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A WEST AFRICAN TALE

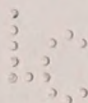
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BY

MRS. GEORGE H. STROUSE

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## Chapter One.

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### The Sergeant.

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At one time a caravan moved from Ibadan farther into the interior of the Dark Continent.

Ibadan is a city 120 miles from the sea-coast of that part of West Africa known as the Yoruba Country, which was formerly the old slave district of the European Powers. The Yoruba People were at one time inhabitants of a kingdom more powerful than either Dahomey or Ashanti. At the beginning of the last century the Fulahs split up the kingdom. At present the Yoruba People comprise four tribes—known as Yoruba, Egba, Jebu, and Ilesha. These four tribes have a common descent, common language, and common customs; though each tribe has its own peculiar way of speaking and carrying out its customs. The King of the whole Yoruba People resides at Oyo. The other towns are governed by tributary kings, or chiefs called Balès. The Yoruba Country is situated six degrees above the equator. Its inhabitants are Negroes, and a few Arabs or Fulahs who have migrated from the East. The English have extended

a railroad from the sea-coast town, Lagos to Ibadan. Farther one must travel by hammock.

The caravan consisted of an English officer, Sergeant Williams, by name, his cook, his carriers, and his interpreter. The Sergeant's companions were natives of that country. Sergeant Williams was dressed in a light brown duck suit with brass buttons and epaulets of braid. He wore a helmet to protect him from the African sun. His cook was a boy of about seventeen summers. He was black as ebony and had tribal marks cut deeply in his face, as is common among the Yorubas, every face is cut with deep gashes, the size, number and arrangement of which varying according to the tribe or family to which the person belongs. These marks disfigure faces which would be otherwise good-looking. They are tell-tale marks, which make it impossible for strangers to conceal their identity. A fugitive from justice rarely escapes being caught on this account—for the gate-keepers of the towns through which he must pass recognize him by these marks. The gate-keepers are thoroughly posted in this lore and they know the nationality of everyone passing through their gates.

David, for that was the name Sergeant Williams had given his cook, wore a white suit with brass buttons—the gift of the Sergeant. Proud as the morning sun when he rises in solitary glory eclipsing lesser lights David strutted along behind the Sergeant's

hammock. The carriers wore primitive trousers, cut to the knee. From the waist up they wore no clothing. On their heads they supported the loads, sometimes of one hundred pounds, which rested on turbans deftly made by twisting impromptu clothes into shape.

The Sergeant was borne in a hammock swung from the heads of two men by means of bamboo poles and ropes. His trunk and boxes were carried by a dozen more men. Slowly the caravan proceeded. Not much could be heard by the Sergeant except the steady tramp of the hammock-men, as they bore him along. Not much could be seen by him except the glistening back of the front hammock-man, as drops of water chased each other down it, or the carriers in advance with the loads on their heads. For they were going through dense brush. The natives going and coming from town to town would occasionally stop to let them pass. But when a higher elevation was reached as they journeyed away from the coast, the brush was cleared away so that a broad path extended before them—allowing two caravans to pass each other. It was then that the Sergeant could see the natives in great variety. They passed his caravan unceasingly—in single file, each carrying a load on the head for everything is carried on the head by the natives of that country. There is no means of conveyance besides that, except a few donkeys which some of the Fulahs own. The horses carry native

chiefs. There is naught else used for carrying except the backs of the women for their babes.

The natives commonly passed the caravan as a silent, solemn host of human beings—like shadows in a dream—each one intent on his or her business. The women predominated as it is their work to bring the produce from the farms and to transact the marketing. This work is shared by the men slaves. One-third of the Yoruba People are slaves. Of those who passed the caravan of the Sergeant, some had loads of yams, or bundles of faggots, or chickens; and every female almost had a babe tugging at her breasts. The women carry loads sometimes whose weight exceeds one hundred pounds. If a man should pass on the road with a light burden on his head or none at all—one might know he had wives who did the work for him, or else that he was the owner of slaves.

