a different character: now it was the sound of fun and jollity. There was a deal of wrestling and jocularity. Our friend of the sabre, who seemed, as the phrase goes, "pretty well screwed," got into a quarrel with another man, who came forward and put his hand on his head, apparently by way of challenge, for immediately the two made as if to retire in order to settle the matter. This gave rise to much talking, both of an angry and funny nature, judging from the laughter and

angry looks which expressed the feelings of the various individuals. Their exit was frequently interrupted in order to discuss the cause of quarrel, and ultimately it seemed to have been arranged, and all returned again to share the sport going on in the court. After a good deal of wrestling had been done, a large fellow stepped into the midst, and stood, with a smile on his face, waiting for some one to join "grips" with him, but a glance at his great muscles seemed enough to prevent any one from daring the combat. Our artists at home would have opened their eyes with delight to see such a grand living specimen of a Hercules. It may be all very well to go to Rome, but I believe they would acquire a vast deal more by spending half a year in Africa than many years at Rome. While looking over the verandah railing at the sports going on in the court below, a fine-featured, intelligent-looking man came towards where I was standing, and we had some talk as to the object of our visit to Victoria, and going up the mountain. I was pleased with him, as he spoke in a kindly tone about it; but before leaving he said, "Victoria be place for God man, no be place for trade. Suppose white man go make trade there," and here his face assumed a most savage expression, "it be just same as kill all we,"—meaning, I suppose, that the Bimbians were determined to resist to the last man any such attempt. Poor fellow, I am afraid that the white men are, in matters of personal interest, as determined as the Bimbians, and that the latter must give way even though it be to the last man. Trade is para-

mount to all things, and everything else must give way for it.

'The day was by this time far spent, and, as might be supposed, we were not unconscious of a desire to satisfy the cravings of hunger, for we had not yet broken our fast. Our host had not been unmindful of our necessity; but cooking here is a slow process, and necessarily so especially when the party to be provided for is large, for in that case the goat or sheep which is to appear at table in the shape of stew has to be caught, killed, skinned, cut up, and cooked. All these operations having been now concluded, Mr. Deedi quietly having hinted, as before mentioned, to Young Dick Bimbia and his friend Nako that we wished to be alone, they bade us good-bye, and also drew off the noisy crowd of revellers that were outside. We were at last left in peace and quietness, and, after waiting a reasonable time, had the pleasure of sitting down to dinner, or a late breakfast, as it happened to be in our case, to which we did ample justice.

'We were now in a position to enjoy our pipe and talk over the incidents of the day. It is not always that deliverance from danger is succeeded by a pleasing sensation. It often happens that the danger is so great or so obvious, that the dread of it continues to haunt the mind for long after. But in our case the dangers to which we had been exposed were more apprehended than actual, and, being mixed with somewhat of the ludicrous, we were, while thankful to God for deliverance, in a frame of mind to enjoy the change of our

circumstances, and to take a hearty laugh over some of the incidents. Mr. Deedi's premises did not possess very extensive sleeping accommodation, but we managed to stow ourselves away very comfortably for the night. I chose a hammock, which was slung up in the hall for the emergency, but in attempting to get in performed a most beautiful somersault, with an agility which much surprised myself, and greatly amused my companions. A second attempt proved more successful, and, wearied as we were with the day's excitement and want of sleep during the previous night, we were speedily oblivious to all around us.

'About midnight we were roused from sleep by the return of a messenger whom Mr. Deedi had sent by the forest path to Victoria, when our position was at its worst, to inform the Rev. Mr. Pinnock of what had occurred. Mr. Pinnock seems to be resorted to in all matters of difficulty, and we were not disappointed at this crisis. He sent a message requesting us to be in readiness without delay, as he would be round with his boat in a short time to take us away. We got up immediately, and made preparations for our night voyage, but were in doubt whether we should not wait until morning, and bid our Bimbian friends good-bye. Mr. Medley seemed desirous of going at once, as there might be some difficulty with him in consequence of his connection with Mr. Collings. It was agreed, however, that we should be guided by Mr. Pinnock, who was more likely, from his lengthened experience and superior judgment, to know what was best to be done.

After an hour or so, the sound of oars was heard, and Mr. Pinnock shortly after was introduced to us. After hearing our doubts, he advised us, without hesitation, against waiting till morning, as there was no saying what "palaver" might arise, and there was little doubt but we would be detained a long time, while now we had the opportunity of getting away without difficulty or delay. We of course bowed to his decision, and were soon seated in his fine large boat, and on our way to Victoria.

'The night was dark, and the sea at times somewhat rough, but we had six good oarsmen, and an experienced steersman at the helm, and so got along pleasantly, although rather crowded. There was just sufficient light to reveal the coast, which we could see was of the same nature as that we had passed on nearing Bimbia,—bold and rocky, with deep water up to the cliffs. We crept along near the shore, and as day dawned landed safely at our place of destination. After resting a while, we had leisure to look about us and see the little town and its surroundings. The situation is pretty, reminding one much of some of our West Highland villages; but the hills, covered with forest, resemble more the scenery of Inverkip; only there are numerous palm trees here, which, although exceedingly graceful, make us feel that we are far from home. Other features there are that awaken a home feeling. The fences or dykes dividing and enclosing the garden plots are built of what is termed dry-stone building, very thick, and not very high, of dark volcanic stone, and prettily prinked

out with ferns of various descriptions,—all which remind us much of our sea-coast villages; and, to heighten and strengthen the resemblance, a brattling stream of cool limpid water joins the sea just behind the town.

'The view seaward is also interesting. A wooded promontory juts out on the left, forming one side of the bay; beyond that are several islands, high and wooded; and to the right a long range of rocks or islets stretch away seaward. Far across the sea is Fernando Po, with its grand peak, often hid in clouds, but often, too, rising in its greatness from the horizon far up into the clear blue sky. The view towards the land is fine too, although not so striking as that towards the sea. All that can be seen is forest-clad hills rising one above another, and stretching away towards the mountain of which they form the base. The town is small, and built in an irregular, picturesque manner, which is rather pleasing than otherwise. The people are chiefly those who some years ago were expelled by the Spaniards from Fernando Po on account of their faith. They seem sober and well-conducted, but very poor, as there is little or no trade. Notwithstanding their want of money, however, they are comfortable enough, having a plentiful supply of food from their plantations, and manage to obtain decent clothing.

'In front of the town there is a fine broad sandy or gravelly beach, where market is held every two or three days,—the natives from the mountain villages bringing plantains, yams, and other produce of their plantations,

which they exchange for fish brought by the tribe inhabiting the islands, who spend their whole time in fishing. It is very interesting to observe these assemblages of naked savages, and their various articles of barter. The market is held in the morning, and it is a fine sight to look seaward at the canoes coming from the islands with their cargoes of queer fish. By the time the canoes are beached, the mountain people make their appearance in parties of five or six, the men walking in front, and the poor wives following with heavy loads on their heads. After an hour or so the business is generally over. The canoes push off to sea, the hill folks return to their villages in the forest, and all is silent again.

'During the course of the afternoon, we learned that our Bimbian friends were very wroth about the manner in which we had left them, and threatened to come round to Victoria to-morrow (Saturday) morning to "make palaver" about it.

'Next morning we were astir early, with the view of taking a sail round the "Pirate Rocks" before the Bimbians should arrive. These rocks or islets, for they are of very various size, from the bare rock up to the tree-clad island, stretch out from the land in a long straight line. They are of volcanic origin, and most likely are the remains of a stream of lava thrown out from the mountain. They have been carved out by the waves into the most picturesque forms,—some are pierced right through, the opening assuming the appearance of a rough archway, and one is so wrought out, that

it stands on three piers or pillars, with a groined roof; another consists of a tall, square column; and others again, of a larger size, are capped with bushes, and a palm tree or two. But the gem of the group is the largest and the only inhabited one. It is a mere islet, perhaps two hundred yards in diameter, but clustering in the rocky nooks are numerous little houses, whose brown thatched roofs contrasted prettily with the black rocks and the bright green of the palms, and the other trees and bushes which sprang from the sheltered crannies. Crowning the whole were a number of ragged dykes or ridges like broken walls, so that it had all the effect of some ruined fort, such as may be seen on rocky knolls overlooking the sea at home. The picturesque effect is much enhanced by the various tints on the cliffs, from sober grey to warmest brown. It is quite inaccessible except at one point, where there is a little shingly beach at the foot of the rocks, from which the inhabitants manage to scramble up to their houses, leaving their canoes drawn up on the beach. These people belong to the tribe of fishermen, and obtain from the tribes on the mainland plantains and other provisions in exchange for fish.

'Our excursion occupied more time than we expected, so that the market was nearly over by the time we got back, and we were afraid that the Bimbians might have been detained, or probably have left without having their palaver settled. We found, however, that they had not put in an appearance; but during the course of the day a report was current, to the effect that they

would pay us a visit on Tuesday. The Victorians did not seem at all put about by these threats, considering themselves quite ready to meet the Bimbians on any terms they chose, whether as friends or foes. In the afternoon a steamer was observed on the horizon, apparently making for Bimbia; and as Mr. Collings had sent to Fernando Po a notice to acting Consul Hopkins of the treatment which he had received at the hands of the Bimbians, we came to the conclusion that it was the consul on his way thither to seek redress. It turned out, however, to be a Spanish gunboat, which we afterwards found lying at anchor in Man-o'-War Bay, about midway between Bimbia and Victoria. What was her errand we did not ascertain; but her appearance there had a startling effect on the Bimbians, who, like ourselves, mistook her for an English ship with the consul, and, not being anxious for an interview so soon after their recent doings, betook themselves to the bush in a state of considerable consternation.

'Next day was the Sabbath, and I have seldom spent a pleasanter or more profitable one anywhere. The Victorians are a well-educated people, and speak English fluently, so that there was no need of an interpreter, as at most other mission stations; but as a portion of the congregation consisted of natives from the mountain, a short address was given for their special benefit by a native teacher, a Bimbian, whom we found to be an intelligent young fellow, and of great service in our journey. Mr. Pinnock is a black man, a

native of Jamaica, but speaks English so perfectly, that one listening to him, but not seeing him, would not suspect him to be a negro. He is much respected by the natives as well as his own flock, and is resorted to in all matters of difficulty. Although not a fervid orator, he is a calm but impressive preacher, and evinces care and judgment in the preparation of his sermons. He would be considered a fair average preacher in Scotland, and would require no allowance to be made on account of his colour or means of education. The people turn well out to church, and, with the exception of the native portion, have a most respectable appearance, being dressed in plain, decent European clothes. Mr. Pinnock took the morning service; then followed the Sabbath school; and in the evening Mr. Gillespie preached.

'My three companions, Messrs. Gillespie, Medley, and Collings, started in Mr. Pinnock's boat on Monday, intending to go to Cameroons River, in order to see the consul. We were as yet under the impression that the steamship we had seen passing was a British gunboat, having the consul on board; but not finding her near Bimbia, we supposed that she had passed up the river, as there was a palaver to settle there. They found, however, after proceeding for some miles, the real position of things, and returned. Being unwell, I did not accompany them, but kept in bed most of the day.

'Being satisfied that the consul was not in the neighbourhood, we were now at liberty to proceed on

our journey, had not the Bimbians proposed to pay a visit to Victoria. Although the general opinion was that they would not come, it was thought advisable to wait and see; and meantime a general muster of the male inhabitants was called, in order to ascertain what means of defence there was in the place, should the Bimbians be disposed for fighting. From thirty to forty men of all ages and conditions assembled on the beach, and were put through the first stages of military exercise by Mr. Gillespie.

'Although there was little uniformity in dress, and great diversity in arms, it was doubtless an imposing spectacle to most of the onlookers, and the fame of it would no doubt inspire with wholesome dread all the enemies of the Victorians.

'After some time spent in marching and countermarching, the army was dismissed with a few words of commendation, and an aged veteran with a timber limb, who occupied the position of rear-rank man, discharged an old but formidable-looking horse-pistol, the report of which reverberated amongst the hills, and was followed by a shout from the assembled multitude.

'Whether the report of this military display arrested the Bimbians, we cannot say, but it is certain that none of them had the courage to show face at Victoria, either that day or during our absence.

'We now prepared to ascend the mountain. Although far from well, I could not bear the thought of staying behind, and therefore resolved on making the attempt

at least, hoping that health might return as we rose into a more bracing atmosphere,—a hope which was happily not disappointed. Our party consisted of the Rev. Mr. Pinnock, missionary at Victoria; Rev. Mr. Gillespie, from Gaboon; Messrs. Medley and Collings, merchants, and myself, with a train of bearers and guides; also Charles, a native evangelist, to act as interpreter,—making altogether a somewhat imposing company. Immediately on leaving the cleared ground behind the town, the road leads into the primeval forest, where, except at a few plantation clearings, we were agreeably sheltered from the heat of the sun. The road for eight miles or so is tolerably good, being much used by the people of the lower towns in going to market. On our way we forded the stream which enters the sea behind Victoria. It is even at this (the dry) season a copious stream, about thirty feet wide, and a depth of about twelve inches, having a strong rapid current. So far as we saw it, there was no succession of rapids and quiet pools, such as give variety to the most of our own streams; but the water is cool and very pure, and, as may be supposed, a pleasant thing to look at in this burning climate. We drank deeply of its limpid waters, and would fain have lingered a while to rest; but we had to push on. We passed through several little hamlets, and reached Boana, the first principal town or village of the hill tribes, and remained there for the night.

'Next morning, 13th December, we started early, and camped in the evening on an open space of ground

beyond Mpanja, the highest of the hill towns. At the town below Mpanja there was a great assemblage of people engaged in dancing. We halted, and saluted the chief and the principal men of the place, and, after looking on for a few minutes, proceeded on our journey. Some of the hill people, who had been to market, on learning our purpose to ascend the mountain, had been highly pleased, and had said that they would keep "a Christmas" in our honour; but whether this merry-making was in fulfilment of that intention or not, I did not ascertain.

'Before reaching Mpanja our way led through the forest, but at some distance above it we emerged into open country, or rather into a long narrow strip of open country, flanked on either side by forest. This narrow open space we found to be an old lava bed, the crust of which had been broken up into fragments of various sizes, probably when in the act of cooling, and while the interior mass was still in motion. Although covered with a dense growth of moss and ferns, we found it difficult to travel over. Sometimes the pieces of lava gave way under the foot, and at others the advanced foot would go down through the soft yielding moss and between the stones to the depth of one or two feet, sorely to the detriment of ankle and shin bones. Occasionally we tried walking along the top of a high ridge of loose or shattered lava, which was nearly free from the covering of moss; but then we incurred the danger of treading on semi-detached pieces, and having a tumble down the rough sides of the ridge. A few stunted trees

or bushes were scattered over the surface, and isolated bushes of tall heath managed to maintain an existence among the rocks. All these were bearded or festooned with long grey lichens, which gave them a peculiarly weird aspect; orchids of various kinds sprung from every crevice of the ridges, and clothed the branches, and even twigs, of the trees. Very few were in flower at the time, but doubtless many fine varieties could be found here. For several miles this lava bed is so covered with moss, ferns, and orchids, that it is only along the high ridges the stones are visible; and it is remarkable that, although we searched diligently, only one or two plants of grass were seen. We found a few bramble bushes growing among the loose stones, and gathered a few half-ripe berries, which, besides bringing back boyish recollections and thoughts of home, helped a little to assuage our thirst. On diving into the deep hollows which skirted the lava bed in search of water, we were agreeably surprised to find, in the gloom of the forest, numerous fine fern trees, the ribs of whose fronds were armed with spines. We were not successful in finding water in any of the ravines we explored. There seemed no solid beds of rock on which the moisture could collect, and little soil to retain it; yet everything was moist, and the herbage fresh and green, and the long moss so charged with moisture, that water in some considerable quantity could be obtained by squeezing it in the hand; so that, had matters come to the worst, we were not likely to perish of thirst. We saw few insects, or animals of any kind, although we heard the

cries of what we were informed were some baboons or apes.

'Our tent proved very comfortable, considering all things. We levelled the stones a little, and formed a thick layer of branches and heather above that, over which we spread our rugs; this made on the whole a soft bed for weary limbs, and, drawing a coverlid or blanket over us, we managed to sleep soundly until near daybreak. Towards morning, however, we did begin to feel a little chilly, and somewhat sore, from the sharp corners of the stones beneath, which seemed to fit awkwardly to our more projecting bones. We were therefore quite ready to rise with the sun, or a little earlier, and glad to get a warm cup of tea or coffee to thaw our stiffened limbs. By the time breakfast was over, our tent struck, and baggage all arranged, the sun was shining over the mists, diffusing a pleasant warmth, and we were again all right and ready for the road; so we started again on this Thursday morning. There was no path. Three youths accompanied us from the highest town, but they did not seem to know much more about the way than ourselves. We continued along the lava bed, now wading knee-deep through the moist moss, and again stumbling along the ridges, taking care to have one foot securely planted before venturing to advance the other. The vegetation became gradually less luxuriant as we proceeded, and the moss ceased entirely; the stones, or rather cinders, were now covered with short rigid lichens, which crushed under the foot like hoar-frost. The orchids

still continued numerous, and I observed a much greater variety of ferns, and amongst them some old friends, such as *Adiantum trichomanes* and *A. nigrum*. We camped again in the evening, after a toilsome but short journey, nearly at the upper verge of the forest, which still continued to run up on either side of the lava bed; but the trees were of smaller size, and much covered with the long waving lichens. Our tent, which consisted of a large canvas sheet, supported by a ridge-pole procured from the adjoining forest, was pitched so that one end abutted upon the side of a high wall of lava, at a part where the top overhung the base, forming a pretty little recess or grotto, into which we stowed our spare luggage. After partaking of our evening meal, we prepared our bed as on the previous evening, taking care, however, to have a thicker layer of heath, of which there was here a great abundance. On the previous evening rain had fallen, and as our supply of water was now much reduced, we earnestly wished for a good shower of rain, that we might obtain a little from the roof of the tent; in this, however, we were disappointed.

'After breakfast on Friday morning, the younger members of our party set out in search of "Mann's Spring," which we were assured could not be far off. Mr. Medley, with two or three of the men, went to the westward, and Messrs. Gillespie and Collings, with Rawku, went to the northward, further up the mountain. The older members of the party, consisting of Mr. Pinnock and myself, confined our operations to

the immediate neighbourhood. After ascending but a short distance, we got quite beyond the upper limit of the forest, and found ourselves on a comparatively level plateau, stretching away for miles along the mountain-side, and of considerable breadth. While the dense growth of moss and entire absence of grass formed a noticeable feature of the greater part of the lava bed which we had hitherto traversed, here the absence of moss and abundance of grass was quite as remarkable. We could still trace, by its rough broken surface, the track of the lava stream, which at some former period had poured down the mountain-side, but on either side of it the ground was solid and free from stones. ' Had we been younger, or in more vigorous health, we might have indulged in a scamper along the grassy slopes which stretched away on either side. As it was, the sense of freedom was delightful. We were no longer hedged in by the forest. Above us rose the green grassy slopes of the upper portion of the mountain, peak above peak; and beneath lay like a map the whole Bight of Biafra, with its rivers and creeks; and far away to the south the Sierra-del-Crystal mountains were dimly visible. Towards the right, and a little beneath, was the steep Mango-ma-Itindeh, a spur of the Cameroons Mountain, and no mean mountain itself, being nearly 6000 feet in height, forest-clad to the summit; and beyond, at a distance of about forty miles, the great peak of Fernando Po rose majestically above its gorgeous drapery of clouds. All this pleasure was enhanced by the exhilaration of feeling produced by

breathing the free pure mountain air. Occasionally clouds of dry mist were swept up by the sea-breeze, producing strange exaggerations in the size and distance of the surrounding objects. These clouds, however, rapidly passed away up among the hills above, and the sun shone out again. In the course of our ramble we came upon a deep hole, filled with a tangled mass of brushwood and creeping plants, out of which a tree was growing. On looking into it, we discovered the mouth of a cave at one side. We managed to get down over the large masses of lava which lay in a tumbled condition in the hole, and, pressing through the brushwood, got inside the cave, or rather tunnel. The roof and sides for some distance from the entrance were beautifully festooned by ferns, such as *Capillus Veneris* (maiden-hair), *Radicans* (Killarney fern), *A. trichomanes*, and some, to me, unknown varieties. A drop of water fell at intervals of about half a minute from the roof. Being very thirsty, we caught a few drops of the precious liquid in our hands, and moistened our lips. The moss on the sides of the cave, too, was saturated with moisture, but we had no means of collecting it, and could only wet our hands and wrists.

'After groping along the cave, we discerned light beyond, and found that it came from an opening in the roof, up through which also a tree was growing. We proceeded beyond this opening for some distance, as far as the light would permit, but left further exploration for another opportunity, should that occur,

when we would provide ourselves with lanterns for the purpose. The width of the cave, speaking from recollection, would be about twenty feet, and the height varying from eight to sixteen feet, the floor being very uneven. It lies in the track of what must have been a stream of lava, and had its origin probably in the external matter consolidating into a firm crust, during some temporary check to the flow of the molten stream, in sufficient strength to retain its position when the internal mass moved on again. Evidence of this was observable on the roof, the surface of which was roughened with fine spiky projections, formed by the sinking down of the softer matter from the hardened crust. After exploring the cave as far as we considered it prudent, we returned again to the upper world and the light of day. The whole plateau has a quiet pastoral look, sloping and undulating, with here and there a rocky hollow containing a few dwarf trees and bushes. Besides grass, there is no great variety of plants. I was pleased to find an old moorland favourite, *Pinguicula*, or butter-wort. Amongst the rocks were a variety of ferns, a beautiful silver-backed species; and, much to my surprise and delight, bringing with it a flood of pleasant memories, in a sheltered crevice I found a little family of that tiny fern *G. leptophyllum*. Only once before had I found it growing, — in its native habitat in the island of Jersey. A prominent plant on the rough stony ground was a species of what is called at home the "everlasting flower," and a very tall variety of sorrel, with the juicy leaves and

shoots of which I managed for a time to quench my thirst; but too frequent use made the mouth and throat sore. The soil on which the grass grew seemed to consist of scoriæ, having much the appearance of fine riddled furnace ashes. The grass did not grow so close as to form a sward, but in detached tufts, looking somewhat like the rich after-growth of a hay-field, without the usual mixture of clover; and with this difference also, that the seed-stalks remained. There were many varieties of grass, but almost all such as cattle would delight in, being juicy and tender,—the blades from five to nine inches in length, and seed-stems about two or three times as long. One could not look on such a breadth of pasture without wishing to see it clothed with flocks and herds. At present it is browsed only by a few stray antelopes. Continuing our way upwards, we came upon what appeared a path, but whether of man or beast we could not tell; probably it is used by both. We now came upon another tunnel similar to the cave, but on a much smaller scale, being only about three feet in diameter. Beyond this rose a great mound, with very steep sides, which, had it been in a mining district, we would have taken to be rubbish thrown out of some pit, and pulverized by exposure to frost and rain. We now found ourselves at the bottom of a steep grass-clad hill, on the long ridge of which we descried through a cloud of mist two figures of human shape, huge and distant. We hailed them, and were agreeably surprised to find that it was Mr. Collings and Rawku, and still more surprised to

discover that we were within speaking distance. They reported themselves to be on the brink of a crater, but as the ascent was steep, we did not care to join them. We returned to the cave, and waited their arrival there, and, after resting some time, made our way back to the tent. Mr. Collings reported having found the higher parts of the hills covered with a fine close sward. Mr. Medley returned to the tent shortly after. Neither of them had been successful in finding water. Mr. Gillespie had left Mr. Collings on an indépendent search of his own, but in what direction we could not form a very clear guess.

'As the means of quenching our thirst consisted of a couple of oranges and about two quarts of water, we found ourselves in a serious plight. Our thirst was already very great, and the nearest water was below Boana. It was therefore arranged that Mr. Medley should set off with some of the Kroomen and endeavour to reach Boana that night, in order to have a supply sent back to Mpanja for us on the following morning. As the day wore on, we became increasingly anxious about Mr. Gillespie, but, not knowing in what direction he had gone, it was vain to send in search of him. Night was near, too, and there was not sufficient water to give to those who might have the courage to go on such a hopeless search. There was no help for it but just to wait. We divided the two oranges, reserving a half for Mr. Gillespie; the water it was agreed to share all round before retiring to rest, which would be about half a cup to each, and the Kroomen would have to

eat their rice dry or want. The sun was wearing near to the west, when, to our great relief, on looking up the mountain slope, Mr. Gillespie was descried in the distance picking his steps along the rugged track; and right glad we were to find that he had discovered a spring of water, and had brought a sample of it with him in a waterproof satchel. Although it had been carried for some miles, we found it most delightfully cold. The quantity was not great, but enough to quench our thirst, besides being sufficient, along with what we already had, to boil the Kroomen's supper, and make tea for ourselves. At the time we supposed that the spring found by Mr. Gillespie was the same as that mentioned by Captain Burton in the account of the ascent made by him in company with Mr. Saker and Mr. Mann, and named after its discoverer, Mann's Spring. In this idea we were strengthened by the fact that a large hut or small house stands close by, of a kind not likely to be erected by the few hunters that occasionally traverse the mountain-sides, having upright walls and sloping roof, all well thatched with grass, a fireplace of some kind at either end, and a hinged door; but, on comparing notes afterwards with Mr. Saker, the description of the spring itself and the situation did not correspond; besides, he had no recollection of a house having been put up at Mann's Spring. In these circumstances, we are disposed to consider the spring found by Mr. Gillespie a new one, lying more to the east and higher up the mountain than the other; and should further investigation confirm this

opinion, we mean to confer on it also the name of its discoverer.

'Although we could have wished to stay a day or two longer, so as to extend our observations, or to complete the ascent of the mountain, we found it necessary to retrace our steps,—our provisions were nearly exhausted, and Mr. Pinnock required to be in Victoria on Sabbath, to attend to his proper duties. We had accomplished all that was really demanded in the meantime, having satisfied ourselves of the suitability of the country, at the height to which we had attained, for the purpose of a sanatorium, and had found water; so we resolved to start on our downward journey next morning.

'We were astir early on Saturday, had the tent struck, and, partaking of a very slight breakfast, were speedily on our way. The men were not burdened with water, and the provision chests were considerably lighter by this time; so we stumbled along over the broken lava with amazing speed. Besides, we were all suffering from thirst, and were eager to reach Mpanja, where we expected to find a supply of water waiting for us. We would fain have lingered a little at the moss-field to wring out a few drops of water, but time pressed, and we thought the water so obtained might not be wholesome. We arrived at Mpanja about noon. Water was our great desire, but we found that Mr. Medley had not been able to get to Boana on the previous day, and, indeed, had only managed to get to Mpanja in the dark, so that the expected supply was not waiting us. He had, however, before starting in the morning, given

instructions for a supply of plantain and palm wine to be in readiness. We were greedy for anything in the shape of liquid, and took a long draught of the former. It was nauseous stuff, greenish in colour, and having a dull vegetable taste. The mimbo, or palm wine, however, was very acceptable, and we speedily drank all that had been provided. After a short stay, we proceeded on our journey, and soon reached Boana, where Mr. Medley was waiting for us. Having here a plentiful supply of good water, we halted, and had our breakfast and a rest, for which we were not a little thankful. As Mr. Pinnock, although very tired, was anxious to be in Victoria the same night, it was arranged that he and Messrs. Medley and Collings should push on, and leave Mr. Gillespie and me to come on leisurely, so as to reach Victoria next day. Having taken a good long rest, we left Boana, intending to remain at Bosumbo over night; but on reaching that place I found myself in such fair trim, that we resolved to proceed and endeavour to make Victoria that night. The path was now more level and smooth, and we swung along at a rapid pace. It was well we did so, for the day was by this time far spent; we managed, however, to get clear of the forest just in time, reaching our destination as the dusk of evening was merging into the darkness of night.

'Our return journey was thus accomplished in one long day, the ascent to our highest encampment having occupied about two days and a half; but the rapid descent cost us several days of sore bones and muscles.

This, however, wore away, and left us in greatly improved health, and highly satisfied with the results of our exploration. Our only regret was that want of water and provisions had prevented a more protracted stay on the mountain. This slight regret, however, is more than counterbalanced by the hope of what remains to be seen, should we be permitted, in the good providence of God, to revisit those glorious scenes.

'Thus pleasantly did we accomplish our first partial ascent of the great Cameroons Mountain, or, as the natives call it, Monga-ma-Lobah—"The Mountain of God."'

Mr. Thomson's ascent of Clarence Peak is recorded much more briefly as follows:—

'*6th January* 1872.

'Left Cameroons morning of the 20th ultimo, and arrived at Clarence on the afternoon of the 22d. Called on Rev. Mr. Roe, and was invited to take up my quarters with him; slept on board *Elfe* that night, and next day, Saturday, went on shore. . . .

'Called on the other two missionaries, Messrs. Burnett and Maylott. All were exceedingly kind. Proposed climbing the Peak, and arranged to start on Tuesday, Monday being Christmas.

'Christmas was a day of drumming, dancing, singing, and most grotesque mumming, but we saw no drunk person.

'Tuesday morning we started for the Peak,—Messrs.

Roe, Burnett, Maylott, myself, Peter Bull, our guide (a Christian Boobie), and thirteen boys or carriers, and reached Basillo, the Spanish sanatorium, and slept there. Started next morning, lost the path, and camped in the forest. Reached our highest camp on Friday evening,—terribly hard work to get through the nettles, balm, and brambles. Saturday, started for the top, Mr. Burnett rather unwell, and stopped half way. Mr. Maylott sprained his ankle, and obliged to give in when within a little way from top. Mr. Roe and I struggled on together, and managed to make it out, but very tired. Found bottle containing names of visitors; opened it, and added our own. Amongst those we could read we found G. Mann, Laughlan Roy, John Inglis, Hewan, and F. Wilson. Started for home, and arrived wearied enough on Sabbath evening, for we had to press on, as our provisions had run out. You may suppose that I am not so very much reduced in constitution, when I could do so much climbing, and so soon after having done about nine thousand feet of Cameroons.'

Mr. Thomson's main objection to Clarence Peak was the fact that it was under Spanish rule. The Methodist missionaries in Fernando Po strove to remove his objections, urging that freedom of worship was conceded in Spain itself, and so no religious difficulty need be apprehended. The sequel proved that his fears were only too well founded. The Spanish Governor demanded that all the children be taught Spanish, five

hours every day. When the missionaries demurred, he ordered them to leave the island by the first steamer. That order he had to modify, but pursued in various ways an irritating and hampering policy towards the missionaries.

CHAPTER VIII.

SETTLING DOWN IN VICTORIA.

ALL his investigations seemed only to confirm Mr. Thomson in his previous judgment in favour of Cameroons. So, after a short visit to Calabar, he returned to Victoria in order to commence operations. This town of Victoria itself was no little cause of his preference for Cameroons. It is a missionary colony, founded by the Baptist Missionary Society on the expulsion of their agents and converts from Fernando Po by the Spanish authorities in 1858, who, after leaving it practically in British hands for a century, then resumed possession of the island. The Baptist community, now numbering, according to Captain Burton, 800 souls, had to prepare to emigrate. In the name of the Baptist Missionary Society, the late Mr. Saker purchased, with full powers of sovereignty, a small patch of territory, extending some twelve miles along the coast and some five into the interior. In this twelve miles of coast they have, if Captain Burton's opinion may be trusted, the best roadstead in all that part of Western Africa,—one much superior to Port Clarence. They intended to put themselves under British authority,

but Government has never exercised any control over them, or afforded them any overt protection. The British consul of the Bight of Biafra acts to some vague extent as their protection against aggression from their neighbours. They have formed practically a republic,[1] with a supreme court, whose powers and constitution are alike uncertain. It has become the acknowledged place of refuge for all those in the vicinity who have been accused of witchcraft and such like imaginary crimes, and hence is perpetually being augmented by heathen runaways. For some years before Mr. Thomson's arrival, Mr. Pinnock, who has been referred to above, acted as chief magistrate, but felt his office an onerous one. The town had many of the functions as well as the disadvantages of the sanctuaries of old days. Like them, it had a semi-sacred character, and like them was over-burdened with personages of doubtful reputation as to honesty. Further, we have seen that the Bimbians wished it laid down as a maxim that as a 'God-town' it should be excluded from trade. The full force of these disadvantages Mr. Thomson learned later. He regarded it as a Christian community, and therefore a suitable starting-point for any attempt for the amelioration of the condition of Africa. Its proximity to Cameroons added to its suitability for his purposes; and its quasi-dependence on Britain seemed a guarantee that no external or political hindrances would be permitted seriously to impede his work. The kindly assistance of the Baptist

[1] *Vide* Appendix on 'Constitution of the Republic of Victoria.'

missionaries who were labouring in stations on the Cameroons River,—Mr. Quintin Thomson and Mr. Smith,—was itself an inducement to settle in Cameroons Mountain. For themselves, these two gentlemen were ready to guarantee £100 towards the erection of the sanatorium, and to press its claims on the attention of their Missionary Society. Other friends, traders, and others, gave various sums to help on this project, and these are duly chronicled in the letters home.

After his return to Victoria, he once more ascended the mountain to some of the villages on the slopes, partly in order to get more information as to roads, and also to find out what chance there was of water being got at easy distance from any place that might otherwise seem suitable. Not less important than these, was the necessity of gaining the confidence of the tribes inhabiting the mountain, who could easily make it impossible to pass from the sea to the upper regions should any capricious suspicion seize them. The question of roads was an all-important one. Although the tribes might prove as friendly as possible, still the mere difficulty of access might render a place otherwise suitable, practically useless for his purpose. Hence there was a necessity for making roads that would be passable for palanquins and donkeys, for the narrow irregular chance-made paths of natives were not suitable for conveying invalids up and down the mountain. It was obvious enough that merely to take the first path that offered, and complete it to the required breadth and smoothness, might entail at first a great deal of unneces-

sary labour and expense in making these improvements, and a great deal of additional labour in keeping the road up. All this made repeated surveys of the various paths necessary before work could be begun. At first Mr. Thomson anticipated that his principal difficulties would be merely the natural ones incident to the conformation of the mountain; by and by he discovered that artificial obstacles were not less potent. A village, in order to keep its cattle within its own bounds, might, instead of making a fence along the side of the pathway, erect a barricade right across it, and charge exorbitantly for the privilege of knocking it down.

Moreover, however easy of access the sanatorium might be, its usefulness would be greatly limited if water was not easily accessible. Although the rank vegetation proved that there was abundance of moisture in the soil and atmosphere, yet even at middle heights there were but few springs, and still fewer at a greater elevation. The light soil, composed as it is so largely of volcanic ash, does not retain moisture. This water difficulty occupied Mr. Thomson's thoughts greatly, and numerous were the expedients which his fertile fancy suggested for overcoming it. At one time the device that found favour with him was to get puncheons to collect the rain that fell copiously, and prevent it running away through the ashes of which we have spoken. But though puncheons were plentiful enough on the coast, there was the difficulty of getting them up the mountain in sufficient numbers, and of sufficient size to be of use: indeed, the narrow zig-zag roads of the natives rendered

it practically impossible. Having heard that our troops, while engaged in the Abyssinian campaign, had used a pump that was at the same time capable of boring, he made inquiries about it, but, on account of its reported liability to go wrong, had to abandon all thought of it. There is no wonder, then, that Mr. Thomson was obliged to multiply his visits to the mountain.

One difficulty that was frequently urged against the feasibility of his scheme, was that it would be almost impossible to convey the sick up some eight or ten thousand feet. This led him to consider the possibility of introducing beasts of burden,—palanquins involved keeping a constant staff of bearers, and that would make transit very costly. The only animals of large size about the mountain were native cattle, but these, though tame enough to be property, were not trained to be beasts of burden. Moreover, the character of the roads precluded the possibility of ox waggons being used. Consequently he was led to think of employing donkeys, as they have great carrying power, and at the same time are more hardy and sure-footed than their more expensive relative the horse. We subjoin a portion of a letter, which will give some idea of the difficulty of landing live stock at Victoria. We should premise that he already, at the date of this letter, had got one donkey, whose name was 'Jock.'

'18*th June* 1872.

'There was a good deal of trouble in getting the donkey No. 2 here. Captain Walker put him on board the steamer at Calabar, and we managed to land him at

Fernando Po with little difficulty, but we had a great job putting him on board Mr. Collings' cutter. He most stubbornly refused to go on the timber jetty, and at last had to be carried bodily to the hoisting tackle, by which he was lowered into the boat; and when we got here, we just tumbled him overboard about a quarter of a mile from the beach, and allowed him to swim for his life. He looked quite disconcerted when he rose to the surface after his plunge, and tried to get on board again, but a Krooman leaped into the water, and, getting a hold of the halter, turned his head toward the shore. He swam very well notwithstanding his want of practice,—so well, indeed, that the Krooman was obliged to let go the halter and dive, for Ben was intent on getting on the top of him, and was swimming faster than the man. It was rather comical to see him in the water, as he kept his tail erect all the time, so that, with the long ears at the one end, and the tail at the other, he cut a queer figure. As the distance from the shore was considerable, I was a little anxious about him, and watched his progress very intently. Once or twice I lost sight of him, and feared he had sunk, but it was owing to the swell of the sea, which merely hid him for a short time, and I was right glad to see him at last walk up out of the water on to the beach. The Krooman followed him, and got hold of the halter, keeping, however, as far from Ben as the rope would allow, and led him along to the mission house, where he received a hearty greeting from his brother Jock, who seemed glad to see him.

'Next day we had him saddled and bridled, and, for the first time in Victoria, the wondrous sight was seen of an ass being ridden upon. Ben is a fine animal, and looked well in harness. Jock is not so nice-looking, but is of a musical turn, and has already taught the younger members of our community to hee-haw. Ben, although evidently the younger of the two, never indulges in that way. The two fight and wrestle a good deal, in fun generally, but sometimes it grows into earnest, much to the alarm of the good folks. Such serious outbreaks do not occur often, however,—they are evidently fond of each other's society, as brothers should be. They lead a very easy life at present; but although idle, they don't cost anything, being allowed to forage for themselves. I mean to set them to work, however, on the road by and by.'

In the course of this letter he mentions the case of a young trader, Crow by name, who, fearing he was dying of dysentery, had sent for Mr. Pinnock. This leads him to speak of the way that everything—body, soul, and spirit—is sacrificed to trade. While recognising that Christianity—not trade—must elevate Africa, he also sees a new evidence of the need of a sanatorium on the coast of Western Africa.

He had to carry on his operations in road-making, etc., by means of Kroomen. His ignorance of the Kroo language often exposed him to difficulties. Usually in a gang of Kroomen there is one who can speak broken English. Unluckily, in the gang with which Mr.

Thomson began operations, the only one who had that accomplishment was a leper, and with him the people would have no communication; so Mr. Thomson was compelled to dismiss him. The very fact that all heavy work had to be done by Kroomen, made building and road-making more arduous, and both directly and indirectly more expensive. Although hired, according to the ordinary custom, for a year, again and again would they have to be sent home by steamer before that period arrived. Or they might (and did frequently) take French leave, walking off with anything that suited them. Boat after boat Mr. Thomson lost through these Kroomen running off. As they are usually employed on board ship, it is possible that continuous work on shore did not suit them. The Kroo nation inhabit a narrow stip of territory, which is barely capable of supporting them, but they make what among them is a fortune, by hiring themselves out to Europeans to help to man ships, or to be general labourers. Always, when they have made what they regard as a competence, they return to spend their latter days in their native land. We need scarcely say that Mr. Thomson's plan, as originally thought out, designed the employment of the natives of the district where the sanatorium might be set up. But the incorrigible laziness and shiftlessness of the Bakweli, as indeed of almost all other Africans, compelled him to trust the Kroomen, although employing the natives so far as possible.

While thus struggling against moral and physical difficulties, always hopeful of ultimately surmounting

them, he received at times encouraging tokens that his efforts were appreciated by some, although denounced by others as utterly chimerical; in some cases these latter in so doing contradicted their own former declarations. We subjoin a letter which speaks for itself:—

'CAMEROONS, 23*d August* 1872.

'The Mission Board have acted very generously indeed in voting me £150. I cannot say that they have acted wisely, however, in so countenancing such a mad-like scheme. While grateful for the kindness of the Mission Board, I do not see my way clear to accept of the sum voted to me, except on condition of a loan, and that I be left quite free and irresponsible, seeing that it is possible that in carrying out my scheme I may see it necessary to do things which might not quite meet the approval of every one, and I must be in such a position as not to be considered the agent of any society. It is all but certain that I shall have the co-operation, so far, of Messrs. Smith and Thomson of the Baptist Mission here. This mail brings instructions for those two young brethren to leave Cameroons River, and find a new field elsewhere. This being quite in accordance with their own views, they have resolved on coming to the Victoria region, to labour among the Bakwelis on the mountain, and amongst the tribes on the sea-coast and Rio del Rey at the base,—a fine field, and one likely to lead towards opening intercourse with the interior.'

It may be remarked that he never had to face the question of the disposal of this grant, as it was never paid over. As may be seen from the end of this extract, he was gratified with the prospect of having two friends in the neighbouring mission station,—all the more so, that both had, as already mentioned, professed themselves so favourable to his attempt. Mr. Smith settled in Victoria, and Mr. Quintin Thomson in Bonjongo, a village a considerable way up the mountain.

Meantime, while he was eagerly carrying on the planting operations on which he laid such stress, he discovered that the cattle had a great liking for the succulent shoots of Indian corn, and that the African insects, too, had to get their share—and it was a large one—of the young crops, so that the return he could hope for was but small. Notwithstanding, with unabated spirit, he tells his plans of planting cacao, koko (a native vegetable), sweet potatoes, rice, and ginger.

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY UP THE MOUNTAIN.

DESPITE the interest which Mr. Thomson would naturally feel in a struggling community like Victoria, he saw clearly that the sanatorium must be erected on the mountain, and that therefore some other residence must be found. Victoria might well serve as a landing-place for those going to the sanatorium, but as the journey to the height at which it would be best to build the sanatorium could not be accomplished in one day, there was need that some accommodation be provided for the night. In order to understand more clearly the roads of the mountain, and to secure information as to the places best fitted for these resting-places, Mr. Thomson accompanied Mr. Quintin Thomson in an expedition to the mountain. One extract from the journal of the beginning of their ascent may be given, as showing Mr. Thomson's abiding interest in nature :—

'*15th July* 1872.

. . . . . .

'Immediately above the ford I observed what had escaped my notice formerly, that the stream spread

itself out into a wide shallow pool, overhung by large trees, whose roots laced the rocky rim of the basin on the side from which we had crossed,—the whole scene wearing an aspect of exceeding sweetness and repose. What greatly enhanced its interest for the time, was that an amaryllis, bearing a glorious crown of white bells, rose close to the water's edge, finely relieved against the mossy rock, and right in the centre of the scene. Then all these objects were repeated in the pool, — the trees, the rocks with their garniture of moss and ferns, and, Narcissus-like, the lovely amaryllis gazing on its own beauty in the mirror at its feet. This species of amaryllis is one of the finest flowers I have as yet seen in Africa. The massive flower-stem rises from a tuft or nest of curving lance-shaped leaves, and bearing a crown of large glistering white flowers, sometimes seven or eight in number. But it is short-lived: it opens in the morning, and, when not shaded by cloud or otherwise, is closed by noon.'

As African mountain travelling is very much the same, we need not describe the ascent here, when so full an account has been given of the first ascent; yet as some of his experiences on this journey may be interesting in themselves, we subjoin the following extract, which begins, as will be seen, by the description of a native house at Bosumbo:—

'15*th July* 1872.

. . . . . .

'It may be as well to give you a description of the

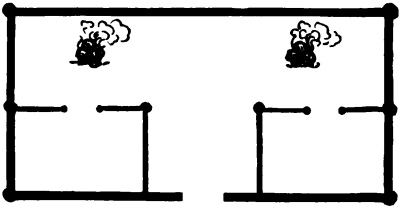
house in which we were lodged, being an average specimen of those inhabited by the Bakwelis, the people living up the mountain.

'Like all the houses which I have as yet seen in Africa, it is rectangular and oblong, and is much better than the houses built by some tribes, but not so good as those of others. This one is much larger than the generality of African houses, being as near as I can guess forty feet by twenty, the side walls about eight or nine feet high, with a pretty high-pitched roof. The roof is supported on runners fastened to the upright posts of the walls, and by a strong ridge-pole supported at each end in the gables, and by two intervening posts or pillars in the interior. The roof is thatched with a sort of matting, made from the leaflets of the bamboo palm. It is an interesting fact that this kind of thatching prevails over a large part of Africa, and is done in the same way.

'The walls are constructed of posts and upright slabs of bark, not very closely jointed,—the whole stiffened by horizontal rails secured to the posts outside. I should have mentioned that the roof has spars and purlins, and a considerable projection of cane. There are no windows, but, serving to some extent the purpose, there is a doorway seven or eight feet wide. No nail or pin is used in all this construction: the posts are either forked or notched at the top, and all the rest is secured by tying with strips of bark, or pieces of the running or climbing plants which abound in the forest.

'A space at one corner of each end of the interior is boarded off so as to form a sort of bedroom. This bed-

room is roofed over at the height of about six feet, and the attic thus formed is used for storing wood and other odds and ends; and there the fowls roost. It is got to by a very simple ladder,—a notched-out cut of a tree. A few rough sketches may make the foregoing description somewhat more intelligible, however.



'. . . As the door had to be kept open for the sake of light, we had not to complain of lack of company,—the inhabitants of the place, including sheep, goats, and dogs, coming and going continually. Our cooking and dining operations seemed specially interesting to them, —to the dogs especially, who seem kick-proof. It was a difficult thing, too, to keep the sheep and goats outside; but they had a right to be inside, and doubtless it seemed

to them a strange state of affairs when they could not get the use of their own house. Although we could willingly have dispensed with the presence of our other friends, we made no objection, as the house was both large and airy. In the evening, when we had got our lantern lit, and were making ourselves comfortable, we had a visit from the head-man and the general population, when Mr. Q. W. Thomson took the opportunity of addressing them, through Kufela, on religious matters. At the close of the address we had some general conversation; amongst other topics, that of witchcraft came up, for here, as in most other places in this region, the belief in witchcraft in cases of death is very firm and deep-rooted. No death occurs but is attributed to this evil influence; some witch-doctor is consulted, who generally charges several persons. These are put to the ordeal of drinking an infusion of the sass-wood, the evidence of guilt being that they are not affected by it; should they, on the other hand, sicken and vomit, it is taken as an evidence of innocence.