The men wear the "shocoto," a pair of baggy breeches reaching to the knee. Over the shoulders sometimes a cloth is thrown which falls to the knee. The quality of the cloth and the "shocoto" depends upon the rank of the wearer. Their legs are bare. Pairs of sandals, made of cows' hides are used by many, especially in walking along the hard roads; but the mass of the people go bare-footed. The men sometimes wear broad-rimmed straw hats of variegated colors, manufactured by the Natives. All the clothing of both sex is made by the Natives of materials

chiefly manufactured by themselves; sometimes bought of English traders. Sometimes the shoulder-robe of a man is replaced by a loose shirt falling over the "shocoto" to a little below the waist. In the case of a king or chief the shirt extends to the ground and has over it a gorgeous shoulder-robe. The women leave their breasts, legs and arms usually bare. A cloth is wrapped around her waist and thighs in which she tucks her baby. Sometimes this cloth is pulled up to conceal the breasts, but ordinarily not. The men shave their faces and heads almost entirely. The women arrange their hair into a number of little braids which are so adjusted as to form different designs. Over the heads of the men are worn close-fitting caps or turbans. A couple of twists to a piece of cloth around her tresses form the head-dress of a woman. The children until they are eight years old wear no clothing ordinarily, except a string of beads around the belly, or neck or arms. Sometimes they dress like their elders.

The Sergeant mused as he contemplated the queer sights. Occasionally his meditations were interrupted by noticing a beautiful bird alighting on a tall palm tree. Its colors were so handsome and varied, such as he had never seen before. The unique sights of the native huts among the tall grass diverted his eyes. These huts are of mud with a thatch of grass supported on a bamboo pole. They stand about six feet

high. Here and there, one by one, dots the landscape, but they are mostly to be found in numbers composing a town or village.

At one such village the caravan arrived when the carriers stopped for "chop" (food), after they had crossed several shallow streams, where the Sergeant was obliged to lift his patent boots high, lest they be submerged. The men lifted the Sergeant's hammock to the ground, and he alighted.

It was a grief to Sergeant Williams to be forced to stop at these native villages. Nothing elevating to the senses was to be found in them: A herd of human beings, half naked—some all naked—chattering like magpies, some squatting on the ground, some standing, a hot sun beating down on the parched earth, no trees for shelter—was the substance of the place.

"David, get dinner ready and be quick about it!" The Sergeant's voice was peremptory.

"Confound this cussed place! The last trip I make up this——country, or my name isn't Williams!" He seated himself upon what was once the trunk of a live tree; and took out his note-book.

The boys meanwhile put up his tent. Slowly the time passed away.

"Saleph, tell David to bring the dinner—curse that boy!" An hour rolled by and then Sergeant Williams was seated on his camp chair in his tent with his folding table before him spread with faultless linen

and shining plate and glass—in great contrast to the dirt and squalor of heathendom without.

“Saleph, tell David, the next time he puts meat on the table that has been cooked twice the same way, I’ll discharge him!”

The Sergeant’s repast was soup, three courses of meat, and pudding the regulation dinner of the English in Africa.

David had meanwhile come into the tent and seating himself on a stool near the Sergeant’s table—called down upon himself the wrath of the Sergeant, as he arose from the table.

“Get up, you nigger, or I’ll choke you, curse you!”

So saying, Sergeant Williams grabbed his cook by the neck. “These niggers never know their place,” he muttered to himself, as he took out a cigar, while David, sad at heart, slunk away out of sight.

“David!” The Sergeant’s voice was as if he had called his dog. Soon the faithful boy was back again. “Take these boots and shine them, and bring me my smoking jacket.”

Silently the boy obeyed. David was the most intelligent of all the Sergeant’s boys, and the most ready to work; so he used him more than the rest.

“David, get two fowls and pay threepence for both—you hear?”

Poor David looked dismayed. How was he to get

the chickens for threepence, when the price was sixpence apiece? He knew he must steal them or run the risk of flogging from the natives. Seeing no chance to quietly take off two, he began bargaining with a woman for two of her finest chickens. The woman demanded sixpence a piece. David said he must have them for threepence or the white man would shoot her. Frightened, she gave him the fowls. He threw threepence at her and moved away, amid the angry clamoring of the woman as she loudly told her neighbors of her loss.

The caravan moved on. The Sergeant's eyes were refreshed by the beautiful flowers growing near his path. As they advanced the scenery became more changeful. Here and there a mountain could be seen and many low hills rolled over the country. Not many trees gladdened the eyes except the palm-trees and the banana and cocoanut palm. It was the rainy season, so once in a while a shallow stream had to be crossed, which in the dry season deteriorated into stagnant pools, or else evaporated completely.

The Sergeant was amused as he saw his carriers lift off bananas from the heads of passers-by, and he muttered to himself: "The missionaries would call it 'stealing,' but bless the devils, they only take what they ought to have for their hard day's work."

His musings were interrupted by his head carrier pushing unscrupulously out of the way a poor old



man with a bundle of sticks on his head, landing the man on his back in the mud and his sticks in the bush.