'We puzzled our friends somewhat by asking why it was that the sass-wood was given at all, for if the witch-doctor had power to name those to whom it should be administered, he would have power to tell without that, who was the guilty person. We asked them also what would be the result suppose all the people in a town were to be put to the test; and they at once admitted that most, if not all, would have to die. Being desirous of knowing whether they had any traditions amongst them, I inquired if their forefathers had always lived

here, or if they had come from some other place, but their belief is that they had been always on the mountain. Our head-man could not altogether conceal his acquisitiveness on this occasion. Having called his attention to the coverlet on which I had been reclining, with the view of explaining to him the nature of its composition, he cut the subject short by requesting that I would give it to him.

'Being a little nettled at this blunt request, I replied that he might as well ask for my head; but this was an article which he did not seem to covet. He then felt and examined my old cloak, and offered to give me a sheep for it. This was a liberal offer on his part, for it is a rare thing for them to sell their sheep, they being reserved for funeral or other great occasions when their owner's wealth is displayed.

'I would readily have agreed to accept his offer, for the cloak was not intrinsically worth half a sheep; but then I had no other, and to me it had been a guid auld cloak, and not easily replaced, so I was forced to decline this proposal also,—neither cloak nor coverlet could be dispensed with. After inquiring about the neighbouring towns and roads, and subjects of conversation getting exhausted, the head-man left us, and our host having got the rest of the company prevailed on to retire also, the large door was drawn across the entrance, and we were left to ourselves. In due time those inside disposed themselves for sleep,—the Kroomen chose the driest corner they could get, the sheep and goats took another; Mr. Q. W. Thomson spread a waterproof sheet on the

floor and lay down upon it, and I retained the bench on which I had been resting since we arrived. I was curious to know how our host and his family would manage, and was gratified to discover the use of the corner inclosures, having been under the impression that they disposed themselves around the fires; but the Bakweli, however rude in some things, are a stage in advance, so far as sleeping arrangements are concerned, and study their comfort as well as cleanliness in this matter. After our lantern was put out, I discovered at times during the course of the night, when happening to awake, that a fire was smouldering in each of the bedrooms, and as the occupant of the bed now and again stirred the embers into a blaze, I could discern through the chinks that the bed was raised several feet off the ground, that it consisted of (which I discovered afterwards) an openly wrought mat, secured at each end to a frame, and thus suspended over the fire.

'Since that time I have had more respect for the Bakweli. The domestic animals of the Bakweli consist of sheep, goats, swine, dogs, and poultry. The last-mentioned are very like the common cocks and hens to be seen in our own villages at home. The dogs are the same as those to be met with in all African towns where I have been,—weak-limbed, long-eared, and sharp-nosed, with a sly cast about the eyes, giving them a foxy expression. They are short-haired, generally light-brown, but sometimes black; the tail is often very much curled. They do not seem to be very courageous, and are rather afraid of white faces; they are very self-

possessed, always at home, and continually on the look-out for a morsel at meal-times, the scent of our animal food being especially attractive to them. Their cry is a sharp yelp or subdued bark. The swine are of a small kind, long-nosed, usually black, but sometimes mixed or white. Being allowed to run at large, they acquire all the sagacity reported of their Irish relatives. The goats are fine animals, much larger than those usually met with in this region,—about as high, or higher, than the Highland goat, with two or three times their bulk of body; they are very fat, and are delicious eating. Their colours are various,—white, black, brown, and mixed. It would require a long description to give a clear notion of the African goat. It is the most domestic of all animals, prying into every nook and corner of the house, self-possessed to a ludicrous degree, and devoid of fear. The kids are particularly amusing, from their playfulness, and the propensity to be on the top of anything raised above the general level of the ground. There is great difference of expression in their voices; they may be said to possess a language, and the cry of the kid is often so human-like, as to be mistaken for that of children. It is remarkable that they differ so widely from their near relative the sheep in this, that while the sheep bears all kinds of injury, even death itself, in meek silence, the goat is a most sturdy protestant, petulant and vociferous.

'But the Bakweli sheep,—what beautiful creatures they are! Long-limbed, with long graceful necks and

small pretty heads, with a placid expression of countenance,—the eye large and soft. Their colours are very varied,—white, brown, black, and every conceivable pleasing combination of these. Sometimes there is a black or brown ground with white flaky spots, or white ground with black or brown spots.

'They are, as you are no doubt aware of, not woolly, but short-haired, like cows at home. I have not yet seen a ram in any of the villages; but if at all like those seen elsewhere, they must be fine-looking animals. The ram only has the privilege of wearing horns, and he is possessed of a shaggy mane, which gives an air of grandeur to his appearance. The scarcity of rams amongst the Bakwelis is owing to a belief that a he-lamb is a sovereign remedy in many cases of sickness. I understand that some superstitious rites are connected with the killing of the young ram on such occasions, but have not yet learned of what nature they are. These sheep, although so different in appearance from our own, are possessed of the true sheep nature; their voices and ways are the same as pet sheep at home, and the lambs are quite as full of frolic. There being no general lambing-time here, however, the poor bit lambie having seldom any companion of its own age to keep it company, is obliged to amuse itself; but this it does with great energy, capering about on its long legs, and jumping up in the air, in all the gleefulness of lamb nature.

'Bosumbo, like other Bakweli towns, so called, consists of a central hamlet composed of four or five

houses, where the head-man resides, with numerous outlying hamlets of two or three houses dotted about at various distances, some nearly a mile from the head-man's place; it is difficult, therefore, to make even a rough guess at the number of the inhabitants. But supposing that the number of hamlets which we saw was merely a portion of the whole, the mountain-side must be much more populous than has been hitherto supposed, and affords a good field for mission work, but necessitating a good deal of travelling.

'They are a docile people, and not lacking intelligence. A prudent missionary would be looked up to, and great deference would be paid to his teaching.

'We awoke in the grey of the morning, roused the sleepy Kroomen, and set about preparing a short meal before starting on our journey. Both fires were soon blazing, and sending out an agreeable warmth, for at this season the mornings are a little chilly. It was market morning at Victoria, to which two of the women of the house were going. Our host prepared breakfast for them, and I was surprised at the speed with which this was done. A few plantains, gathered from the neighbouring plantation, were skinned, sliced, put into a native pot with some palm-oil, placed over the fire, and in a few minutes dished out piping hot to the market-goers. The Bakweli women take down great loads of plantains and palm-nuts to Victoria, which they exchange for dried shrimps, fish, and tobacco. Having partaken of a cup of hot tea, we called in the head-man, and gave him a dash proportioned to the

kindness with which he had received us. Our host we engaged as guide to Boana, the town which we meant to visit next, and which is situated a little higher up the mountain. We felt much refreshed with our night's repose, and were ready for a long day's work.

'The road to Boana is not very good in wet weather. It is hemmed in for most part with tall reedy grass and bush, so there was a good deal of slippery work. On nearing the head-man's place, I recognised the man who was our host on the occasion of our last visit, at work in his plantation; and as we had parted on pleasant terms, he was glad to see us back. He left his work at once and followed us, ready to receive us again into his house. We paid our respects to the head-man, who is old and infirm, unable to come abroad. He receives visitors in a recumbent posture, leaning on his elbow, with his head protruding from the door of his house. He was glad to see us, and gave us a hearty shake of the hand. We then retired to our former quarters and had breakfast, after which, the people having gathered in considerable numbers, Mr. Q. W. Thomson had a little talk with them. We now parted with our Bosumbo host, paying him for the use of his house and for coming with us, giving him such a dash as sent him away well pleased. While at breakfast, our host brought a little child to see me, with whom I had made friends on my previous visit, and to whom I had given a small piece of cloth and a lump of sugar. I now gave the little body a piece of sugar and a snuff-box. These little gifts being dis-

played outside, we were speedily gratified by an infant show, all the babies in the neighbourhood being brought to the door,—their mothers, no doubt, hoping that their little ones also would be treated in like manner. But I declined extending my baby acquaintanceship.

'We engaged our host to guide us to Mpanja, the next town higher up the mountain,—the highest, indeed, in this direction, and through which we passed on our ascent in December last. Having recently visited Boana, and given the old man a considerable dash, we did not feel called upon to give much now.

'We gave him, however, something by way of acknowledgment, with which he seemed pleased, and bade him good-bye. Besides our guide, we were accompanied by the head-man's son,—a thoughtful-looking man, with whom Mr. Pinnock and I had some interesting talk on our recent visit. He is tall and well made, and about forty years of age. Another decent-looking man came with us also, so that there was little danger of our going astray. It was still early in the day. We reached Mpanja before noon. The head-man's hamlet is but a small place, consisting of three houses; his own house is the neatest and largest I have seen here about. I guessed its size by pacing,—about twenty-two by forty-five feet. It was furnished in a similar way to the one we had occupied in Bosumbo. Here, as elsewhere, there are little hamlets scattered about at various distances. This is the place where Burton's expedition experienced so much difficulty, the then

head-man demanding goods to the value of £500 for liberty to pass beyond. We experienced no difficulty in our ascent, the head-man being well pleased with a dash the value of a few shillings. On the present occasion we were received with a good deal of shyness. Had Mr. Pinnock been with us it would have been different, as he is known and respected by the Bakwelis living near Victoria. At first we were told the head-man was away hunting, and we were allowed to stand in the open street, or space between the houses. We soon ascertained that he was among the few people who had gathered to look at the white men, but he declined to have aught to say to us, telling Kufela that he did not know for what purpose we had come. He inquired if we wished to go up the mountain, and was informed that we did not purpose doing so. After some time spent in vain attempts to draw him into further conversation, he was joined by an elderly man from a neighbouring hamlet, and they, with a few other men, went into one of the houses. Mr. Q. W. Thomson took advantage of this to go and speak to them, but after a short time they rose and left the house, leaving him sitting alone, and rather nonplussed. While he had been thus employed, I was walking up and down outside, and observed that on leaving Mr. Q. W. Thomson they met at the end of the houses, and were for some time engaged in quiet deliberation. I was at a loss to comprehend the state of matters, and had come to the determination of leaving such an inhospitable set, and proceeding on our journey, when the

meeting at the gable of the house broke up, the head-man and his friend coming to me and giving me a hearty shake of the hand, at the same time pointing to the large house with a kindly expression. Of course I very readily accepted this invitation, and was joined by Mr. Thomson, who had been welcomed in the same fashion. All was now sunshine, and we were glad we had not acted precipitately, and that matters had taken this friendly turn. It is of importance to be on friendly terms with the Mpanja people, as we may have to employ them as guides to the upper part of the mountain. We rested here for a short time, had some talk with the people, and gave dashes to the head-man and his people.

'We then proceeded on our journey to the next town —Bonjongo—under the guidance of our Boana friends. Bonjongo is situated to the westward of Mpanja, and at a lower level. The road was in general easy to travel, and we were not long in reaching this stage of our progress. We were pleased to find it a much more populous place than those we had passed. We were unfortunate in not finding the head-man at home, so we passed on to the hamlet of the man next in rank; he was sick, but we were most kindly welcomed by his son. Mr. Q. W. Thomson spoke to the people, and visited the sick man, offering to give him medicine should any of his people come to Victoria. The son called and got it a day or two after. We were quite delighted with the pretty situation of this place. The hamlet lies along a plateau of considerable length, well

cleared in front, and forest-covered hills behind. Here we parted with our guide and the two others, and sent all of them away well pleased with their little dashes. It was evident the two friends who had come with us of their own accord had not expected anything, and were agreeably surprised when Mr. Thomson placed the trifling articles in their hands. We made no long stay at Bonjongo. Having engaged the sick man's son as guide, we proceeded on our way to Makunda, a town still further to the westward, and at a lower level than Bonjongo. The road was now good, and we got along rapidly. It descended by a series of stages, the declivities not being seriously steep. We reached Makunda some hours before dark, and could have managed to make Victoria, but we had done a good day's walking, and there being no urgency, we resolved to spend the night here. Before reaching the head-man's place, we passed close by several of the outlying hamlets, very prettily situated, and larger than usual. Our first sight of Makunda was a pleasant surprise. After coming out of the confined path, we found ourselves on a pretty level piece of open ground, and, about a quarter of a mile across an open green valley, sat the little town, on a level plateau backed by steep forest-clad heights; and what added much to the interest of the scene, a herd of fine cattle grazing in the little valley, the only cattle we had seen on the mountain. The whole of this open space was covered with a sward of short grass, which contrasted agreeably with the prevailing rank vegetation.

'Our entry into the town was accompanied by many demonstrations of wonder and merriment. We were received very warmly, and were taken at first to the king's house; but while we were having our luggage disposed of, the son of his majesty interposed and led us to his own, for which piece of hospitality we were afterwards led to give him small credit. This house was similar to the one we had occupied at Bosumbo, and, having got the use of one of the two bedrooms in order to change my clothes, I had an opportunity of examining it, which was as already described. After getting on dry clothes, and giving orders about dinner, we went out to have a look at the town, followed, of course, by the greater portion of the inhabitants. One individual, a young man, was an albino, not very pleasing to look at, having a raw, scalded appearance, but he seemed in vigorous health, and not deficient in powers of sight. We were desirous of ascertaining whether a view of the sea could be obtained from the place, and were led to a point a little lower than the town, where, through an opening in the trees, we got a peep of the ocean, with Ambas Island, and could distinguish the ridges of some of the prominent points of the land near Victoria. The town consists of two parallel streets about forty feet wide, with a row of houses on either side,—the houses not quite attached to each other, but having a wastage between. The street in which the king's house is, has five or six houses on each side, and may be said to be complete, as it extends to the foot of the steep hill behind, to

near the extremity of the plateau. The other street had about half that number of houses. At the end of the principal street there is a sort of semicircular space, skirted by some large trees, whose branches are clothed with the rich growth of mosses, ferns, and orchids. In the centre of this space stands a tall slender tree of no great age, at the root of which were disposed a few odd things, stones, etc., and a few recently-planted amaryllides, which seem to mark the spot as having some superstitious association. Such sacred places, so common in Calabar and in the towns which we visited beyond Uwet, I had concluded had no existence among the Bakwelis, until we came to Bonjongo, where I was surprised to find a very complete one. At the end of the hamlet where we hutted, I observed a neat little fence constructed in a cleared space in front of a young tree,—the enclosed or railed-in space would be about four feet,—where I saw a small wooden idol, with a great variety of other quaint things, but I did not approach too near for fear of offending, or showing that it was worth notice. On our return to the house, we were aware of something unusual impending, and shortly afterwards the king made his appearance, preceded by an attendant bearing a stool and a red cloth. The stool was placed in the middle of the floor, and the cloth spread over it, on which his majesty took his seat. He is an old man, apparently about threescore years and ten, with a very pleasing expression of face, but devoid of decided character. He was dressed in a coarse blue overcoat,

with a striped cloth reaching to his knees, and on his head he wore a nightcap and common chimney-pot beaver, a good deal dented in the sides. Whatever might be our opinion, it was evident that he felt himself right royally arrayed, as befitted the great occasion. Silence having been obtained, Mr. Q. W. Thomson proceeded to address him on the objects of our visit; but although several of those present could understand what was said,—Mr. Thomson using the Dualla, which is the language spoken at Cameroons,—the old man did not know what was said, and it was not till Kufela spoke in the Bakweli that gleams of intelligence were observable on his face, accompanied by nods and grunts of assent. It was only now that we came to know that he was accorded the title of king,—Mr. Q. W. Thomson being corrected by some Bimbian traders who were present, when addressing him simply as headman; and certainly he is quite as much entitled to the dignity as many other African kings. Having expressed his concurrence in all that was said by Mr. Thomson during the course of delivery, or interpretation rather, the royal speech in reply was very brief indeed, and when finished he rose and left us, followed by his throne and its bearer. In our perambulations about the town we encountered his majesty, who shook hands, and looked as kindly a recognition as possible, although no longer encumbered by his royal garments, he having resumed the ordinary simple attire of the fathom loin-cloth. The people were, as usual where white men are scarce, much interested in all our move-

ments, following us when walking outside, and crowding around the door when we went into the house, watching us especially when eating, making remarks amongst themselves on our outlandish habits. But the most exciting moments were when any of our boxes happened to be opened. Then every eye was eagerly employed to get a glimpse of the contents, which doubtless were of unimaginable value. This was a treat, however, which we took special care they should enjoy as seldom as possible. When evening came, and our candle was lighted, we had a crowded assembly, and a general conversation,—parts of which only I could catch up. The king's son took a very prominent part on the occasion, and after some time made a very humble request for snuff. Mr. Q. W. Thomson had a small box full, which he had prepared before starting on our journey, knowing the general love for that article amongst the Bakwelis, but it had not until now been inquired for. We handed him the box, making sure to explain that it was to be returned, after passing it round that others might have a pinch. All present partook most heartily of this special luxury, the women asserting their rights to an equality with the men,—a claim which, indeed, did not appear to be questioned. During a part of the time occupied by Mr. Q. W. Thomson in intercourse with the people at one end of the house, I was resting myself by reclining on the two-tree bench along the back wall, observing, unobserved, a group in the recess at the opposite end. Two young mothers sat by the fire, engaged in conversation to

them of greater moment than the talk of the white man. The one nearer me had an infant asleep on her knees, the other had a child of about two years of age amusing itself in the space between her and the gable beyond. I was amused at the movements and prattle of this little body, so like that of children at home. It was busily occupied in gathering bits of things about the fire, and sticking them up in the chinks and cross timbers of the wall, according to some arrangement of its own devising, lifting and replacing such as were frequently falling down, keeping up a continual prattle the while, no doubt concerning the great things it was doing, and which engrossed all its energies both of mind and body. It seemed in a little world all its own, and cared not as to what was doing elsewhere. I was pleased in looking at this little group, it was so picturesque,—the flickering flames of the faggots producing fine Rembrandtish effects of light and shadow, ever varying in intensity as the fire blazed up and dulled down again. While the little toddler was absorbed in its work, its mother rose and went out unnoticed by it; but when it discovered her absence, it was no longer at ease; all its confidence and unconcern were gone. It began to cry most earnestly for its mother, and as there was no response, it left its pleasant corner to go in search of her; but on reaching the outer limits of the recess it happened to catch a glimpse of the white ogre lying in the gloom, and, fearing to venture further, came to a stand, calling more earnestly for its mammy, to whom, when she at

last made her appearance, it administered a most reproachful and lengthy rebuke, no doubt expatiating on the danger to which it had been exposed.

'After breakfast on the following morning, we invited the king to receive his dash and say good-bye. As our eatables were being packed away, I handed him some specimens of white man's food, consisting of a piece of loaf, a biscuit, and a piece of sugar; each of them, after being narrowly scanned, was handed to his personal attendant, and probably formed an interesting part in the collection of the royal museum. Mr. Q. W. Thomson having collected the articles constituting the formal present, consisting of a stout striped shirt, a few small snuff-boxes, and some tobacco, set them before his majesty, who laid them on his knees. At this juncture the king's son interposed, stooping down and rudely turning over the articles, talking vehemently all the while; others joined in equally loud talk, so that there appeared symptoms of considerable excitement amongst them. The king, who appears to be a man of few words, sat quietly for some time, saying nothing, but suddenly he threw the things on the floor, and, starting to his feet, rushed out of the house; some of those present, however, gathered them up, and followed him. I was under the impression at the time that the prince had succeeded in convincing the old man that our dash was so contemptible as not to be worth having, and insulting to his kingly dignity. I was glad to learn that this was not the case, but that the prince in whose house we had been lodged had laid

claim on that account to a share of what we had given.

'This grievance was, however, speedily rectified, by giving a special dash or payment for the accommodation we had received from him, and also for the water which had been supplied to us. All cause for ill feeling having been allayed, we started on our homeward course, taking Botta, or Fishtown, on our way. Our road now was all down hill, or it might be said down stairs, for it was a succession of levels and descents.

'The path was exceedingly good, having a space of from fifteen to twenty feet cleared on each side. We passed a number of small hamlets, and came upon some very beautiful open spaces, surrounded by grand forest scenery; many of the trees, whose whole bulk we could survey from root to topmost bough, were of enormous size, both in height and girth. The cotton tree, so called, is a striking picture in the African landscape,—the noblest in appearance, although the most worthless in a utilitarian point of view, of all the forest giants, its white-grey trunk and massive top towering majestically above the rest, and breaking the general uniformity. You are aware that the cotton tree sends out a number of buttresses all round its base. These are, in the larger specimens, often nine or ten feet broad, gradually tapering towards the trunk to about a third of its height, and are about seven or eight inches in thickness, including the bark. The roots are continuations of the buttresses, and look like great ribbons, winding about and spreading to a great distance. Where the soil is thin and

rocky, they stand up two or three feet above the surface, producing curious effects.

'From the top of the buttresses the boll rises,—a fine rounded column, often as straight and as perfect to the distant observer, and possessing the same delicate taper, so expressive of strength, as the columns of classic structure. No branches mar its delicate outline, until the great lower limbs are reached, and the trunk may be said to cease, the whole top being a mass of gnarly, tortuous limbs, spreading all round, the whole forming a dome-like mass of green, with the silvery grey of the bark shining through it, often assuming the appearance of an immense oak. Of course there are many variations according to peculiar circumstances. The only use to which the people here apply it is by burning to obtain a little alkali for soapmaking.

'Another peculiarity of this tree is, that as it increases in age, and the buttresses extend outward, the lower part of the trunk becomes quite attenuated, so that when cut down there is no appearance of trunk at all, but a thin web connecting the buttresses. We passed a grand specimen on our way this morning, one of the largest I had seen, the buttresses of which had quite absorbed the lower portion of the trunk, so that the whole superstructure was borne on flying buttresses, leaving a large opening in the centre.

'This journey, although not long, has been of considerable interest to us, as bearing on the future. We visited all the towns which we had been to before, and two others of greater importance than any of these, and

ascertained that the population was much greater than we had supposed.

'We had, on the whole, been kindly received, and had thus established friendly relations with them all.

'We have also ascertained that in all likelihood a much easier road can be got for ascending the mountain, than that by which we went in December last.

'While the new road may be longer, the ascent will be more gradual, but of course we have still to learn whether it is less rough. I am hopeful that by it we may avoid the rough causeway laid down by the volcanoes of bygone times.'

The last sentence in this extract has reference to the dread many people have of the lava bed, and the notion that it would be impossible either to improve it into a good road, or avoid it for some easier mode of ascent.

One result of this ascent was the settlement of Mr. Quintin Thomson in Bonjongo; another was that George Thomson made Mpanja his headquarters on the mountain.

CHAPTER X.

RESIDENCE IN MPANJA.

ALTHOUGH Mpanja was not intended as the ultimate site of the sanatorium, yet it seemed a resting-place that might be useful for all intending to go higher up the mountain, and for some of the more debilitated invalids, absolutely necessary. He was very much pleased with the people, and had the most perfect trust in their honesty. He says that he went to sleep troubled by nothing but the cold. In connection with this, he tells an incident of his Krooboy Tom, which throws a kindly light on both master and servant:—

'I cannot refrain from mentioning a little incident regarding my Krooboy Tom, which pleased me much. Tom is possessed of a little rug or blanket, which I gave him to keep him warm on the mountain during the nights, which are very cold even at Bonjongo. Somehow he had discovered that I had omitted to bring my coverlet, and that Mr. Smith had nothing of the kind to give me. When it was somewhat late, I happened to take a look round, and found Mr. Smith's boy and Tom curled down on their mat on the floor,—poor Tom

without any covering, and his rug spread neatly on the couch where I was to sleep. I felt touched by this simple act of kindness and consideration done so unostentatiously, and was glad that I could call Mr. Smith's attention to it; for Kroomen are not remarkable for consideration, and get credit for a good share of selfishness. I had been a little concerned as to how the chill of the early morning was to be met, but, having fortunately brought an extra woollen shirt with me, I put it on, and wrapped Tom's blanket about him while he lay fast asleep.'

One of the difficulties which always press upon one in negotiating bargains with Africans, Mr. Thomson felt more directly in Mpanja than he did in Victoria. They carry on all trade by means of barter, but certain goods serve very much as currency. In regard to these, the natives will take at times the most unreasonable prejudices for one kind of a special class of goods, and as unreasonable a prejudice against any other. Beads of a special shape and colour were at Mpanja and Bonjongo the only recognised beads of trade. As he had got others which were much better, he strove to get them equally received in return for goods. For this he combined the two kinds of beads in patterns for necklaces, and presented them to the chief ladies of the village. Even more commonly used as a medium of exchange is the tobacco leaf;—and very particular are the Bakweli market-women as to leaves. Scarcely would a grocer in a coining district scrutinize a suspicious sixpence more than they do a tobacco leaf.

Often great inconvenience is caused by this to the unfortunate whites who happen to be resident among them, as the reasons which lead to their rejection of a leaf are inscrutable. Sometimes, when a market-woman is offered a tobacco leaf, she will first look at it carefully all over, on both sides, and so slowly that one begins to think she has discovered some mysterious inscription on it, and that she is deciphering it with difficulty. Next she smells it, then holds it up to the light, and tests its toughness; then, without pronouncing an opinion, she passes it on to her neighbours, who each subject it to the same weary process of scrutiny. The result of the whole may be that it is handed back into the hands of the person that offered it, with the assertion in broken English that it is 'no good.'

Having secured from the village authorities at Mpanja, ground on which to build a house, Mr. Thomson desired to find out the source of the water supply, but about that the inhabitants were rather reticent, merely vaguely indicating the direction whence it was brought. Not improbably there was some dread of witchcraft being exercised on their water. On the 10th of February 1873, he determined to explore for himself; and, after sleeping in caverns so low in the roof that it was matter of congratulation that their noses were not skinned during their sleep, he was able to chronicle the discovery of a new spring, but was disappointed at finding it but very small; yet it was refreshing, for it was cool as one on 'the Cobbler.' When they got out from the wooded dell in which

the spring was, into the open, they found the grass had all been burnt up. The mountain had been noticed several times to be on fire; now they found long stretches of the ground black with burnt herbage, yet flowers were seen springing in the midst. In his accounts, Mr. Thomson mentions several of his old friends among wild-flowers or their congeners. One thing he notices with peculiar pleasure, that among the varieties of heath to be seen, there was one not unlike our own heather. In the descent, the way taken was slightly different from that by which the ascent had been made, and so the road had to be cut through the tangled bush by the Kroomen with their cutlasses. 'At one place,' says Mr. Thomson, 'I found myself walking along what seemed a fine smooth trodden pathway, but on putting down my alpenstock I failed to find a bottom, and on close examination I discovered that the path consisted of the trunk of a tree. After proceeding a short way, my feet slipped, and away went I, shoulder first, into the depths of the tangled bush. I fell softly, however, and was fished up none the worse for my plunge.' Having thus satisfied himself that there would be water within easy distance of the region which he had destined as the site of the house, he determined to stay, for some time at any rate, at Mpanja. We subjoin a description of this village, which Mr. Thomson furnished in a letter to James Irvine, Esq., Birkenhead:—

'Mpanja is the highest town in this part of the mountain, 2700 feet above the level of the sea, I understand. It is an easy day's journey from Victoria, and

a good starting-point for the higher region. Here we have abundance of provisions, while beyond there is as yet nothing of the kind, nor is likely to be for a long time to come. Mpanja, therefore, must be the chief source of supplies until we ascertain what sort of crops can be raised higher up. But even if I should fail to get a footing further up the mountain, I am satisfied that Mpanja is a most salubrious place. I feel the benefit of the change myself; and others that have been here remark the difference from the climate of Victoria, which is itself one of the healthiest places on the coast. I think it is not going beyond the truth, when I say that I have seldom enjoyed better health than I do at present. Another thing that weighed with me, was the necessity of gaining the confidence and goodwill of the people here. Not being able to understand my reasons for wishing to build a house on the mountain, they were, as may be supposed, suspicious of what my real intentions might be. Taking all these things into consideration, I have resolved on gaining a firm footing here before proceeding further.'

When he had determined to settle at Mpanja, it was necessary to get a house built for himself. As labour is done, as already said, by Kroomen, a gang of them had to be sent up the mountain. They were soon laid aside with ulcers on their legs, due most likely to carelessness and want of cleanliness on the part of the men themselves. In such matters as these, negroes have to be looked after much as children. It may be that their eagerness for a cure was not increased by

the fact that they were let off work for a week at a time in consequence of these same ulcers. Meantime, his relation to the people continued all that could be desired, and he declares himself more and more pleased with them. After native fashion, the head-man had 'dashed' him a hog. Mr. Thomson took the opportunity to invite all the head people of the village to a feast, at which also Buchholtze, a German naturalist, was present. After explaining the meaning of what he was about to do, Mr. Thomson asked a blessing on the food, but does not say how far they understood his explanations. After they had finished feasting, the whole inhabitants betook themselves to games. Among these, Mr. Thomson's Scottish instincts would fain have introduced 'puttin' the stane,' 'heavin' the caber,' etc.; but he was unsuccessful.

All, however, was not pleasant at Mpanja. A leopard marched off with two young goats which had been brought at some expense from Madeira. Unluckily for itself, the leopard extended its marauding beyond the property of the white man, and took a goat belonging to one of the natives, and thereupon was quickly tracked and shot by the owner of its prey. It is a noticeable trait in Mr. Thomson's character, that when he tells this, his main cause of joy at the death of the leopard is, that as there are so many little children always crawling about the village, the beast, emboldened by hunger, might have run off with some of them. But his difficulties were not merely with the hunger of wild beasts, but also with the greed of human

inhabitants of the region. The reader has seen already the insolent demand of the Bimbians, that Victoria should be excluded from trade because it was a 'God-town.' Now a new cause of quarrel emerged. By a sort of tacit custom, all inland towns are regarded as 'bush' to some town on the coast, and the inhabitants of these coast towns get, as we have seen, a double profit on the trade of these inland towns. Mr. Thomson's dealings with the Mpanja people had been too generous for the coast traders to get their usual profit. A solemn deputation waited on him, and presented a formidable list of the losses they had sustained through his trading with the Mpanja people. That, however, was at length arranged, though in a way greatly more suited to the inclinations of the petitioners than to Mr. Thomson's monetary interests.

Although in one sense resident in Mpanja, he had frequently necessity to remain for a considerable time at Victoria; but he saw after the spiritual interests of Mpanja even while absent from it. He employed Kufela (Captain Burton's 'poor fellow'), now named Richard Cooper, as teacher and catechist there. Cooper was an amiable, pious young man, with whom Mr. Thomson had to the end the highest reason to be satisfied. This, unfortunately, is more than can be said for the most of his favourites. Yet it may be that we are apt to measure converts from heathenism by too high a standard. Even Christianity, though honestly received, cannot give the new convert the instincts of a civilisation centuries old. We have only to read at-

tentively the Epistles of Paul, to see how prone the early Christians were to fall into the grossest vices of the heathenism they had abjured. Even the early fathers, who never ought to be named without reverence, show a laxity of morals in regard to truth, that ought to make us more charitable with regard to negro converts.

Mr. Thomson's relationship to the people of Mpanja was put to one severe strain. A boar which he had, having taken offence at being driven by a woman from something he was enjoying, turned on her and tore her leg. There was at first some fear that the woman would die, and that, even should she recover, the demands made might be exorbitant. However, the head-man, though it was his own wife who had been the sufferer, was reasonable. Though it was not demanded, Mr. Thomson ordered the offending boar to be killed; so, after another feast, which was accompanied with 'dashes' (gifts) all round, peace was restored. By way of contrast, we may relate the experiences of Mr. Quintin Thomson in consequence of a scrape into which an escapade of his dog brought him. This dog killed a cock belonging to a native of Bonjongo. The owner demanded an exorbitant sum as compensation, calculating all the chickens that might, before time was done, have venerated the deceased as their remote ancestor. Mr. Thomson, though willing to pay even considerably more than a fair price, demurred, until the head-man, who was absent, should return. The owner of the cock seized a sheep and a lamb belonging to the mission; then, when it was intimated to him that he

would be held responsible for anything that might befall them, he brought them back in a surly fashion to the mission-house, but now Mr. Thomson would not receive them. The people then met, and proclaimed that whoever should be guilty of selling anything to Mr. Thomson should be fined five 'big things,'—about £5. This was really an attempt to 'Boycott' him into submission. Luckily he had laid in a stock of provisions some short time before; and as it was the wet season, and he had water runs fitted up in the house, he was not much put about by the embargo laid upon all trade with him. Meantime the people discovered that they had cut themselves off from their supply of tobacco and salt. There was a blood-quarrel between them and the people who held the territory between Bonjongo and Victoria, so they could get no supplies from thence; and when they went up to Mpanja they found that 'Makara Mpanja' (the white man of Mpanja, *i.e.* George Thomson) would have no dealings with them until they made peace with 'Makara Bonjongo.' So, after due protestations, they were compelled ignominiously to 'cave in,' and accept the terms offered. It is interesting to see two single unsupported white men thus bring to terms a whole village of savages, without any use or threat of violence. We do not know what the Anti-Tobacco League would have said to the above transaction; but had the Bonjongo people not been 'slaves to the noxious weed,' they would not have been so easily dealt with.

As we have seen how a blood-quarrel with another

town made the subjugation of the Bonjongo people all the easier, we may refer to another which Mr. Thomson mentions in the same letter in which he narrates the 'tobacco war.' An old blood-quarrel had been patched up with fines, but unluckily some one said of one of the head-men implicated, that 'he had plenty mouth but no shoot.' To roll away the reproach, a henchman of his shot a man and wounded several women belonging to another village,—not that with which peace had just been made. This is no uncommon way of spreading a quarrel among the Bakweli, and among the other West African tribes. Should a man belonging to town *A* kill a man—voluntarily or involuntarily, it matters little—belonging to town *B*, then the inhabitants of *B*, if they can neither take vengeance on the murderer or on any of his fellow-townsmen, kill somebody belonging to town *C*, and so, as they say, 'wash the street.' The quarrel is now passed on to *C*, while intercourse is now restored between *A* and *B*. As *C* may be unable to reach the inhabitants of *A*, they may pass on the quarrel to *D*, and so on. Sometimes acts of great cruelty and treachery are done in consequence of this. A youth, in virtue of a time-honoured treaty with his native town, was staying in a town near Corisco. Unknown to him, a blood-quarrel was passed on, so that his town and that in which he was had a blood-quarrel between them. He was allured to the beach by his host, and there foully murdered. The murderer was perfectly amazed when Dr. Nassau refused to shake hands with him.

Early in the year 1874, Mr. Thomson had the pleasure of receiving at Mpanja Mr. Crow, a young trader, whose sickness he had chronicled earlier. Mr. Crow professed himself so delighted with Mpanja, that he thought there was no need to go any higher. While eager to elevate the people of Mpanja, and, if possible, desirous of presenting them and their village in as favourable a light as possible to his friends at home, Mr. Thomson was at the same time careful that he should not embarrass his neighbour, Mr. Quintin Thomson. His sister and niece had offered some gifts of clothing for the Mpanja school, but he refused them, on account of the effect such gifts might have on the attendance at the Bonjongo school. He speaks thus of the school in a later letter :—

'My school at Mpanja seems getting on well. Richard Cooper, the teacher, so far as I can judge, is well fitted for the work, having a fair knowledge of English and Bakweli. The attendance is various, sometimes half a dozen, and at other times as high as fourteen. I have arranged with Mr. Q. W. Thomson that he should take the oversight of the school, and of Richard's evangelistic work. In this way more good is likely to result, and less likelihood of jarring. As there is great jealousy between the different towns, it would not do for one to have advantages over the other.'

Mr. Thomson introduced to the Bakwelis a product of our civilisation which astonished them. Some of Mr. Quintin Thomson's goods at Bonjongo had been pilfered. Suspicion pointed strongly to the household of

the head-man Tundo. They, however, one and all accused Mr. Thomson's Krooboy of being the criminal. Mr. Quintin Thomson then got his friend from Mpanja to come down and try the case. When he came and took his seat as judge, he at once separated the witnesses from the audience, and introduced them one by one; then tested their evidence by the device of cross-examination. One and all, the witnesses broke down, and contradicted themselves and their neighbours flatly. The presiding judge had difficulty in preventing interference, and had to fine one loquacious dame a fowl for making 'leading' remarks. After prolonged hearing of witnesses, Tundo was compelled to admit the innocence of the Krooboy, and the guilt of his own household. The sentence of the court was that Tundo pay as fine a fat hog, sheep, or goat, one half to go to the court, the other to the Krooboy. Of course the judge made over his share to the people for a feast, Mr. Quintin Thomson added a goat, and we presume the woman's fowl would swell the supply. With some *naïveté*, Mr. Thomson says that the people were all satisfied with the sentence. There need be no wonder that this was the case with the general public, as they partook of the feast; the woman, however, whose fowl had to fall, may have been a dissentient. He mentions that they were greatly taken with the white man's mode of getting at the truth,—first introduced, if we may believe the Apocrypha, by Daniel. Whether it may lead them to abandon trial by ordeal may be doubted. It may, however, pave the way to that result.

Although by these and other ways Mr. Thomson was

gaining the confidence of the Bakweli, yet they were still loth to tell him the source of their water supply. This reticence was no doubt partly due to the fact that they feared that they would lose the money they were wont to gain by selling water to the white man. Mr. Thomson determined to make another attempt to find out the source of the water supply, the more so that the spring he had discovered before was liable to become dry, as he had learned during an ascent which he made in company with the American brethren, Messrs. Gillespie, Kops, and Murphy. So, when at Bonjongo during the rainy season, Mr. Quintin Thomson and he agreed to start on an expedition to find it out. After a long, weary walk, in which the inhabitants of the villages near Bonjongo, who might hope to reap a harvest from the white man's need of water, declared the brook an immense distance off, at last, at a more distant village, they got a man to guide them. As it was rainy season, the path, being but little resorted to, had been lost in herbage, and the guides had to hew a way for the explorers. Mr. Thomson tells his own story thus :—

'Our way was still getting rougher, being mostly over ridges of broken lava, with deep hollows between. We were longing much to come to the object of our search, and after every new ascent we hoped to find it in the hollow beyond. At length we came upon a deep ravine at the bottom of which water was running; and as our foremost guide had come to a stand, we inquired if this was the Madiba or water. We were quite prepared

to find some insignificant runnel. He shrugged his shoulders, however, which meant an answer in the negative, and pushed on. After passing some other ridges, and when struggling up a steep ascent, we were glad to hear the shout of one of our guides who had got down over the other side; then we heard the rush of water, and, following down the path, we caught the glimpse of white foaming waters flashing through the trees. Cautiously approaching the edge of the ravine, a spirit-stirring scene was revealed to view. High up, the torrent was dashing over and among large masses of broken rocks, and at our feet a stream of white foaming water rushed down an almost perpendicular cliff into a deep pool, when it foamed and boiled, and then went dashing down out of sight amongst another series of broken rocks. Although the water was somewhat turbid from the heavy rains, we drank deeply of the ample flood. We were wet enough outside already, and were not disposed to have a bath; but, had the weather been dry, no doubt we would have gladly availed ourselves of such an opportunity for indulging in that luxury. It must be a delightful place in the dry season; and we were informed that the volume of water was the same as we saw it all the year round.

'Although this may not be literally the case, still I have no doubt there is always a full flow of water. Should circumstances permit, we mean to pay it another visit a few months hence, and endeavour to trace the stream to its source; and if it is found much higher up the mountain, that may induce us to alter our future

proceedings very materially, as it is of so much consequence to have an abundant supply of water. Our guides said that the stream comes from Mount Etindeh, or the lesser Cameroons, a bold, rugged peak between five and six thousand feet, standing in connection with the greater mountain in a very similar manner to that which Dumgoin does to the Campsie Fells, but on a vaster scale. It is a prominent object from the sea, and in clear weather is seen at a great distance. It is very steep on the seaward side, shooting up to all appearance little off the perpendicular for several thousand feet, seamed with deep, dark gorges, and terminating in a sharp cone, and is covered with trees to its very top. On the landward side the ascent is much more gradual, and can be scaled, Mr. Pinnock and Mr. Mann having together accomplished the feat. On our way home we managed to obtain a good view of the upper part, and the ridge connecting it with the lower end of the larger mountain. From thence the ascent of Cameroons would be very easy, as the slope is quite gradual, and the country free of forest, to all appearance similar to the grass-covered portion of the mountain which we already know.'

After a somewhat tiresome walk they reached Bonjongo, and next morning felt none the worse for the damp and fatigue,—a thing more to be chronicled, as these two are so apt to bring on the country fever. The reference to Dumgoin at the end of the above extract proves how potent the scenes of his childhood were in his feelings to the last.

While engaged in serious work, and often disheartened by the failure of his hopes, he often refreshes himself, to use his own words, with a 'crack' about flowers. Orchids were his especial delights,—their wonderful variety of form and colour, and their strange mocking resemblance to creatures higher in the scale of life, all taking his imagination. Though he revels in his enthusiastic descriptions of their beauties of form and hue, yet we fear our readers, unless professed orchid fanciers, would be apt to tire over them. The adventures of his live stock are duly chronicled, with all his usual humour,—the gambols especially of that black rascal Jock, the donkey, who solemnized the Sabbath by an attack on his master's best sheep, which ended in the death of the sheep. Very characteristically, Jock's master is anxious to absolve him from the charge of malice in knocking down sheep and goats, and then crushing them to death as he did by coming down upon them all his weight with his knees. By way of punishment, his victim was hung about his neck for some time, but his master soon took pity on him. The object of Jock's being at Mpanja was that he might be used as a beast of draught or burden; but as things were not advanced enough for any use being made of his strength, he himself found employment for it in mischief.

The battle of his ram and billy he also narrates with great glee. 'The ram,' he says, 'is a big, bold, stately fellow, dark ruddy brown, with jet-black legs, a shaggy mane of coarse hair, not unlike that of a stag, but longer

in proportion, and much darker than the colour of his body; and the expression of his eye is anything but sheepish,—it is bold, steady, and far-ranging. The goat is a curious specimen of a brute. His colour is light brown, yellowish, and of a pepper-and-salt pattern. The sides are deep and massive, covered with short hair, while that on the ridge of the back and buttocks is long and coarse; the shoulders and neck are furnished with a mass of long waving hair, constituting a mane of most formidable appearance; the head is just like that of a Skye terrier, the hair arching over the eyes, leaving about two inches of nose projecting; his beard is long and thick, and falls in with the general mass of the mane in front; his legs are short and stout, so that as a whole he is a burly-looking brute; the horns, too, are queer-looking things, something like a couple of bent blunt Scotch fir cones, lying close back on the head. As to character, he is, like African goats in general, as self-possessed and confident as any Irishman, never conscious of being out of place, except when the ram condescends to let drive at him.

'When this happens, it is very amusing to observe the two,—the cool, unimpassioned, Sphinx-like repose of the ram, as if he had done nothing; and the demonstrations of insulted dignity on the part of the billy, going away as if he had made up his mind to have no more friendly intercourse, suddenly returning with outstretched lips and gaping mouth to demand satisfaction, glaring through his shaggy brows at his enemy, who scarcely deigns to look at him. This is repeated several times,

till Billy, finding it of no avail, goes off in the huff.'

It would obviously take a great deal to depress unreasonably one who could draw such amusement from the quarrels and gambols of sheep and goats.

CHAPTER XI.

GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Thomson went out to Africa with no intention of trading, he by and by found himself compelled to do so. In the letter to Mr. Irvine from which we have quoted above, he lays down his reasons for this step. The communication with Fernando Po was very defective, though better than it had been. Two cutters occasionally made the passage, sometimes taking only eight hours, at others forty-eight. This was the only means of getting to or from the mail steamer, and thus the only means by which invalids could be brought to the sanatorium. Although there were little cabins in these boats to shelter the travellers from the worst violence of weather, yet there was discomfort enough to make it anything but advisable to expose invalids to it. It was needful, then, that if possible the mail steamer should be induced to call; but it would call only if there were cargo to make it worth while,—and cargo could only be supplied by trade. Further, Victoria seemed to him the one spot of light on the dark continent, but Victoria was miserably poor. If the inhabitants, he thought, could be got to plant, then,

if they found a ready market for their produce, their circumstances would improve, and their influence for good would be greatly increased. Besides planting, grazing was a thing that they might advantageously engage in. But for this, too, it was needful that the steamer call at Victoria. Mr. Thomson was thus led to begin trading: he expressly stipulates that the goods sent him should all be of good quality. Mr. Irvine had long been in the African trade, and knew what this meant. He had himself to strive to be honest to his convictions, and yet maintain trade in a way that would be at least fairly remunerative. Trade he did not wish for its own sake; but if compelled to carry it on to further his great aim, Mr. Thomson determined it should be honest trade. The misfortune was that his efforts were not appreciated, and his honesty was met with anything but honesty or trustworthiness in return.

As a specimen of his efforts to develope the natural resources of Victoria, he presented each of the school children with two cocoa-nuts, and, having secured a piece of ground, he brought them in procession to it, and showed them how to dig holes and plant them, and informed them that they were to have a certain property each in the plants that sprang from their nuts. They made solemn promises to take care of the plants and see that no accident befell them, and also promised to pay to their benefactor one-half the produce by way of rent. However, they found it too much trouble. Mr. Mann had, years before, urged the planting of cacao,

but the lazy, thriftless ways of the people made them deaf to any advice.

As Mr. Pinnock had felt the united duties of pastor and chief magistrate somewhat onerous, he was anxious to get Mr. Thomson to take the latter office. As may be seen by Mr. Thomson's letter to the Board of the Baptist Missionary Society,[1] he was not, by the peculiar constitution of the little republic, eligible for this office. This, however, was not known at the time, so, after some natural demurring to giving up so much of his time from the pressing duties of furthering his great scheme, to presiding over the 'court,' and acting as criminal judge, he agreed to take office. In a letter to one of his nephews, he gives an account of the various classes of the population of Victoria:—

'16*th December* 1873.

'In order that you may have some idea of my position here, I purpose giving a sketch of the social condition of the small community which has been gathered at Victoria. It may be said to be composed of three classes or elements: 1st, The Christian and professed Christian; 2d, The heathen; and 3d, An intermediate class. The first consists of those persons who came over from Fernando Po about fourteen years ago. These had been in connection with the Baptist Mission there, and when liberty of public worship was denied them by the Spanish authorities, they were constrained, at much pecuniary loss, to seek it elsewhere, and were provi-

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

dentially directed hither. The land was purchased from King William of Bimbia by the Baptist Missionary Society, with money paid by the Spanish Government for the property belonging to the Society in Fernando Po. This emigrant class consists of about a dozen families, representing about as many different African tribes.

'These, with other two families belonging to this neighbourhood, constitute the governing class, and their male heads are members of our court. In connection with some of these families there are young persons of both sexes who are looked upon as adopted children, originally slaves, several from Old Calabar. These, having been brought up under Christian influences, and having had a certain amount of school education, are becoming valuable members of society. A number of the older settlers have died since coming here, two of them quite recently, which makes a large blank in so small a community.

'The heathen part of the community consists of natives,—Bakwelis, Isubu or Bimbians, and Fish people from the islands and coast to the west. These have been drawn to Victoria from various reasons. A considerable number are what are termed witch people, who, having been charged with causing the death of some one, and failing to pass the sass-wood ordeal, have fled hither for refuge; while others, doubtless, have come because of the greater security to be enjoyed here than in their own towns. In some respects this class tends to strengthen the community, but in other respects they are becoming a source of trouble and

anxiety. Their number has become considerable, and although in general very docile and respectful, they are apt to be swayed more by their own superstitions and customs than by the laws of the place; and, having family relationships with the natives of the surrounding towns, they get involved in any quarrel which may arise amongst these, and take a part in it without consulting the authorities of Victoria. Several cases have occurred which have involved us in difficulties with the people of the neighbouring towns,—one of them a very serious case, and still unsettled. About a week since, a case occurred which shows the difficulty of our position. A Bakweli man residing here fell sick, and, being convinced that he was bewitched by the people of one of the towns to the north of Victoria, the Victoria Bakwelis mustered on a market morning, without consulting us, and, going along the road, drove back the people of the said town, destroying or taking possession of the produce they were bringing to the market. The fact, also, that few of them understand English, and that few of the influential persons of Victoria are familiar with the native dialects, is a serious difficulty. It is evident that great vigilance and prudence will be requisite in dealing with them, and that a considerable time must elapse ere they can be brought under complete control. The third or intermediate class consists of persons who have at various times and in various ways escaped from the Portuguese islands of St. Thomas and Princes, and after many hardships and vicissitudes have ultimately managed to get here. Ten of these are natives of

Angola, who were taken to St. Thomas as hired labourers, but were subjected to treatment of such a harsh and unjust description as to become unendurable. They are, on the whole, a well-behaved set, and very anxious to rise in the social scale. Two of them are at present candidates for admission to the church; both are exemplary characters, and one is quite a superior man, a credit to any community. Of the other members of this class I cannot speak so favourably. They are called "Portuguese," and seem possessed of some of the objectionable traits of character said to belong to that people. One has been a prisoner in our jail for two years, having been guilty of murder by stabbing a man in open day, and in the presence of a number of persons. Another is at present undergoing a punishment of twenty days' imprisonment for uttering threats or hints as to using a knife in a quarrel; and others have given trouble at various times.'

Among this *omnium gatherum* of odds and ends of various peoples, sometimes men turned up that suited Mr. Thomson's purposes. He recognised that to rise in the scale of civilisation the people of Victoria must have more wants—must, in other words, see the advantages accruing from the appurtenances of civilised life, in order that they might increase their efforts so as to be able to purchase them. For this purpose Mr. Thomson was anxious to introduce a steam sawmill among them,—a machine which would have the additional advantage of utilizing the wood of the enormous forests

that were everywhere around them. But among other difficulties that beset this scheme was the difficulty of getting any one to work it. This difficulty he thought he had overcome when he discovered a man, Goddard, a mulatto from Antigua. He proved to the end a good workman, but died too soon for Mr. Thomson's hopes.

He was not long in possession of the high dignity of President of the Court of Victoria, till he began to feel how great was the encroachment made on his time by its duties, while, in letters complaining of this, he characteristically adds, 'It is the means of preventing serious frays amongst them (the inhabitants), and that is my reward.' One who has not endured it, has no idea of the intense wearisomeness, not to say difficulty, involved in deciding a case between Africans. The plaintiff begins by telling a long, complicated, and would-be rhetorical account of all the wrongs he or his have sustained at the hands of the defendants or his forbears, interlarded with digressive explanations so numerous and copious that the original tale is lost sight of. The defendant, who has up to this time been with difficulty kept from interrupting the flow of his neighbour's eloquence, now takes up his parable, and enumerates unheard-of wrongs inflicted by the plaintiff on the innocent defendant or his relatives. All these digressions must be heard patiently to the very end, as there is risk that your arbitration may be resisted, and so all your trouble may be lost. It will be easily seen how much time would be lost, and what a severe strain would be put even on Mr. Thomson's all but exhaust-

less stock of patience, by filling the office of judge to the Victorians.

In his letters home he gives accounts of many of the cases he had to settle, when there was anything interesting or amusing about them. We subjoin one of these:—

'27*th November* 1874.

'As dispenser of justice here, I settled a rather troublesome and complicated case, which, as it involved some of the peculiar customs of the people, it may interest you to know about. Dekosa, a resident of this place, some time ago married a woman from a distant town. As is the custom in these parts, he was to pay to her guardian a dowry; but as the two men are in some way related, only part payment was asked at the time, the balance to be paid as convenient. The amount paid was two "big things," consisting of one keg of powder, one beaver hat, one mug, two tumblers full of powder. Husband and wife did not get on well together, so Enanga availed herself of the privilege of ill-used and ill-conditioned wives, of knocking head with a man residing a little way from here, named Notungo. This is a singular custom, and puts a great deal of power in the hands of the wife. Any man who declined to receive a woman coming to knock head, would be disgraced. It is difficult to ascertain the exact forms gone through, but, so far as I can gather, the woman goes through some form of words to the man whose protection she claims. After which the man kills a hog, or sheep, or goat, or it may be several

animals, if he is rich, tears in pieces a full piece of cloth, and breaks a mug or some other article. Sometimes the wife does not wish entire separation from her husband, but only for a time. At the end of that time the husband is sent for, or claims his wife, but, poor fellow! has to pay double of all the animals killed and all the goods destroyed, besides any expenses which may have been incurred (such as medical attendance) on the woman's account by her protector.

'If the wife wishes a permanent separation, the husband is asked to fix upon her value, or this is arranged in some way, when the protector pays the amount, deducting, however, for such animals and goods as have been destroyed. The woman then becomes the wife of the man whose head she has knocked, or he may arrange to have her married to one of his relatives. Dekosa did not grieve much for the loss of his wife, and very soon got another; but he was awfully grieved for the loss of the money he had paid, and was continually bemoaning himself, and entreating me to interfere on his behalf, by stopping Notungo when he came to Victoria. And one day he took the job in hand himself, the result of which was a fight, for which he was brought to court and fined. Ultimately it was ascertained that Notungo repudiated Dekosa's claim, and was paying for Enanga to her original guardian, Ebumwe. This made it necessary to have Ebumwe brought to Victoria to tell his version of the palaver. After several delays, all the parties interested were got together yesterday, when it was arranged that Notungo should pay the whole

amount to Ebumwe, and Ebumwe to reimburse Dekosa. Notungo not having paid at the time fixed, we had to send a constable for him. He said that he had not sufficient at hand, and so, in order to have the matter settled, I advanced what was required, viz. two red coats and eight fathoms of cloth. Just at the winding up, however, another curious custom or superstition was brought to light. A friend of Notungo's, who was present, had ascertained that Ebumwe had cut and kept in possession some of Enanga's hair; and it seems that this gave him such mesmeric or other influence over her, that she would leave Notungo and return to him, death being the consequence of non-compliance.

'This charm was therefore demanded from Ebumwe, who agreed to give it up. I should have mentioned that Enanga had a few weeks ago left Notungo, and wished to return to Dekosa, but the authorities, getting information of this, ordered her to take up her residence with some one else, and this morning I handed her back to Notungo. I should also mention that if any influence has been exercised to induce the woman to leave her husband, he can then demand from the person she goes to, or her relatives, all the money he has paid for her.'

At a later point in the same long letter, he tells of another case, which indicates the way the unscrupulous might profit by this custom of marriage by purchase. A Bimbian named Janga appealed to the Court against one Nobili, who had sold him a wife, and then, after

leading her to strip her husband's farm of all its 'kokos' and plantains, enticed her back to him again. Janga wanted back what he had paid, and all that the woman had cost him, which, after due delay (*i.e.* delay needful to let both parties get their breath out), decree was given for the plaintiff.

The Supreme Court of Victoria had not only to attend to civil, but also to criminal causes. A man, Metchi, had entered Mr. Thomson's premises, and, undeterred by his judicial character, carried off an oil measure and a quantity of oil. He was an old offender, and as his whereabouts were known, the constable was sent after him, accompanied by a crowd of volunteers. About midnight everybody was awakened with the shouting with which the captors announced their success. He was locked up in Mr. Thomson's back premises for security, and next day was visited by all the wives in the town, and well scolded by them, as they one and all had suffered from his depredations. During the day, Mrs. Michael, the wife of Mr. Thomson's factotum, having secured him in some way, set him to weed and do odd jobs, on the principle that if any one would not work neither should he eat. The Court meantime had to deliberate as to the sentence on the criminal; the prison accommodation at the disposal of the republic was limited, and not very secure. In no long time Metchi took the question out of the hands of the Supreme Court by running away. One night shortly after the capture, the whole household was roused by the shouts of Mr. Michael. His master found him in

the main hall of the house, gesticulating with a loaded gun in his hands, and his eyes dilated to their fullest size, shouting, 'Metchi go! Metchi go!' It was with difficulty he was persuaded to lay down the gun, which, in the crowded state of the hall, had it gone off in the midst of his excited gyrations, could scarcely have failed to work danger to life or limb. The next day, however, the runaway was caught, and was banished to Fernando Po,—Mr. Struthers, one of the traders, taking on him the duty of deportation.

Like many states of greater age and influence, the Republic of Victoria had difficulties as to the disposal of criminals. Mr. Thomson tells of the miserable condition in which a man, guilty of murder, was found. He had been detained by the authorities of Victoria, in default of any one willing to inflict the last penalty of the law. The murder had not been an aggravated one. Simple ungoverned anger had prompted him to stab a man who was striving to hinder him from assaulting some one against whom he was infuriated. The crime had been committed some years before, so the thrill of horror that always follows murder had passed away, and in the breasts of many a feeling of pity for the prisoner had taken its place. We do not wonder that men like Mr. Thomson, with kindly hearts, were moved to pity on finding a human being in this condition: 'Besides being put in the stocks, he had a chain round his neck, the end of which was fastened to a beam overhead; another round his waist, fastened somewhere behind; and his left wrist fastened

to a heavy piece of wood by a strong iron staple. He was emaciated, his eyes, owing to the thinness of his cheeks, appearing unnaturally bright, and his hair nearly all off his head. It was a touching sight to see that the poor fellow, so wasted and so loaded with fetters, had his Bible lying before him in the stocks in which his feet were secured.' It was natural that the offer which Consul Hopkins made, to take the prisoner off their hands, should be welcomed by Mr. Thomson and the more educated part of the community, but the mass of the people strenuously opposed it. After several meetings of the inhabitants, all that was granted was the removal of the prisoner's chains, and the setting free of his wrist and of one of his legs. Such would, we suspect, in any country be the result of a commutation of capital punishment into imprisonment for life. All the better part of the community would begin by and by to commiserate the criminal, and that might not always be met by the stubborn adherence to justice which the Victorians manifested. In their difficulty about fit punishments they usually resorted to flogging or fines. The president detested the first mode of punishment, but yielded. As for fines, he ingenuously confesses to paying part of a man's fine for him when the criminal declared his inability.

On one occasion, however, Mr. Thomson seems really to have lost repugnance to flogging, by a sense of the way in which it was deserved. The Court endeavoured to put down witchcraft among the people,—a task none the less difficult that many of the inhabitants were

refugees under that charge. A man who professed to be what they called a 'witch doctor,' one who could find out the person who by witchcraft had caused any one illness, but also alternated that employment with casual thefts, was found 'casting cantrips' in a house in Victoria. The man by his accusations had been the cause of many deaths. When he was brought before the Court, he was sentenced to a flogging, and to be paraded about the streets with all his charms jangling about him. Besides deterring him from repeating his offence, this punishment tended to bring him and his arts into contempt.

The authorities strove also to exclude from the territory of Victoria all other heathenish practices as well as witchcraft. In connection with this, we shall quote from Mr. Thomson's journal a passage which must prove interesting to all students of national customs.

'While the Court was engaged in business, the cry was raised, "There Jangu! there Jangu!" Having often heard of Jangu, I was anxious to learn somewhat about it, and vacated the chair, rushing to the door with the senators to have a look. Looking towards the bush end of the street, I observed a man stalking along with a long stick in his hand, and followed at some distance by two gaily-dressed women, moving at a slow, measured step, singing a low, sweet air, accompanied with the tinkling of small hand-bells, concealed in basket-work. I was quite taken with the music, so soft and sweet and fairy-like. The ladies, too, were handsome and well-favoured, or "weel-faured," as we

used to say. As to their dresses I cannot speak particularly, for they had scarcely reached past the door when I very rudely ordered them back to the bush, forbidding them to come into the town in that fashion. A few of the more striking parts of their adorning I recollect distinctly, however. Their skin was powdered over with ground camwood or redwood, producing a delicate peachy bloom, and their faces elaborately ornamented with white lines and dots similar to tattooing. On their heads they wore an ornament seemingly composed of splints of bamboo, formed into a frame spreading outward at the top, and covered with small white feathers. The only garment worn by them was the petticoat or kilt, reaching from the loins to near the knees; but such a skirt was never seen on the streets of London or Paris! For bulk it bore some resemblance to the garments worn by the buy-a-broom girls, that in days of old paid their annual visit to Glasgow. The material of which it was composed was undoubtedly vegetable, and that in its raw state. It had the appearance of narrow strips of plantain leaf—not fig leaves—probably wrought into a long fringe, and wound round the body. This was the least becoming part of the dress. They also wore a great display of jewellery, consisting of circlets of various sizes and colours of beads round the neck, arms, and legs, tastefully arranged. Besides these adornments, I think they carried something in their hands,—one, for certain, held in this way two pretty feathery fern leaves, which heightened the general effect wonderfully.

'In regard to the dresses, I am disposed to think that of a similar construction were those in use amongst the natives of this part of Africa before cloth was introduced amongst them. Since coming here I saw a woman with such a skirt, composed of a mass of cords; it was very dirty-looking, and did not add to her appearance. Here and elsewhere I have seen pretty things of the kind made of the yellowish fibre used in weaving the cloths and bags common at Calabar, neatly laid together and trimmed at the ends. Our Bimbian warriors wear ruffs of this kind round the neck and loins. Our two ladies and their friend were rather crestfallen when obliged to retrace their steps; and I felt sorry to appear so harsh, but we require to set our faces against the introduction of such heathenish practices in our community. One of them, I learned afterwards, is the wife of a Bimbian, and was coming to visit her husband after recovering from a sickness she had.

'Being a Bakweli woman, she wished when sick to go for Jangu, which, so far as I can learn, signifies a particular course of medical treatment. The sick person is sent to reside alone in a small house put up in some retired part of the bush, and remains there for a longer or shorter period, according to the duration of the illness, and regulated also by the ability to pay for medical attendance, for the doctor retains the patient until his fees are paid. In this way many months sometimes elapse ere they are allowed to leave.

'A poor woman, wife of a Bimbian gentleman, was

brought to me some time ago, having been found running about in the forest close by in a state of fright. A little hamlet near where she was located was attacked by the people of a neighbouring town, and, hearing the noise, she got alarmed, broke from her little house, and fled terror-stricken, fortunately in the direction of Victoria, where she was found and recognised. Her illness, poor body, was in the head; we could not get her to speak. This is the Bakweli Jangu; but the proper Jangu is quite a different thing, being more akin to the Calabar Egbo. It is a secret society, composed of full free persons only, both men and women,—indeed, the latter seem to be of more importance than the men, and exercise their influence to good purpose in bringing two contending towns to cease fighting, or calling delinquents to account.

'Mr. Pinnock tells me that when at Abo, a country some sixty miles farther up the river than Cameroons, he has seen a turn-out of several hundreds of women in their Jangu attire and insignia, passing from town to town, the Jangu women of each town turning into the procession as it came along, thus augmenting the numbers as they went. On such occasions the slaves have to keep out of the way. There is a language used by them known only to the initiated. On certain occasions they assemble together, and retire to a remote part of the forest, erect a large building, and continue for months at a time in the celebration of their orgies.

'These Jangu societies prevail amongst all the coast

tribes here, such as Botta, Bimbia, Cameroons, and tribes farther up the river; at Malimba, and other places down the south coast, reaching, it is said, as far as Gaboon, although even that may not be its southern limit. Like freemason lodges, the members of any one society have the privilege of intercourse with any other, the knowledge of the language common to all being guarantee of membership; and it is said that the uttering of a few words has been the means of saving the lives of members in the time of battle.'

This efficacy of 'Jangu' in preserving the lives of members in battle, was a use of it which in especial the authorities of Victoria wished to make needless so far as their territories was concerned. They wished, in short, to make it a sort of Switzerland on a small scale, into which no warlike force should enter. This determination supplied a great deal of business for the 'Court.' Continually in the market were men guilty of presenting guns at those who enraged them. When they were imprisoned for this, the towns to which they belonged were liable to threaten war. It was then declared illegal to bring arms to the Victoria market at all. When war broke out between native states whose towns lay on different sides of the territory of Victoria, they had yet greater difficulty in preserving their neutrality inviolate. In their anxiety to expend powder on each other, the belligerents were apt to transgress the sacred territory. Luckily these wars are not deadly, more lives being usually taken by treachery than in open fight; very often the sole victims are

women who have been caught on their way to or from market. Mr. Thomson tells of a war of this kind which broke out between Botta and Bimbia. The Bimbians, returning home from an expedition to Botta, had ventured on a short cut along the shore of Victoria, the constable was sent out to them, the gallant Bimbians took to their heels, and one old warrior, scrambling over the rocks, fell and broke his calabash of gunpowder. 'This,' he adds, 'was the sole damage that resulted from a day's fighting.' It may be remarked, as showing the various things to which any European resident in Africa has to turn his hand, that these market squabbles frequently called Mr. Thomson to practise as an amateur surgeon. In consequence of this, he often requests his nephew to send him surgical appliances of various kinds. But their belief in witchcraft and their dread of its effects rendered it difficult at times to assist those wounded on these occasions.

CHAPTER XII.

RETURN HOME.

THE duties and responsibilities of the 'presidentship' he found liable to occupy more and more of his time, from the character of the neighbouring native communities,—especially that of Bimbia. Sometimes they would, in one of their numerous wars, seize market women belonging to Victoria, or who had come to market there; then there were prolonged negotiations to get them set free. Again, roused by something, they would begin to clamour against Mr. Thomson trading in Victoria, coming sometimes in numbers threatening to tear the house to pieces. Of course this was in reality sheer boastfulness, for they had a wholesome dread of the consul, yet it was very provoking notwithstanding. Besides, necessity arose now and again, at the death of any great man, to aid the traders and consul in enforcing the treaty obligations into which these native potentates had entered with the British Government to abstain from human sacrifices. All these things made him desirous of getting free from an office which was rendering more and more impossible the great aim of his coming to Africa, so he determined to resign. As,

however, authority had still to be maintained to repress disorder, he retained the position for some time, until his successor could be appointed. This became all the more difficult from the singular constitution of Victoria, which was then unearthed for the first time during Mr. Thomson's residence. It now appeared that his presidency was wholly unconstitutional. He would then have resigned at once, but the necessities of the colony kept him a little longer at the unenviable post.

Meanwhile he was eager in his desire to further the great plan of inducing the Victorians to take to planting. As he had celebrated the New Year of 1874 with planting cocoa-nuts, two for each of the school-*boys*, he followed it up on the New Year of 1875 by planting another series of cocoa-nuts for each of the school-*girls*. In order, if possible, to induce something like gallantry, he gave the charge of each girl's plants into the hands of one of the boys. Whether this solitary inculcation of chivalry, among examples pointing in the opposite direction, would produce much effect, may be doubted. The sowing of the previous year showed several blanks; these Mr. Thomson supplied from some reserve plants which he had kept ostensibly for himself. He was hopeful that the planting of cocoa-nuts and of other useful trees on New Year's Day might become an institution among the Victorians, but his untimely death put an end to this as to other benevolent schemes of his.

Other matters, however, made it well that he had resigned his judgeship. Circumstances required his

presence at home, so he had anew to make arrangements to take once more to sea. Meanwhile, however, he did not cease his efforts in the carrying out his great scheme. One difficulty asserted was that the anchorage at Victoria was bad; this, it may be added, is directly in the teeth of what Captain Burton has said. At Batola, some miles along the coast, there was reported to be a good landing-place at all times, so he went along to see it. In seeking for this, his eye could not fail to note beauty wherever it was to be seen. He thus speaks of the cove at Batola: 'It is quite a fairy nook, such as one might find about Loch Lomond or Loch Katrine; and the water is as placid as a mill-dam, just the faint lisping at the margin, while outside the surf is foaming among the rugged rocks. This little cove is bounded on two sides by broken rocky banks, with a variety of trees springing from them, the roots and rocks so mingled as to render it difficult to say which was which, and the branches stretch far over the water. At the inner end is a gently sloping beach of fine black sand, and beyond trees covered with ferns, orchids, and begonias.' With some difficulty he found a pathway leading up to the village, to the dignitaries of which he was introduced by Mr. Steane the catechist as 'Makara Mpanja,' and at once was treated with kindness and hospitality.

In his letters there are frequent descriptions, not only of scenery, but of such natural phenomena peculiar to the tropics as the tornado. In one of his letters he begins: 'A tornado this morning. It is worth coming

here to witness this sight. It is a thunder-storm, but differing in some respects from such as occur at home. It does not suggest visions of Sinai; it lacks the dignity and grand majestic movement of our own thunder-storms. When seen at a distance low down on the horizon, it is like tortured wreaths of smoke issuing from a great low-browed furnace, that seems as if the mouth of the bottomless pit, and comes as "fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell." First comes the stormy wind roaring through the forest, tearing in its fury leaves and twigs, bending the stately trees, laying hold on the tresses of the palms as if to drag them with it. Man and beast flee for shelter, and crouch with bated breath. Meanwhile the lightnings begin to flash, and the thunder growls nearer and nearer; the gloom deepens, until one feels under the low roof of a dark vault; then comes a blinding flash and a great fierce crash of thunder, and down pour the torrents of rain with a sound like the voice of a great cataract. A few minutes more of darkness, rain, lightning, and thunder, and lo! the turmoil is over. One breathes freely again, the palms sway gracefully again, the bowers of the forest trees heave once more with a gentle motion, and even the rain falls softly. The chariot of the storm has passed on its course, and peace resumes its reign. The power of the storm is of course felt less or more according as one happens to be near the verge or the centre of its track. At sea a tornado is rather exhilarating. There is first of all the prompt but unhurried preparation of taking in extra canvas and getting everything ready; that done,

you wait until the breeze stiffens. Gradually but rapidly it increases in force, until the ship, or cutter, it may be, is flying on before the blast like a racehorse, the waves dashing over the bows in white foam. It is not so comfortable, however, in a small boat.' Then follows a description of a hazardous voyage which he made, accompanied by a Mr. Smith, but which fortunately terminated without disaster.

When leaving Victoria, on 22d March 1875, to get the steamer at Fernando Po, he was destined to have an experience of the power of the tornado at sea. The captain of the cutter in which he was embarked, although a capable enough seaman, was unacquainted with tropical storms, and so permitted a tornado to swoop down almost on them before he made preparations to meet it. Fortunately these preparations, though late and through this difficult, were successful, and the little craft reached Port Clarence in safety. His voyage homeward was pleasant enough till he reached Madeira, when he had cause, yet more painful than the risk he had run, to remember the 22d of March. As usual when a steamer arrives at Madeira from the south, letters sent by friends to meet the passengers are brought on board for the various names. One to George Thomson from his sister announced the melancholy tidings that his brother Alexander had died on the 22d of March. His brother and he had been so long together, had so long together thought out in common the great problem of the art of the future, and so long had struggled together for its realization,

that the wrench was a terrible one. Memory after memory, experience after experience, had been cherished in order that they might be talked over with him. It seemed to him as if he had been suddenly bereft of one-half his life. Yet in a note which he sent home by a steamer that left Madeira a day or so before that in which he was, he is able to say, 'God's will be done.'

He arrived at home in time for the meeting of the United Presbyterian Synod in Edinburgh, and, much to his astonishment, he had not only to appear on the platform at the Annual Missionary Meeting, but, to his still greater disconcertion, was asked to make a speech. He satisfied himself with making a few simple remarks, thanking friends for the kind terms in which they had spoken of him. His words were barely heard across the hall, for few except practised speakers can fill such a building as the Music Hall. The many friends which he had over the country were glad to welcome him home from his perilous sojourn in Africa. His time was of necessity very much occupied with business,—all the more from his brother's death; yet even in the midst of it all he did not cease to think of his African scheme. He strove, in his gentle, unassuming way, to bring it under the notice of the various missionary societies that might be supposed to be interested in such a thing. He might have been more pressing and urgent, but he felt that the progress he could make would of necessity be slow if he were to make his sanatorium all that he wished it to be; and he knew that societies, like all other popular bodies, cannot afford

to wait long for results, so he had a diffidence in urging them to commit themselves to his scheme.

While at home, he paid many visits to different parts of the country, among others to Yorkshire; and while there went to see Haworth, the home of Charlotte Brontë. In a letter he sent to his sister while on this excursion, he is full of the pleasure that visit afforded him, and mentions that he saw Charlotte Brontë's 'signature in the marriage register books.' He was much interested in discovering that the woman who showed the church had been a scholar of the authoress in the Sunday school. He had a true artistic delight in a good novel, as in every other work of art; and, while ready to sacrifice his life for the gospel, he never falsified by making that gospel a gloomy, harsh thing, nor strove to lay or aid others in laying a burden on believers which would take from life any of its sunniness. At the same time, he never shirked religious subjects in conversation: he passed from religious topics to those of everyday life, and *vice versâ*, with the utmost naturalness. A deeply religious spirit pervaded his whole nature, and he partook of the world and its enjoyments always in that spirit; hence he regarded nothing as out of relation to the divine spiritual life. Hence many of his letters, which begin in overflowing fun, change their tone into one of the most elevated devotion. Thus, when writing from Africa to his niece Mrs. Tod about the linguistic acquirements of his son, and jocosely declaring that he would have to fall back on Bakweli, he then turns aside the current of

thought, and the letter becomes a prayer for the boy's growth in grace. Again, in a letter to his niece Miss Bessie Thomson, from an address in London, after joking about where the letter may find her, and the small expectation he had of being where he was, he adds, 'Wherever we may be, we are all under the care of a kind Father, and can meet at His footstool.'

The following year a change was introduced into his life which all his friends rejoiced in. On 1st June 1876, he married Miss Johnston, daughter of the late Rev. Andrew Johnston, and niece of Mr. Goldie, of Old Calabar. His friends not only felt grateful that he had got one like-minded with himself, but also that in her he had got a motive to take care of himself,—a thing which he was prone to forget to do. Mrs. Thomson had been associated, through her relations, with mission work, and especially with mission work in West Africa, from her earliest years, and so was all the more ready and able to sympathise with the great object of her husband's life. The acquaintanceship had been no thing of yesterday, for there had been an intimacy between the families almost from the time of Dr. Thomson's going to Africa.

After paying a few visits among friends, Mr. Thomson turned his face again towards Cameroons. In preparation for this, he wrote to the directorate of the Baptist Missionary Society, in order to get proper rights to such property as he might find it necessary to acquire in Victoria.

To carry out more fully his plan of raising the people

above their merely trading form of civilisation, he took out with him two young men, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Shannon, to look after the building operations necessary, and the setting up of sawmills and steam-engines. The voyage on the whole was a pleasant one, the visit to Madeira and Teneriffe being a refreshing break in the voyage.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECOMMENCEMENT OF LIFE IN AFRICA.

MR. THOMSON'S feelings, on landing at Victoria, were saddened by the news of the death of Mr. Smith, one of the Baptist missionaries with whom he had been very intimate. Mrs. Smith he had known when in former days, as a young lady, she had arrived in Glasgow on her way from America to Western Africa. It had been arranged that until Mr. Thomson had got a suitable house built, he and Mrs. Thomson should live with the Smiths. It was a sad introduction to Africa, to find, instead of the happy couple with whom they anticipated spending many happy days, only the weeping widow weakly with severe illness herself, and preparing to leave the country. Mr. and Mrs. Thomson entered on possession of the now vacated mission premises. Mr. Shannon, who had made himself very active in landing goods, discovered the power of a tropical sun, by finding, on the following morning, his feet all a mass of blisters. While things were being put to rights, however, a storm was gathering, the bursting of which we shall leave Mr. Thomson to tell in his own words:—

'*28th September* 1876.

'The old jealousy of the Bimbians about trading here was rekindled by seeing such a display of goods landed on the beach, and a few days after, two or three of the principal men, with a large armed following, came to talk palaver with me. Although their mode of coming was not so quiet as we could have wished, it did not take me quite by surprise; and as the chiefs came up to the house unarmed, and in a friendly manner, there was not much to complain of. We had scarcely got over the formalities of friendly greeting, when a great hubbub arose on the beach, and, on going out, I found our people running for their guns in a great fury, and declaring, in reply to my expostulations, that the Bimbians had come for fight, and not for friendship. I ran down amongst the Bimbians to quiet them, when some of them got hold of me and pulled me towards a large canoe, which they began to shove into the water. King William and Monie, however, rushed after me, and relieved me from them. We then returned to the house, but, fearing that our people might precipitate matters, I went back through the town towards my own place, turning those who were on their way to the beach. On getting near to my house, I observed a large force drawn up armed, with Mr. Shannon, who was borne on the shoulders of a man, at their head. He had risen from his bed, and although his feet were a mass of large blisters, he had got dressed and armed, and, with his sword drawn, was all prepared

for fighting. After getting them quieted, and warning them not to come to the beach nor fire a gun, I returned to the mission-house, and held palaver with the Bimbian chiefs. After hearing them, and finding that the old grievance was at the bottom, and that they wished me to come and trade at Bimbia, I told them that it was my purpose to do so now; and as they admitted my right to continue trading at Victoria also, there was no difficulty in satisfying them. They agreed to carry such building materials as were required, and to provide posts and rafters for the erection of a factory. Monie now produced a note, which Mr. Saker sent to me by him, stating that they had come off to him as he lay at anchor off Bimbia on his return voyage to Cameroons River, and requesting me to do my best to satisfy them. This request had of course been complied with. It was agreed that I should visit Bimbia on an early day to choose a site, and I gave them, as an earnest of fulfilling my promise, a few timbers and sheets of iron.

'Having arranged everything amicably, I gave them a supply of rice and a piece of pork for their breakfast, as the state of the water prevented their return that day. Since then I have had very friendly visits from others of the Bimbian chiefs, and have entertained them and their followers in similar fashion.

'On Monday, accompanied by Mr. Grenfell and Messrs. Shannon and Campbell, I went to Bimbia, and, after visiting the various places, fixed on erecting the factory on Nicoll Island, in the Bay of Bimbia. It has been occupied for a similar purpose before, and has

this recommendation, that it is uninhabited, and conveniently situated for communication by water with the various Bimbian towns.' He thought also that it might be suitable for his plantation projects. A treaty was duly made, and everything seemed put right. The simple reading of the above will suffice to show the difficulties one has to encounter, and the entanglements in which one is apt to find himself, when he attempts such an enterprise as Mr. Thomson's.

During this uproar Mrs. Thomson got her initiation into African customs. Hearing the hubbub, she was going out to see what it was, when Mrs. Wilson, one of the native inhabitants, who happened to be in the mission house, stopped her, and said she must not go out 'till war done finish,' and all the while seemed wonderfully placid and unconcerned for an African. Mrs. Thomson thought that either wars were not very serious matters in Victoria, or that she would have to endure a prolonged imprisonment. She soon learned that the former impression was correct. She had soon another experience of Africa given her. Mr. Smith's death, and Mrs. Smith's long illness and subsequent departure from the country, left the mission-house in a cheerless and dilapidated condition. A good housewife could not endure this, so, all unwitting of the nature of an African climate, she fought against the disorder, and brought on her first attack of fever, which was so severe that she was left weak and ill for some time after. The young men Mr. Thomson had brought with him had their share also of the African fever.

As will be seen by the account given above of the conduct of the Bimbians, Mr. Thomson had to face the disagreeable necessity of setting up trade again. Mr. Shannon, besides superintending the building operations, had the further and more awkward duty of helping in the store. Having a much clearer apprehension of the inherent roguery of human nature—savage as well as civilised—than Mr. Thomson's large charity would permit him to have, or at least acknowledge, Mr. Shannon not only often checked direct purloining, but limited the more frequent indirect theft which attempted to masquerade as purchase on a promise of payment never meant to be redeemed. A rogue, notorious all over the West Coast, had assumed the title of King Pass-all-men, *i.e.* more king than any one else, came to Victoria with a large retinue on pretence of trade. Whatever took his fancy, that he declared he would buy, and without more ado popped it into the folds of a sort of plaid which he wore over his shoulders. Guessing what his object was, Mr. Shannon, quietly keeping behind him, dexterously removed the articles from the plaid as soon as he put them in. King Pass-all-men went off in high dudgeon, declaring his 'fader (Mr. Thomson) no have heart' for him.

The year 1877 opened with brighter hopes for the future, despite the frequent illnesses of the household. The natives spent the week from Christmas to New Year in constant rejoicing, expressing itself in games of cricket, wrestling, and foot-races. For the benefit of Mrs. Thomson's health, they accepted an invitation to

Bonjongo mission station, with a view of proceeding to Mpanja. They arrived duly at Bonjongo, Mrs. Thomson being carried up in a machillo, and found the town in an excited state; the head-man had died, and the head-man of a neighbouring village was accused of 'witching' him. Heavy rains prevented them proceeding further, and a deputation from Mpanja came down to Bonjongo, accompanied by Richard Cooper. The native potentates, while ostensibly come to welcome Makara Mpanja back to Africa, actually came to get the 'dashes' or presents which natives always expect from foreigners. Mr. Thomson, in giving them the presents he had brought, took the occasion of inveighing against their stupid superstitions. He tried to get them to consent to abstain in future from putting any one to death merely on a charge of witchcraft. They said in return that all people should be got to agree not to witch any more. However, Mr. Thomson made known his abhorrence of the practice, and records his hope that what he said might be blessed. Leaving Mrs. Thomson at Bonjongo, he descended again to Victoria. After some time, Mrs. Thomson was the better for her stay in Bonjongo. She wrote to him to bring the donkeys, Nelly and Ben, to convey her down,—a mode of travelling she preferred to that by the machillo. He gives an account of their descent to Victoria in a letter to his nephew, Dr. Thomson:—

'On Saturday morning, at a quarter-past seven A.M., we started on our homeward journey, Isabella mounted on Ben, and Nelly equipped with a pack-saddle and

wicker panniers, which we had bought from Mr. Quintin Thomson. Nelly led the way, followed by your venerable uncle, switch in hand, to urge at times a quickened pace on Nell, who prefers a very slow rate of travelling. Then came Ben with his precious burden, followed by two boys to guide and render any other assistance which might be necessary. I may mention that the panniers contained all our effects except a couple of pillows and a basket, which were piled atop. So you can imagine the picturesque appearance of the caravan, as it wound its way along the narrow path, now between walls of elephant-grass ten or twelve feet high, then through shady forest glades, scrambling down steep rocky slopes, leaping large trees lying across our path, or halting while the boys cleared with their cutlasses a way round the end of them.'

In this same letter he chronicles the departure of Mr. Campbell for Scotland. His repeated attacks of fever and ague had frightened him, so, having set up the steam-engine and sawmill, he resolved to go home again. As Mr. Shannon had some knowledge of the working of machinery, he soon added that of engineer to his other offices. He still braved the climate, and occupied himself in various ways for the furtherance of Victorian prosperity. His exhaustless animal spirits and boundless *bonhomie* stood him in good stead with the natives, and made them bear more readily with his shrewd exposure of their cheating. Among other things, he set up and drilled a volunteer corps, which at all events employed the young men,

if it did not afford much protection to the tiny republic.

Mr. Thomson, from the influence he had acquired with the natives on the mountains, was able to help friends who wished to make the ascent of Cameroons; among those whom he so assisted were Messrs. Kalbreyer and Comber.[1]

'*25th March* 1877.

'Mr. Kalbreyer and Mr. Comber wishing to go to the upper region of the mountain, I had to procure permission for them to do so from the king and his brother Mungala, for they had recently determined that, with the exception of Mr. Q. W. Thomson and myself, no white man should be allowed that privilege. In former times the Mpanja people were not allowed to come to

[1] In connection with Mr. Kalbreyer, we will quote from a letter of Mr. Veitch, London, to Robert Smith, Esq., Brentham Park, about Mr. Thomson, and also from the *Gardeners' Chronicle*:—

'I knew the late Mr. Thomson of Cameroons very well, and he was most kind to our plant collector when out there two years since. We heard with great regret of his death, and we got a new orchid named after him by Professor Kerchenbach. You will find it described in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of last year,' etc.

After describing the plant, and relating its discovery by Mr. Kalbreyer, Professor Kerchenbach goes on to say,—

'I wished it might bear the name of its discoverer, but various letters from the Royal Exotic Nursery, and one written also from somewhere in the tropical regions, told me Mr. W. Kalbreyer ardently desired it might bear the name of the late Mr. George Thomson, who was unusually kind-hearted in his English reception of the German traveller. I think this testimony is equally honourable to him and to his grateful survivor, Mr. Kalbreyer.'—*The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 8.11.79.

The orchid referred to is figured in the following number of the same journal.

Victoria, or, at all events, did not do so; but after I went to reside amongst them they not unfrequently went to the Victoria market. The people of the towns lower down continued to allow this until recently, when, at a court or meeting convened for the purpose of considering this matter, it was resolved that the Mpanja people should not be permitted to go to Victoria any longer; and so, as a set-off against this action, the Mpanja folks resolved that no white man be allowed to go up the mountain except Makara Bonjongo and Makara Mpanja. After a little private talk with Msassu and Mungala, they agreed to suspend the law in favour of my friends, and so I handed them over to their care, they promising to provide five men to act as carriers and guides to Mann's Spring. The two travellers started next morning, and got to the spring early on the following day, having had to encamp near the upper part of the lava bed. Mr. Comber succeeded in making the ascent of the peak; Mr. Kalbreyer's ambition did not lead him to make the attempt, his object being to look after flowering plants. They both returned to Mpanja just as we reached there.'

Meantime, he felt the necessity of trading a hard one, and writes home under date 8th May 1877: 'I sincerely wish some one would turn up to relieve my hands of this trading, as it is absorbing my time, my energies, and, for a time at least, my means. . . . The trading and other causes have hitherto delayed the building operations sadly.'

He soon found additional hindrances crowding around

him in connection with trade. A few pages above we quoted a letter from Mr. Thomson, in which he gave an account of his agreement with the Bimbians to set up a trading station on 'Nicoll's Island.' When his wife and he were all ready to start to take possession of their island, their progress was stopped by a letter being handed to Mrs. Thomson, but addressed to King William of Bimbia. When opened it ran as follows:—

'*24th May* 1877.

'DEAR SIR,—I am very glad to write and tell you, as I heard that Mr. George Thomson is going to build to my island, you must let him build, and then you must let me have what he is going to give you, as your father used to do. You know very well that island is mine. If you will be need of me, please let me have an answer with the bearer. Trusting you are pretty well, as I am. —Yours ever truly, YELLOW JOSS or PRESO.'

Mr. Thomson comments on it as follows:—

'The contents of this epistle were of a nature quite unlooked for, and rendered inquiry necessary ere we could with confidence proceed farther in regard to Bimbia. Mr. Pinnock had never heard of such an ownership or claim, but, on inquiring at Mr. Steane the evangelist, who is a native of Bimbia, he recollected having heard of such a thing. It seems that at some former period, before he was born, some Cameroons people had been to Bimbia, and one of their number was killed on this island by a Bimbian in some row or

other. Heavy fines were claimed and paid by way of satisfaction, and, amongst other things, the Cameroons folks claimed the island as being the scene of bloody deed. As a set-off to this claim, however, the Bimbians claimed property in the fishing ground frequented by the Cameroons people at the mouth of the river, in consequence of one of their number having been afterwards killed by the Cameroons folks at that place, and so the account was considered squared.

'When Monie and King William called a few days after, I read the letter to them, which not a little excited their indignation. They declared the demand to be trumped up by Yellow Joss just to obtain a few coppers, and that the claim was quite without foundation; they, however, offered to make good any loss which I might sustain in consequence of it. Still another matter prevented our going just at this time, for rumours reached us that Monie and others of the Bimbian head-men had, without consulting the folks here, determined to make a law forbidding the people of the coast to the westward trading with Victoria people, under pain of death. This foolish step being likely to result in a serious quarrel with the Victorians if persisted in, we thought it would be well to see it settled before going to Bimbia. The minister and the other elders of Victoria prudently wait until Monie comes here, in order to ascertain the facts ere taking any active steps.'

The end of this extract gives some idea of how difficult it is to carry on trade with the West African

natives, and how almost inevitable it must be that one who strives to make a trade a merely subsidiary thing shall lose money. Those who devote themselves to trade alone are apt to get hardened, and to begin to take to practices which, with regard to any more scrupulous set of traders than those West Africans, would be utterly unjustifiable.

In a letter dated June 27 and 28, 1877, Mr. Thomson describes in roseate hues his life in Nicoll's Island, and is especially pleased to be able to announce that ships of war had begun to provision at Victoria. As may be seen from his memorial on the state of matters in the settlement, and from what has been said above, he had been eager to lead the inhabitants of Victoria to betake themselves to planting. But an adventurous bull belonging to the late Mr. Saker made fences useless. Nothing could keep him out of any place where he wanted to go, and once he made way his harem easily followed. Hence all thoughts of planting cacao or cinchona had to be abandoned until some system of enclosure by stone wall could be adopted. But, from the peculiar constitution of an African community, such a change could be introduced only if adopted by common consent. The next best thing to lead the people to was cattle-raising. That has succeeded so far admirably; and by order of the Admiralty, Victoria is one of the places where ships of war may revictual.

CHAPTER XIV.

LEFT ALONE.

ALL the roseate hues of hope and health which had lighted up his early residence in Nicoll's Island were clouded over. Mr. Thomson had soon to encounter another trial. Mrs. Thomson became debilitated by repeated attacks of fever, the consequence of her prolonged stay on the sea-coast, and was compelled to go home in search of health. Mr. Shannon also, despite his high spirits, had to succumb, and recognise that a longer residence on the West Coast of Africa would be very hazardous for him, if not even fatal; he determined to accompany Mrs. Thomson in her voyage home. So once more was Mr. Thomson left quite alone in his work. In writing to Mrs. Thomson shortly after she had left, he gives a humorous description of the discomfort of his loneliness, but at once, lest he should make too sorrowful an impression, breaks off to narrate the arrival of more ships of war, and to chronicle his hopes with regard to the rising importance of Victoria. He finishes up with a full account of a dinner which he gave to the officers of the ship of war, intended manifestly to allay any anxiety felt as to his welfare.

A specimen of the domestic intelligence to be expected from the West Coast of Africa may be given here. 'Mary Edgerley,' the female servant, 'informed me, in her usual unintelligible fashion, that Yellow Will had got the loan of the foot-bath to bale the boat, and that he had lost it. She mentioned some other things about it which I could not make out. On referring to Tom Tobi, he said, "Yes, Yalla want die for water, and lef' go and pan lose." After much interrogation, I learned that on Sabbath evening the surf boat, which was anchored in the cove, was observed to be gradually drifting towards the beach, and "Mr." Michael sent the Krooman to anchor it further out. The head-man sent "Yalla" to do this; he got the pan from Mary to bale the boat, when he was at the other job at any rate. Having finished, he jumped into the water, but found himself beyond his depth;—strange to say, although a Krooman, he cannot swim. Had not Joe Edgerley put off in a small canoe to his assistance, he would have been drowned.' Thus the foot-bath "went lost." Such incidents,—of damage caused by carelessness,—though little in themselves, become, when often repeated, inconceivably irritating. Would this not suggest that his or my temper had been affected? In regard to the appurtenances of civilised life, the negro is apt not only to be a child, but to be a very mischievous child.

One characteristic of his correspondence comes out if possible into stronger relief now. All through his numerous letters from Africa are these kindly references

to his friends at home, which proved how much his heart was with them. Now, though he was compelled to acknowledge that he is, to use his own expression, 'dowie enough' at times, yet he always breaks off such confessions by some inquiry about those at home. He is concerned about his minister's health, as he had learned that Mr. Rennie had been obliged to go abroad on leave of absence; and is anxious that the annual subscription for the church debt, which he had promised long before his departure for Africa, should be regularly paid, and requests particular inquiries to be made about this. Among his papers there is a fragment of a letter to an old friend, Mr. James Barr, who had emigrated to New Zealand; it seems a scroll, and possibly may never have been completed and sent. After acknowledging his negligence in true penitential fashion, he proceeds:—

'You and Archibald are often in my thoughts, and the rambles we used to have by the Paisley Canal and elsewhere in the bright summer mornings are still recalled with keen delight,—the more, perhaps, that we are so far separated from the actual scenes. Although Govan is not what it was in those days, and great changes have come over the Kelvin and the Canal,—although we ourselves are not just what we were then,—still there remains a dewy freshness in the remembrances of early days which the events and scenes of more advanced life do not possess. I often think of those old days, yet not with repining. God has been very good to me all my life through. Although my

way has not been without its rough bits, and sometimes has been overhung with murky clouds which threatened to burst upon me in ruin, I have this day reasons abundant for raising songs of thanksgiving and of praise.'

While his letters are often brimful of fun, he had all the while too frequently cause for depression. Under date Saturday, October 6, 1877, he writes to Mrs. Thomson: 'This is a dark day. Moses Johnson was to-day charged with forging orders in my name; was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Moses, as you remember, was working along with Joseph Edgerley at Gilbert's house, and so soon as that was finished was to begin to ours' (the house at Victoria). 'They commenced working for me on Tuesday, when this affair came out, and all my plans are deranged. Meantime, at least, I feel downcast about it, as I was taking more than an ordinary interest in the lad; he appeared to me to be one of our most promising young men.' Mr. Thomson was more depressed over the downfall of his hopes concerning the lad than over the derangement of his own cherished plans or the loss of his own money. The necessity for a house of at least some degree of comfort was obvious if the rest of his scheme was to be carried out, yet it is the lad he is most sorry about. This is by no means a solitary case; many others had similarly raised his hopes, only similarly to dash them to the ground, yet he was always ready to hope anew. His was truly the charity that thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

As we have more than hinted above, we think there is a danger of applying to these new Christians too high a standard. We forget how large a number of those who call themselves Christians, yet pursue a course of conduct far at variance with that becoming the gospel. We forget how many are kept from outward and scandalous sin by the dread of law or of public opinion, while these African converts have no such external checks. Every one knows what low specimens of Christianity some of the traders present. But, further, owing perhaps somewhat to the climate, but also not a little to natural disposition, some of the missionaries even, with all their zeal, do not present a very amiable aspect of Christian life. As, for instance, one whom Mr. Thomson mentions as requiring careful handling,—one 'who seemed to think that no one but himself had anything to do.' He expressed himself aggrieved when Mr. Thomson would not forego the services of the carpenters who were working at his house, in order that this missionary might get their service as guides in an exploring expedition on which he had set his heart. In revenge, the aforesaid missionary pooh-poohed the project of a sanatorium, in an account of this exploratory journey which he read before the Geographical Society. Those who knew more about the place and the general question than a casual visitant, had approved of the plan and the place.

While these occurrences were saddening, yet, notwithstanding loneliness and all, his letters are brimful of fun. For Mrs. Thomson's benefit he gives laughable

accounts of passing events,—as, for instance, the execution of an intruding snake, and the release of the cat from an uncomfortable bonnet she had donned. She had been induced by the smell to put her head into a tin which had contained salmon, but, having got her head in, she could not get it out again. This account is accompanied by a sketch of puss with the salmon tin on, looking like some mysterious variety of the ornithorhyndus. As a specimen of how he wrote to his friends, we may extract a few lines from a letter to his brother's family:—

'I have been trying, you see, to feel myself amongst you, but whether my imaginings have come near the truth is a question. Oh, it's a far cry from here to you! "It's no lang tae New'rday noo;" but it is difficult for me to realize it in this locality. Beads of perspiration glisten on the backs of my hands; in our scenery there is no touch of winter, our forests are in full foliage. In some respects this time of the year has a slight resemblance to winter,—it is the dry season, and there is a partial pause in the rush of growth. The most wintry aspect we have is when it is night, and the bonny lady moon rides high in the heavens; this sometimes awakens a thrill of home feeling; but during the day there is everything to tell that we are far from home. If we were to personify Old Father Christmas, it would be needful to represent him with towel in hand wiping streams of perspiration from his face, instead of standing in a warm cloak, with an icicle depending from a red, frosty nose, as at home. Never-

theless Christmas time is near, and you may be sure I shall be with you in spirit if not in person. But, dear bairns, I cannot think of that joyous time at Moray Place without putting into the picture one who used to preside on such occasions, and shed around you all the genial influence of his presence;—perhaps he too may be with you in spirit. I trust you shall rejoice in the presence of an Heavenly Father, without whose presence and blessing there can be no true joy; nor be unmindful of the glorious event Christmas is meant to commemorate. While there may be obligations to observe the day, if it is to be observed at all, it should be in some sense "unto the Lord," and not in mere animal excitement.'

Early in the month of January 1878, accompanied by Mr. Allan, a trader, Richard Cooper, and a boy named Monie, Mr. Thomson made an ascent of the mountain. They had not gone very far beyond Bonjongo, where the Rev. Quintin Thomson was stationed, when they came to a native fence stretching across the road. To get a road for the donkeys, that served as beasts of burden, this fence would have to be demolished; and when they demanded the price of being allowed to do so, the sum named was so large, that, rather than pay it, they turned the heads of their steeds downward again,—we presume somewhat to the discomfiture of the pair, husband and wife, who had made the exorbitant demands. A new difficulty met them in the route by which they now determined to ascend. This road led past Makunda,—their guides were Bonjongo men,—

and there was an unsettled quarrel between Makunda and Bonjongo, and this rendered it unsafe for any Bonjongo man to pass near Makunda. They had to be sent back, and with them their loads. To add to their troubles, one of the donkeys stumbled and fell. Once down, even the donkey thought he might as well lie still for a while, the result of which ruse was that his master, who seemed utterly unable to credit even a beast with malingering, led him the rest of the way. At length they reached Mpanja, and found the house the head-man promised to have finished,—a mere roofed-in frame. Mr. Thomson humorously describes it as having a front door and a back door, and two or three thousand unglazed windows. From Mpanja he anew visited the brook. Struck with the beauty of the waterfall, he seemed to think of placing the second resting-place there, rather than at Mpanja. Mr. Allan was called away while they were at Mpanja, and Mr. Thomson, accompanied by some Boanda men, who acted as guides and bearers, held on their way to Mann's Spring. 'I had great difficulty,' he says, 'in keeping the Boanda men in the proper direction; there is a natural tendency to hold more to the right hand than the left, and so they had done. The consequence was that we emerged' (from the forest) 'a long way to the east of the spring, and had a rather long and wearisome journey to get near it. At length, just at dusk, we got here to an old camp of my own, when here in company with Messrs. Medley and Griffiths just a month short of three years since. The hut then erected had fallen

into decay, but not so much so as to be quite unserviceable. What was of considerable benefit, owing to the lateness of the hour, was that we found a good supply of pine-wood left over from that occasion.' After they had reached the spring, they set to work and erected a rough shed to shelter themselves and future comers. On his descent, Mr. Thomson's attention was directed by Richard Cooper to certain bright berries, which turned out to be wild native coffee. The school children at Mpanja had recognised that the berries on the plants which had grown from the seed which Mr. Thomson had planted, were the same as those which they had been accustomed to gather in the woods. On examination, this native coffee proved to be of the Monrovian variety. Of course this was the cause of great joy, as affording reasons for cherishing high hopes of the future possibilities of Cameroons. Mr. Thomson's own death came too soon for him to see his hopes realized; still the hope may be cherished, that Africa will yet be able to take her place in the work of the world.

After his return to Victoria, he had soon the pleasure of welcoming friends, all more or less in the condition which the projected sanatorium was intended to remedy. They were three,—Mr. Struthers, Acting-Consul Tait, and Mr. Jones. The first had been invalided from an accident. The acting-consul had been suffering from sickness for some time. He had been ordered home, but his presence was as imperatively demanded by the state of matters on the West Coast of Africa. As an

alternative, he was advised to try the effect of a residence on Clarence Peak, or on the Cameroons mountain; he took the alternative, and preferred Cameroons. The third, Mr. Jones, who had brought the party from Fernando, was also an invalid. Here, then, were the first patients for a sanatorium. It will be best to give the account of the ascent to Mann's Spring, and their residence there, in Mr. Thomson's own words:—

'BOANDA, 11*th February* 1878.

'MY DEAR WIFE,—We are here again, where we were about a month ago, on our way to the spring. This second visit is in consequence of the Acting-Consul Tait being desirous of trying the mountain air as a means of restoring him to health. As I have before mentioned, he and Mr. Struthers came to Victoria with the intention of going up the mountain, but Mr. Struthers, after a short attempt, got afraid of having another fall, in consequence of the roughness of the road, and returned to Victoria. The consul persevered, however, and has succeeded in getting thus far, although it has taken a long time. We left Victoria on Tuesday last about one o'clock P.M. by boat, landed at Botta, and from thence commenced the land journey by way of Makunda, where I expected to arrive that night. I had gone that way once before, and then it was all cleared; now, however, it is so narrow by bush and tall grass, that we had to move on slowly, cutting a way for the palanquin or machillo, in which the consul had to be carried, as we went. This occupied so much time, that

day was spent ere we had got about half way; we were therefore under the necessity of camping out for the night. Most of our carriers and baggage had preceded us, and part was at Botta, but we managed to pass the night pretty comfortably, although it threatened to rain once or twice. It was well that only a few drops fell, or we would have been in a sorry plight, and it would have been most serious for Mr. Tait in his weak state of health. We started again in the morning, but, owing to the rough and tangled state of the road, the weight of the consul, and inexperience of the bearers, our progress was very slow;—we had sent back the machillo to Botta, and formed a hammock of one of the waterproof sheets. About noon we got to Makunda, and took up our quarters in a house belonging to a brother of the head-man. Makunda is a larger place than Bonjongo or Mpanja, and we had many visitors,—too many for our comfort,—but we bore the noise and stewing very patiently. In the evening the consul showed the crowd which had assembled, some of his curious things, such as dressing-cases, etc.,—a performance which had to be gone over again repeatedly. On the following morning there was a lot of ceremony. The consul donned his half-military attire, and, after sending for the head-man, we proceeded to the end of a sort of street, where we had the British flag erected and saluted by a volley from a couple of guns. The consul made a suitable address, to which the head-man replied, after which we presented him with a medal having the Queen's likeness upon it, namely, a bright new shilling; we punched

a hole through this, attached a small split ring and narrow ribbon, and hung it round his neck.

'We were under weigh again in the afternoon, and got here in the evening, where we were warmly welcomed by my old friend Dumbi, and took possession of his new house. With more than Spanish courtesy, he told me I was to consider it mine, to be used by me whenever I came to Boanda. I am getting more and more to like the old man. He lives with his second son next door, and is ever running out and attending to our wants. He is by no means greedy, but generally pays us a visit at meal times, and seems to enjoy any little tit-bit that is given to him, but relishes especially a glass of wine or a nip of brandy, if the consul indulges him. To-day he presented us with a fine hog by way of dash.

'On Friday I had the pleasure of witnessing part of a ceremony of which I had not even heard before as existing amongst the Bakwelis, namely, the home-coming of a bride. It was the arrival of the young wife or betrothed of Dumbi's second son. During the course of the day there was evidence of some merriment amongst the young folks of the village, and then followed an hour or so of drumming and dancing, which we were self-complacent enough to suppose as being in honour of the distinguished strangers.. But, as Mr. Tait and I were walking up and down in front of the range of four houses composing the one-sided street where we reside, we observed some of the young men walking about in a state of seeming expectancy, with guns in

their hands; presently the report of a gun was heard along the road in front, and which leads to the higher towns in the east. The young men immediately rushed in that direction, discharged their pieces into the bushes, reloaded, and gave another volley; then we heard the sound of singing or chanting drawing nearer, and presently there emerged and stood at the end of the road a party of three women, attended by a fully-equipped warrior. The central female, who turned out to be the bride, carried in her arm a fowl, and was dressed with a bright-coloured loin-cloth or kilt, and what seemed a white cloth head-dress; the female on her left hand, and slightly in advance, was a matronly woman, with a large basket on her back, out of the top of which could be seen the legs of a goat; the other female was a young woman, who carried on her back a basket piled up with country pots. After this party had stood for some time, continuing to sing the while, Dumbi's head-wife, and probably the mother of the bridegroom, crossed slowly over towards them with a long walking-stick in her hand, which she handed to the bride and received back again; she at the same time embraced the elderly woman, and then led them towards the house. Mr. Burnley explained that the burden carried by the two female attendants consisted of a large goat cooked, as a present to the bridegroom, and for his eating only; and that the head-dress of the bride was composed of the fat of said goat, to show how good it was; the fowl carried by the bride and her young friend were her plenishing. Vigorous drumming, dancing, and merri-

ment carried on until we managed to fall asleep, which must have been amongst the "wee short hours ayont the twal." It may seem strange to old people like us, who have tasted of the horrors of matrimony, that such occasions should be accompanied with such manifestations of mirth, but such seems to be the way of the world all the world over.

'*Saturday*, 23*d*.—We have been here at Mann's Spring a week, having arrived last Saturday, after a tedious and toilsome journey. We left Boanda on Tuesday morning,—our party consisting of Mr. Tait and myself, Mr. Burnley, Francisco Wilson, Pedro Williams, Moses Johnson, the little Monie; the consul's personal attendants, Ive, Robert the cook, and Nyambi, his boy, and six Kroomen belonging to Mr. Struthers; also Ngia and Mbua, two Mpanja boys who were desirous of going with us. The six Boanda men who had cut the road for me were to have accompanied us, but just as we had got under weigh, they declined to go if the two Mpanja boys were not sent back. On the previous night, old Dumbi had brought this matter before us, and we had a long talk over it, the result of which was, that although his people were aware of the two boys going, we were just to go and say no more about it; we felt annoyed now, and did not feel disposed to yield, especially as the young rascals had taken care to go on ahead of us, so we resolved to proceed without the Boanda men. During our stay at Boanda our men had been engaged improving the road, so that our first day's march was managed pretty well. Towards evening we arrived at

the spot where Mr. Allan and I had camped, and we called a halt, and soon had our tent erected and fires blazing. Several men were sent for water to the place where I had got it, to the foot of the high cliffs; but you may imagine our feelings when they returned with empty bags, and the announcement that the pool was dried up! What were we to do?—no cocoa! no tea! nothing to satisfy our thirst! Within a few yards from the camp we had observed in a dry watercourse a small pool of dirty water, in a hollow of rock, but it looked so dirty that the very thought of drinking it was loathsome. Being brought to our present extremity, however, even this dirty drop of water became of consequence to us. After mature deliberation, the consul proposed to strain it through a cloth, boil it along with some charcoal, and use it in the shape of cocoa. We did so, and felt not a little thankful; we retained some for a cup of cocoa in the morning.

'Wednesday morning, Mr. Burnley and I, with two Kroomen, traced up the bed of the watercourse, examining every hollow in vain. We struggled up a steep hill, in hopes of finding the crater, where, a few weeks before, I had seen water; but we got bewildered, and, as much time had been spent, we resolved to return to camp. Meanwhile Moses Johnson and other two had started for Mann's Spring to bring a supply from thence. When we got to the camp, Mr. Tait informed us that the Boanda men had come during our absence, and had been prevailed on to go for water, and, much to our joy, they presently made their appearance with a

good supply from the upper part of the brook. It was beautifully clear and cool, and most acceptable. We then had a comfortable breakfast and proceeded on our journey. Much of the road was so rough, that the consul was obliged to get out of the hammock and walk; but it improved as we advanced, and we managed to reach the place where I had my third camp on the previous journey. Before we got there, we met Moses and his companions with a good supply of water from Mann's Spring.

'Mr. Struthers having written to us that he purposed leaving Victoria on Friday, and would require six of his men, we had to send them back. We started again on Thursday morning; the consul feeling much stronger, sent back Mr. Thomson's hammock, resolving to proceed for the rest of the way on his own feet, but it turned out wearisome progress. The road was now getting steeper as we proceeded, which was sorely against him, and caused him to stop very frequently to rest and gather breath; it was painful to see his distress, but he struggled on manfully. We camped again in the forest under a great tree, Mr. Burnley and most of the company having pushed on to the spring. While chatting by our fire, he informed me that when a young man, he had been a midshipman in the navy, and was at the taking of the Tien Tzin forts in China. From exposure at that time he had rheumatic fever, and was advised to leave the navy, as being unsuited to the altered state of his constitution. Although he had since enjoyed good health, and engaged in all kinds of

athletic exercises and sports, I began to apprehend serious consequences from the fatigue of this journey in his weak state of health. Next day we proceeded in the same tedious and distressing manner as on the previous day, but the ascents were more frequent, and he was more exhausted. Towards the afternoon some of our people returned from the spring, and it was agreed that I should go on, while he came as he was able. On my way I met Mr. Burnley, who was on his way to meet us with supplies, and he remained with the consul all night. I was not long in getting to the spring, and, after eating a little, set some of the men to clear the road. Saturday morning I went back to meet the consul, and was somewhat surprised to find him camped at the edge of the open ground. On learning from Mr. Burnley that he was not far from the edge of the forest where I left him, he made another effort and succeeded in gaining the open. We then had him carried to the camp at the spring, and, poor fellow, just in time, for he was scarcely laid down when an ague fit came on; it put me in mind of that terrible attack which you had at Victoria after coming from Bimbia; of course he got round again towards the afternoon, when the fit was past. Next morning we had him taken to the hillside close by, thinking he would feel refreshed by the clear mountain breeze; but he was not long there until the ague returned, and he had to be taken back to the house. Dysentery also set in, although I was not aware of it at the time. On Monday morning and forenoon he was again very bad, so much so that I thought he

was dying; he was in a low state all day, his mind wandering, and at times scarcely able to articulate. In these circumstances I resolved upon sending for Mr. Q. W. Thomson, and despatched Francisco early next morning. The consul recovered somewhat meantime, and was considerably better by the time Mr. Thomson arrived, which he did, much to our surprise, on Wednesday about mid-day. He left Bonjongo shortly after four o'clock A.M., and must have come on at a great pace. Having brought the requisite medicines, these were administered, and with good effect, so that, the consul being so much better, he left us again on Friday. Mr. Tait has continued to improve steadily, and we have had him out on the hillside.

'*Sunday.*—I am sitting beside the consul, writing this under an awning put up in the open amongst some long dry grass. He seems now in the fair way of benefiting from his visit.

'Mr. Cooper arrived on Monday, and Mr. Burnley, Pedro Wilson, and Francisco went down last week, the last two named having bad colds; and this morning Moses Johnson had to go also. The cold during the night is too much for our coast people, although the Kroomen have not suffered so much. Meantime the house is progressing, and will, when finished, be a comfortable shelter for us when we come up to erect a more permanent abode.

'*Monday, 25th.*—The consul continues to gather strength. This is a glorious place. How I wish you were here to enjoy it with me! I feel as if it will be

our home for some period. Down in the forest there are noble trees, far surpassing anything in Britain; some are very majestic, while others are picturesque, and others again of the most weird and fantastic appearance. Mr. Q. W. Thomson and I measured one, and found it thirty-six feet in circumference. The Boanda men have opened up a considerable length of the new road from the spring downwards, as they promised, and they are doing it very well indeed; so far, it is a great improvement on that which they cut in coming up. There are some charming bits of forest scenery in its course. I have fixed on a site for our house; it is a knoll a little way down from the spring, the water of which can be led down to it and into it by means of pipes. It is surrounded by some grand trees; but when a few in the immediate vicinity are removed, it will be quite open to the sunshine, while at the same time it will be secured from the fires kindled annually by the hunters on the open country, and will also be sheltered from storms.

'The scenery above the forest is of quite a different kind; it resembles more our own Highland hills,—some of it wild and rugged, while other portions consist of bonny smooth sloping hills and braes; a tinge of bright, fresh green is now beginning to prevail, where a few weeks ago all was as black as charcoal. The atmosphere is delightfully pure and dry; in proof of which, the flesh of a goat which was killed on Monday morning is still quite sweet and good, and bread brought up on that day is free from mildew. The only

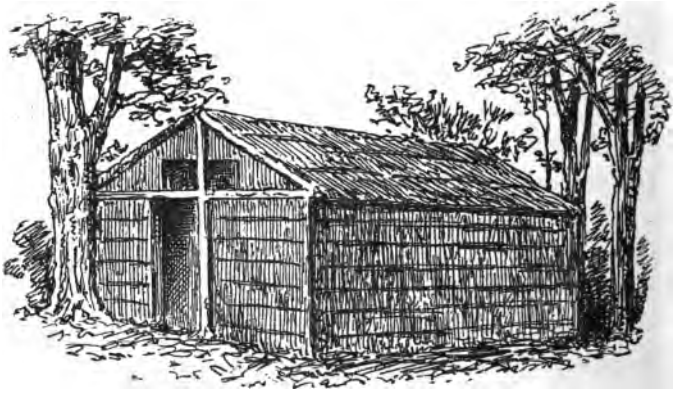
drawback is that we have cold mists daily from eleven to three o'clock or thereabout, but they are not damp; and at night the temperature goes down to a degree which calls for good warm blankets. Owing to this, we are all more or less affected with a cough, but, as far as I am personally experienced, not of a kind to affect the general health; the only change I have made in my clothing is to put on an extra coat which you sent me. The Kroomen have stood it well; they seem to have escaped the general annoyance, and do not complain.

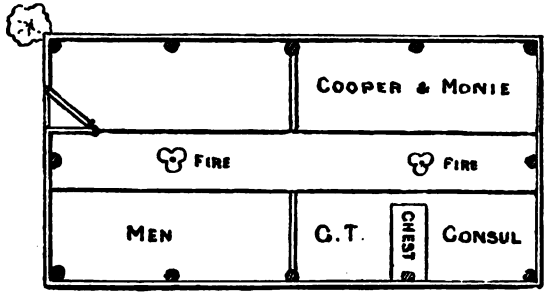
'*Tuesday, 26th.*—Consul still improves. I have been really well. Besides superintending building operations, I spend much of my time sitting beside the consul out in the open, my butterfly net at hand, ready to pounce on any winged insect which may come our way. To-day I was engaged skinning a flying squirrel and three pretty little birds caught by our boys. The little birdies come to drink at the spring, and Nyambi and Monie have gins set for them, which not only secure but kill them at once. We had very nice soup from the squirrel; the skin, which is pretty, is being dried. I may send the skin of another, which is already dried, by the steamer due in a week or so. I purpose going down to-morrow to Victoria to look after cargo.

'R. Cooper remains with the consul, and I will most likely come here again after the steamer leaves.

'You will be curious to know what sort of house we have got here. Well, it is externally very like a towsy, ill-built haystack, for not only is the roof thatched with grass, but the walls also. The inside dimensions

are about twenty-four by fifteen feet; it is divided along the centre by a passage, on either side of which are spaces for lounging and sleeping; the passage space is





separated from the sleeping spaces, not by partitions, but simply by stout logs to keep in grass bedding,—a very necessary precaution, for the fires are made in the passage, and as wood is plentiful and the nights cold,

we have three rousing fires going. Fear of accident from fire has often kept me awake great part of the night. I doubt if Mr. Frame would insure us for any premium. Now that the consul is here, we have partitioned off about half the space of the house by suspending a long sheet across.

'The above sketch and plan may aid you in forming some idea of the first house erected at Mann's Spring. The walls are constructed of the stems of a tall, straight-growing plant which is found in abundance just at hand; they are from one to three inches in diameter, and from ten to twelve feet in height. The lower and thicker part of these stems I have caused to be lashed side by side with bush rope, and braced to longitudinal bars of the same material, which makes a fine stiff wall; the thatch is required, however, to make them air-tight. One corner of the house is secured to a large tree, which, being too big for us to cut down, we utilized as a support. The erection is, like other houses in this region, remarkable in so far that neither nail nor peg is used in its construction; with the exception of a little bush rope, the whole of the materials were found on the ground, or within cry of the site.'

His return down hill, though made more difficult by the recent rains, was duly accomplished.

On 12th March 1878 he writes to one of his nephews:

'*12th March* 1878.

'We are too prone, I think, to confine our thoughts within the compass of our visible horizon, and, because

nothing is visible, to fall into despondency. If our life were bounded by the threescore and ten years which sum up our mortal career here below, we might be justified in doing so, and ask the question, "Why hast Thou made all men in vain?" But when by faith we are enabled to lay hold on the Eternal, and endeavour to shape our course accordingly, how grand life becomes then! The bustling activities of the prevailing modes of living at the present period are all too petty and circumscribed. I am sometimes uncharitable enough to regard them with pitiful contempt. Success in life:—Well, what is it? Very varied would be the answers to this query, and some of them laughable enough. Many, doubtless, would be ashamed to confess the purpose for which they were spending their energies, being convicted of their inner conscience of the utter unworthiness of their course. In my intercourse with the state of things along this deadly coast of Africa, I have often felt painfully oppressed with the almost profuse sacrifice of life which is made in the pursuit of commerce,—that form of idolatry which prevails in our day.

'When the question presents itself to the mind, Is such a pursuit worthy of spending our life for? it is capable of perhaps many feasible answers; but if it is asked, Is it worth dying for? then I for one cannot see how to answer it in the affirmative. And if this test were applied to the majority of human pursuits, I think few of them would stand it very well. Am I right?

'. . . I am beginning to become more hopeful of success now. If only I could get rid of this necessary evil of trade, it would allow me to give myself more entirely to the object for which I came here. It is a glorious place up on the higher region of the mountain. Down here one is in a constant state of stew; but away up there it is delightfully bracing, and one feels a physical and mental ability something akin to spring-time at home; the atmosphere is pure and exhilarating.

'It is strange how one gets to feel at home in these out-of-the-way places, and yet how striking the contrast between it and Glasgow!'

A little later in the same month, he made, along with Mr. Allan, another ascent to Mann's Spring. Through a blunder of the guide similar to that which occurred on his first ascent this year, the party went somewhat out of their true course, and so had to stay all nigh in the forest. They had no wraps with them, these having been sent on to the spring beforehand. As they dared not camp on the grass, wet with the recent rain, they endeavoured to secure warmth and at the same time keep away sleep by heaping heath on the fire. The blaze produced was scorchingly hot for a little time, but soon fell again. When the grey light appeared they began the ascent again; Mr. Thomson, boldly taking the lead, in a few minutes brought them within sight of the hut at Mann's Spring. He was none the better for this exposure, he admits, having had a touch of ague in consequence.

After his return to Victoria he had to chronicle various losses. Now it is a bullock killed by the fall of a huge limb of an enormous cotton tree. Again it is the ravages effected by 'a wicked old cow' belonging to him, which he had to make good. He had banished her to a neighbouring town, but she had travelled a long distance to make this raid. It is to be remarked that he does not mention the terms of the cow's banishment, nor the arrangements he had made with her custodiers; these latter would surely imply safe custody; if so, they, not he, ought to have paid the damage. The very distance that the cow travelled seems suspicious,—may it not be that he was victimized in this case as well as in so many others? Another source of loss was the way his business was being mismanaged at Bimbia by a young negro named Gilbert; while seeing to some extent his misdoings, their full magnitude was not known till afterwards. Another trial which befell him, and which he felt much more keenly than the loss of money, was the death of Richard Cooper, the native teacher whom he supported at Mpanja. He was one of the few in whom Mr. Thomson was not disappointed. The date of his death made it more touching, as it was the anniversary of Alexander Thomson's death. Discouraging as was the failure of promising converts, yet more hindering to Christian work were the misdeeds of nominal Christians. A man named Brass, in the employment of one of the traders, made off with money and goods belonging to his master, and was owing a considerable sum to Mr. Thomson.

The necessity for keeping up trade, which was so irksome to him because uncongenial, was also, perhaps in consequence of this, a source of constant loss. He endeavoured to keep up heart by beautifying the surroundings of his house with flowers, in expectation of Mrs. Thomson's return.

The 22d of March, which had already been so fatal to him, he was destined to learn had affected him more nearly than by the death of Richard Cooper. On that day had died his nephew, Dr. William Cooper Thomson. His hope had always been that this nephew would be able to assist him in his plans about the sanatorium, and so the blow was all the more crushing. He writes thus to one of his nieces :—

'21*st June* 1878.

'Last batch of letters brought sad news. I feel William's death very greatly, there are so few left now of my early friends. Although a nephew, his age was so little less than my own, that I regarded him more as a brother. As earthly ties are being loosed, those that draw us upward are increasing, so that ere long the desire may be to depart and join those who have gone before, and to be with Christ. Oh for more faith! Meantime I feel as if there was still work to do; and why should I despond? This life is but the starting-point of an endless existence, and, I trust, of an endless *life.*

. . . . . .

'It has been pouring since last night, with a grand

accompaniment of thunder and lightning. Fancy such a concert!—the thunder rolling, the rain rattling, and the sea roaring. What a mingling of mighty voices! It has a little while ago cleared up, and then a sweeter music gushed forth as if in joyful gratitude,—the full rich melody of a mavis that haunts our forest. I love to listen to it, for it recalls the blithe spring-time of home, with all the rush of budding tree and flowers.

> "The sauch tree budding o'er the burn,
> The primrose doun the brae."

> "Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
> Hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie."

'Sometimes, but not often, these homeward feelings come up for a brief space, but then I look to this glorious mountain where my work is, and, thinking of the great unknown land beyond, lying in moral and spiritual darkness, I am constrained to pray:

> "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

May we all have the will to do as well as to pray!

'I feel as if a work were assigned me, and consequently to leave it undone would be culpable neglect of duty;—"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,"—and the outcome of that would be misery.'

His hopes, so often expressed in his letters, that Mrs. Thomson would be able to rejoin him, were gratified sooner than he anticipated, or had advised. After this the tenor of his way became more even, only broken by

such events as the marriage of housemaids and visits up the mountain. For three months there were no letters from his pen, partly because Mrs. Thomson relieved him from the necessity of writing, and partly because there was difficulty in getting letters forwarded. His letters, however, when they did come, were full of happiness and merriment,—illustrated with sketches of Mrs. Thomson engaged in a mosquito hunt, etc.

About the end of July, he was cheered on receiving a letter from Mr. Hutchinson, lay secretary of the Church Missionary Society, making careful inquiries as to the amount of labour needful to set up a sanatorium on the mountain, and the best mode of securing it. The Church Missionary Society were anxious to secure a suitable place for their agents from the Yoruba and the Niger to resort to when invalided. His choice had been the result of careful study, he says; and this of necessity gave Mr. Thomson to feel that confidence in his own opinion which arises from others arriving independently at the same conclusions. One thing especially to be noted, is the anxiety that Mr. Hutchinson manifests not to do anything that would be regarded as intrusion by the Baptist Missionary Society or their agents. Mr. Thomson, in concert with his friend the Rev. Quintin Thomson, wrote answering all the queries, and expressed a cordial wish that they too should set up a sanatorium in the mountain.

Nevertheless work was beginning to press heavily on him. A young man named Macdonald had been engaged to be his assistant in the store. He was

in delicate health, but thought that the sea-voyage might benefit him, and followed Mr. Thomson by a short interval to Victoria. Despite his own hopes and medical opinion, poor Macdonald never throve in Africa. Of course, from the nature of his duties, he had to stay on the coast, and that in Africa is always unhealthy. Mr. Thomson had thus the main burden of the work, and meanwhile was erecting a house for his wife and himself. The care and sheer physical labour entailed were great, and, in such a climate, especially oppressive. In a letter, dated November 6, 1878, he is able to say that the house is pretty well forward. He gives a plan of it, in order that his friends at home might have some idea of 'Inverquhat,' as he jokingly calls it.

Ere that letter reached its destination the end had come. Mr. Macdonald's state became so critical, that it was absolutely necessary to send him home. An unexpected opportunity occurred for conveying him to Fernando Po to wait the mail steamer, so he and Mr. Thomson, who accompanied him, had to hurry off with little time for preparation. The voyage was a long and tedious one, but they were in time to get the patient on board the steamer. Mr. Thomson sent home by this steamer the last letter he wrote; in it he mentions having felt insufficiently clothed. In almost the last sentence of this, his last letter, he says, 'I have arranged with Mr. Grenfell to take charge of the store, which will relieve me of a great burden.' Mr. Grenfell had been a missionary, but determined to enter into trade;

and Mr. Thomson was desirous that trade should still be carried on in Victoria, so the arrangement seemed in every way a suitable one.

Notwithstanding the tediousness of the voyage, Mr. Thomson seemed very well on his return from Fernando Po. It was necessary that there should be a stock-taking before the business changed hands, and the most grievous defalcations came to light. Lads supposed to be trustworthy servants had been cheating in the most wholesale way. On this discovery his heart seemed to sink within him, and he complained of illness. He had purposed going up the mountain, and preparations were being made for this, but he grew rapidly worse. His last illness can best be told by her who was with him to the end:—

'*December* 22, 1878.

'On Thursday evening, the 5th December, he returned from Fernando Po, where he had gone with Mr. Macdonald to see him safely on board a steamer for England. He returned in excellent spirits, very happy to be home again, and entered pretty fully into the details of his trip.

'On Friday he seemed in his usual health; during the following night he was feverish, but perspired freely, and next morning took his breakfast as usual. Before breakfast he had been engaged for two hours helping to arrange business matters with Mr. Grenfell, and after breakfast he was sent for to the mission-house to identify goods that had been stolen from the store from

time to time during the last few months. He came home about eleven o'clock, very ill with ague, which soon developed into malignant fever. During the week which followed he was very weak, scarcely able to retain any nourishment, but remaining perfectly calm and patient to the end. He felt that "all was well," whatever might be the issue, and committed himself and all his concerns into the safe keeping of Him who had been the guide of his youth.

'On the day before his death he seemed somewhat better, though evidently weaker, and hopes were entertained of getting him on board a steamer for change along the coast, or for Scotland, if possible. But next morning there was pain in the chest and difficulty in breathing, and about ten o'clock the messenger came to call him to enter into the joy of his Lord.

'Through the whole of his severe illness the kindness of Rev. Q. W. Thomson and his wife, the devoted Baptist missionaries at Victoria, was unremitting. Often by night and day did they share in the nursing and the watching during that sad week, and doing all that medical skill could suggest to avert, if possible, the fatal end. Mr. Grenfell, too, showed much kind sympathy and kindness throughout; and many of the natives testified their sympathy with and appreciation of the sufferer by their kindly inquiries.

'Many mourn him as a father and benefactor.'

After her husband's decease, Mrs. Thomson had to complete the preparations for removal, not now merely

to the mountain, but for a lonely voyage across the sea, leaving her dead in Africa.

Thus ended, so far as George Thomson was concerned, a noble effort for the regeneration of the Dark Continent, and an attempt to prolong the lives of those engaged in that work, and render these lives more efficient. At first sight there may seem to be nothing accomplished; yet even a noble attempt is worth something, if only to show that Christian zeal and self-denial are not dead. But, further, roads were partially made, the confidence of the tribes in the mountains gained, a site fixed, and a wooden building, though only a temporary one, put up. Any going to the work now will find his work made all the easier by the fact that George Thomson had preceded him. The need is still clamant; surely his example, his efforts, will not be wholly lost.

APPENDIX.

(CHAP. III. *page* 22.)

IN vol. sixteen of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, the reader will find extracts from Mr. Thomson's journals supplied by the late Earl Derby, then Colonial Secretary under Sir Robert Peel. The account ends with a paragraph which, if not composed by Lord Stanley, must yet have been inspired by him, which we subjoin:—

'Mr. Thomson had now, therefore, completed one great object of the mission on which he was sent, and, as it afterwards appeared, the only part which he was destined to finish. When we contemplate the difficulties he surmounted, the privations which he endured, and the example of unwearied perseverance and conciliatory expostulation by which he baffled the prejudices as well as acts of the native chiefs, we have the more reason to admire his prudence as well as his firmness, and to lament the irreparable loss sustained by the colony in his premature removal from his benevolent labours.'

(CHAP. VIII. *page* 101.)

'HELENSBURGH, 22*d March* 1876.

'REV. DEAR SIR,—In reference to the civil affairs of Victoria, it may be well to take a view of matters as they existed during my residence there, before suggesting any change for the future. At the time of my arrival, the civil affairs of the settlement were managed by a court composed of most of the original settlers then living, presided over by Mr. Pinnock. The court having become reduced in numbers through death, several of the younger members of the community and myself were assumed as members, and shortly thereafter I was chosen vice-chairman. This court, it may be observed, was self-elective. According to tradition, it was originated by Commodore Wilmot, as representing the British Government; and although his action in the matter had been ignored, the court still continued its existence, without, so far as I know, being called in question by those more immediately concerned.

'Mr. Pinnock found his double position of pastor and chief magistrate a very awkward one. Stormy discussions were not infrequent in court, and the decisions come to did not please all parties, which gave rise to heartburnings, and seriously marred his usefulness in the discharge of pastoral work. In consequence of this, he several times tendered his resignation as chairman of the court; but as no other could be found fitted for the post, he was prevailed on to resume it. At length,

in consequence of a very stormy and disorderly meeting having occurred, he resigned, and could not be prevailed upon to change his resolution. The members of court then desired me to become chairman, which, after considerable delay, I very reluctantly consented to do, as I knew it would seriously interfere with my special work. With a few exceptions, the members were ignorant of the modes of conducting business, and prone to be influenced by private feelings; and when matters involving serious responsibility, and which called for united and prompt action, occurred, very few, and sometimes none, put in an appearance. These things rendered my position very uncomfortable, and made me resolve, on several occasions, to withdraw from all connection with the court; but, on receiving expressions of regret from the members, and considering the evils that might arise from lapse of government, I consented to continue. One consideration, in particular, weighed with me in holding on, and that was the maintaining an appearance of strength and authority in the eyes of the surrounding tribes, more especially in connection with the market law. This market law was, as you know, the result of an arrangement made by the people of the various towns frequenting the market, to prevent disturbances arising out of the custom of "stopping," as practised by the natives. It had been agreed that henceforth no claimant was, on his own authority, to exercise this right, but should apply to the authorities of Victoria to interpose on his behalf. This law was, at an early period of my residence in the place, broken by

the Bimbians, and, notwithstanding a great deal of brag and bluster on their part, they were ultimately obliged to pay a heavy fine. From that time the law came to be duly respected; and although much time was spent in investigating the numerous claims, its impartial enforcement tended greatly to raise the importance and authority of Victoria in the eyes of the natives, and, on the whole, had a beneficial influence. I had hoped to have got the law extended, so as to prevent stopping on any road leading to Victoria on market days. Most of the Bimbian gentlemen, and a number of the Bakweli head-men, approved of it, and in course of time, I doubt not, the consent of all might be got. It would be of great benefit to have such a law made.

'The growing preponderance of the heathen portion of the community is a matter calling for special legislation. Under proper control, the influx from the surrounding towns is to be desired, as the strength of Victoria might thereby be increased, and these people would be brought more effectually under the influence of the missionary, and gradually moulded, especially the children, to civilised modes of life. As it was, or is, however, their presence in the town is to be dreaded as a source of weakness in more senses than one. Many of them still retain their connection with the towns from whence they came, and are ever ready to take part in their palavers; or should aught happen to any of them, their relatives interfere,—as in Coffi's case, for instance,—bringing no end of trouble; and in the event of a difference arising between Victoria and the towns

with which they are connected, they may turn against us, and side with their friends. Some of them, again, are not desirable members of society, being turbulent, lazy fellows. They also import with them many of their heathen customs and practices, notably that of polygamy. These things had been talked over often at our meetings, and I was requested to draw up a series of resolutions on the subject. This was done; the resolutions were discussed at three several meetings in due parliamentary form, unanimously approved of, and appointed to be read at a public meeting of the inhabitants to be convened for the purpose. All came to nothing, however; for just about that time copies of a printed paper, containing laws and regulations for the government of the place, were circulated amongst the inhabitants. Although ignorant of the previous existence of this document, I learned, on inquiry, that it had been circulated at an early period of the settlement's existence. It constituted, therefore, the conditions under which residence at Victoria was permissible; and, moreover, as it contained a clause reserving to the owners of the land the right of appointing a governor, it was plain that neither I nor the court had any authority in the place whatever. Although this was clear to me, I did not dissolve the court, being desirous that some show of authority should remain in the place, but tendered my resignation. Shortly afterwards I was called home, and do not know how government is being carried on. Not having a copy of the above-mentioned document, I cannot say much about it; but,

so far as my impression goes, it was on the whole very good. But this fact was brought to light, namely, that according to it only one of the inhabitants was a proprietor of the plot of ground occupied by him, he having paid for it,—all the others were mere tenants-at-will. One of the most worthy complained of the hardship of being required to pay for the little bit of ground he had, after having sacrificed so much in leaving Fernando Po. Another grievance that requires dealing with is that about the herd of cattle. It is an intolerable grievance that no plantation can be cultivated nearer than Farm Point, on account of these midnight marauders. I spent from £50 to £60 on that piece of ground which I cleared, and all to no purpose,—on their account; and even the little garden plots of the numerous widows and others in the place cannot be protected from their depredations. This was a matter which the court was powerless to deal with in the circumstances. Large plantations were formed in the immediate vicinity of the town by some of the original settlers, but on account of the cattle had to be given up, and are now covered with bush again. Numerous cocoa-nut trees were planted on the open ground along the western shore, but the cattle destroyed them; they also destroyed many that I had planted along the beach, on the Victoria side of the creek, or river, as it is called. In fact, nothing in the way of fencing can withstand that great brute of a bull, except strong stone walls, and that is a mode of enclosing much too expensive for the people now. Farm Point

is too far from the town to be of much use; and the produce is liable to be plundered by the lazy members of the community, or by the people residing beyond, and by the baboons. The consequence is that most of the farms over there are all but entirely neglected. The result of all this is, that notwithstanding the unlimited extent of land belonging to the settlement, the inhabitants are almost entirely dependent for food on the Bakwelis, who could, by such a combination as was formed in Coffi's case, starve them out in a few weeks; indeed, Timbi, an influential head-man of Debanda, held this threat over us on that occasion. I am desirous of persuading the people to engage in rearing coffee, cacao, and other exportable produce; but unless these cattle are brought under control, or banished altogether, little or nothing can be done. There is abundance of wealth in the land, if facilities were afforded for working it out, but at present the inhabitants are entirely dependent on the miserable palm-oil trade. Of course no success can be attained in raising other produce, unless some one with a little capital is prepared to purchase it of them, and in the small quantities which each can produce.

'Under wise, energetic management, Victoria might become a source of blessing to a large part of Africa; its possibilities appear to me to be very great, but, as things are, it seems slowly expiring. Before the time of my arrival there, several of the best of the original settlers had been removed by death, and since then several more have been taken away, while almost all

the young men worth retaining have left the place, to find employment elsewhere. When I joined the court, the members of it, besides Mr. Pinnock and myself, were Messrs. Beckley, Bishop, D. More, Wilson, Michael sen., Michael jun., Burnley, Johnson, Brew, Martin, Scott, Steane, — twelve in all, being all the male members of respectable standing in the community. Of these the three first mentioned are dead, and Mr. Wilson has gone to Cameroons, leaving eight, of whom six came from Fernando Po with the original settlers, and two—Messrs. Martin and Steane—are natives. Only two of the eight can read and write feasibly; and some of the others have not acquired much knowledge of the English language, although their knowledge of the native dialects is of great consequence.

'I think that the fact of the Missionary Society being lords of the soil, is not conducive to the healthful progress of Victoria as a civil community, and would suggest that a more distinct line of demarcation than has hitherto existed, should be drawn between Church and State. It appears to me inconsistent with the character of the Society to discharge the functions of the civil magistrate, which it has done, and I suppose is now doing, through its agents, and, so far as I can see, must continue to do, if resolved to maintain its proprietary rights and privileges. One mode of seemingly obviating the difficulty is by following out the clause of the printed regulations already referred to, namely, appointing a governor,—not a missionary, however,—but even then the person so appointed would be

a responsible agent of the Society. A more thorough course would be to hand over, with certain reserves for mission purposes, the whole proprietary rights to one or more persons of reliable Christian character, but not responsible to the Society. Surely the Baptist denomination could supply two or three judicious and self-denying men who would undertake such a responsibility, and would do so not only without charge or hope of gain, but would be willing also to give themselves and their wealth to the furthering of so laudable a scheme.

'While I would deprecate any very prominent interference of our Government in the affairs of the settlement, in the meantime at least, still it would be of great advantage if consular or vice-consular powers could be obtained for some such individual as has been indicated, said power being limited to Victoria and the mountain. In the present condition of affairs, there is little to induce persons of similar standing with the original settlers to take up their residence at Victoria; but every facility should be given to such, should they desire to do so, care being taken that they are of good character, and likely to add to the welfare of the community. As the place becomes known, it may be hoped that Christian converts from such places as Calabar, Cameroons, or Gaboon would be attracted to it, and in this way an influential Christian community might be formed in course of time. I can suppose that an object of this nature was in the minds of those who projected the Bimbian settlement scheme;

and if a tithe of the expenditure and interest bestowed upon it were now given to Victoria, great results might be attained; if, however, the opportunity be neglected, Victoria is in the fair way of becoming as great a failure as Bimbia.

'Primarily my interest in Victoria is in connection with my own special scheme of establishing a sanatorium on the upper part of the mountain; but, apart from that, I have become deeply interested in its prosperity from my residence there for a period of three years, my thorough acquaintance with the people and desire to benefit them, and from the conviction of its importance as a base of operations by which the blessings of Christian civilisation may be extended to the whole region of equatorial Africa. So firm is my conviction on this point, that although my own special scheme should fail, I would esteem it a privilege to spend and be spent in promoting the welfare of Victoria;—and it is to be hoped that others may be led to join in so good a work. Hitherto I have been working at a disadvantage, being alone; but, in the prospect of returning, I have secured the services of a young friend who is well versed in several mechanical occupations, but especially masonry, to which he has been trained; and if his health is continued unimpaired, I doubt not he will be the means of instructing a number of the people in that and other useful trades, the want of which is at present much felt. While it may be my endeavour to nurse the present palm-oil trade, it is my intention to develope the resources and

capabilities of the place in other directions, more especially in raising exportable produce, such as coffee, cacao, etc. As there is abundance of timber in the district, I purpose taking out a small sawmill, the produce of which would obtain a ready market, and permit of boat-building being carried on. If possible, it is my intention to utilise the fine water-power afforded by the stream near its entrance to the sea, by erecting a water-wheel, which, if accomplished, would be of great service. But it is needless to go more into detail. There are many things that might and should be done, if we had means and men at command, and free scope allowed, and all I have to ask of your Board is, to afford me all reasonable freedom and security; for it is not to be expected that I would launch out in expenditure upon schemes which could be rendered abortive through the interference of an individual.—Yours most sincerely, GEO. THOMSON.

'*P.S.*—The Board should take into consideration the very serious responsibilities involved in the exercise of civil government at Victoria, embracing not only the execution of justice in the community itself to the utmost extent of the power implied in the bearing of the sword, but also the duty of defending the inhabitants by the same power from any attack by the natives; besides which, there are British subjects, and the subjects of other powers, such as Germans and Spaniards, to be dealt with. G. T.'

(CHAP. XIV. *page* 219.)

We may subjoin an extract from a paper on 'The Niger; Past, Present, and Future,' read by Mr. Hutchinson before the Society, afterwards published in its *Transactions*. Speaking of the condition of the oil trade, he says:—

'Provision should also be made in the vicinity of the river for properly repairing and docking the steamers used in the river trade. This might be done in connection with that which appears to me to be one of the great wants of the Niger, — the formation of central stations or depots where the agents of various trading houses might permanently reside; where proper building yards and docks might be erected,—in short, a trading emporium, with all modern appliances. One such and the chief depot might well be formed at Victoria, the new settlement at the base of the Cameroons mountain in Amboise Bay. While it affords all the advantages of a trading station, with docks and stores, the mountain, rising to an elevation of 14,000 feet, would offer innumerable sites for such sanatoria as are eagerly resorted to by our English brethren in India.

'Think of the white merchant shut up in his dismal hulk, say at Bonny, breathing a polluted atmosphere, and floating in liquid miasma; no wonder that the term of servitude frequently ends in the white man's

burial-ground at Rough Corner, and that the motto, "A short life and a merry one," is very generally accepted and illustrated in a way which does not commend the Englishman to those around. In contrast to this, let us picture him leaving for a holiday at reasonable intervals, to be spent in the life-giving highlands of these beautiful mountains.'

THE END.

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