“Ha! ha!” roared Sergeant Williams. “That’s the way to make a good time.”

The carriers were chatting among themselves—a lot of gibberish to the Sergeant. Tired of it all he was glad when they arrived at Oyo, where they were to put up for the night.

## Chapter Two

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### Asendi.

“One little hut among the bushes,  
One that I love.”

Among the thousands of native huts at Ogbomoso was the abode of Asendi.

Ogbomoso is a town of two hundred thousand inhabitants, situated a one day's journey, or thirty miles from Oyo—on the road towards the river Niger.

Asendi was a boy about twelve years of age. The ages of people are not reckoned in the Yoruba country. Asendi's father was a farmer, and had five wives, all living with their children, in his house. The farmers are the most numerous and important class. The farms extend for many miles around the city walls. They are merely small clearings in the tall grass and scrub growth of the country. Everyone can cultivate as much land as he pleases, and hold it as long as he cultivates it. He ploughs the field with a rude hand scythe. Some of the farms are very neat—the vegetables being planted in regular rows with a fence of bamboo sticks enclosing the whole. The cotton farms are a beautiful sight.

The men, as a rule, work these farms. They are also builders, blacksmiths, iron-smelters, carpenters,

calabash carvers, traders, weavers, basket makers, hat and mat makers, barbers, tanners, tailors, workers in leather and morocco, producing saddles, shoes, sword and knife scabbards, quivers, pouches, satchels and bags of many sorts and sizes. The smelters reduce the iron ore and obtain from it a good steel. They make this into swords, knives, razors, hoes, bill-hooks, arrow-heads, axes, stirrups, carpenters' and blacksmiths's tools, and other articles used for business purposes.

The house where Asendi lived was like the ordinary native's hut. These huts have a piazza around them, formed by the roof extending on all sides from the exterior of the walls. On the piazza the family mostly congregated. The interior of the house is portioned into several rooms used as dormitories or for storage. The rooms and piazza are on the ground floor. Within the hut are mats and cook-pots, oftentimes skins of wild animals. Sheep, goats, chickens and pigeons play about the house as welcome members of the family. Several such houses, in which different of these families live, are enclosed by a mud wall to which there is only one entrance, which is by a gate with double bars. This gate is usually closed at night. Such a combination of houses is called by the English a "compound." The houses of a compound enclose a large space called a court. The towns are made up of numerous compounds scattered about with no refer-

ence to order or plan. Narrow and crooked lanes run between the houses.

Often Asendi would go with his mother to the farm and help her carry the loads home. On one such trip he met a missionary lady, Mrs. Jones, who asked his mother to let him come to work for her, and she would get his clothes and food for him. The mother, having three other children to provide for, as the wives must support themselves and children, was glad to put her boy in the care of such kind women as Mrs. Jones appeared to be. Mrs. Jones seeing the sad face of little Asendi, had been strangely attracted toward him. So Asendi left his native hut and went to live with Mrs. Jones at the Mission House.

The houses of the white people in Africa are called "bungalos". They are built with clay with embellishments of windows, and doors of European fashion. A sheet iron roof protects the inmates from the heat and storm. The bungalos are neatly plastered within. They are raised permanently from the ground by means of poles. The poles are frequently replaced by a foundation of clay, portioned into several apartments in which the servants of the white man live, while he lives solely on the floor above.

The Mission House at Ogbomoso was situated on the outskirts of the town upon a high expanse of country. It commanded a clear view of the country around for many miles. Many acres of land surrounded

the house, which had been cultivated in European fashion—growing rose bushes, orange trees, lemon trees, magnolia bushes, and flowers and fruits in great profusion.

There were four rooms: a dining-room, a kitchen, and two-bed rooms, in that part of the house where the white people lived. Mrs. Jones put Asendi in one of the basement rooms. She made him a little suit of blue. She taught him to read and to write; to wait on table, and to scrub floors; to wash dishes and make beds. She taught him about Jesus and His love for poor black Asendi. She asked him to give himself to God and serve Him.

On his knees Asendi went and gave himself to God. The black face shone with a new light. Of all her boys Asendi was the best. He was so conscientious that her money was left in his care—so thoughtful that she need tell him but once all the intricacies of English house-keeping, and Asendi would remember; so gentle that a baby could be entrusted to him; so industrious that work was play to him; so good that the Bible and God were all his delight. Mrs. Jones taught a school of native children—boys and girls. The Yorubas neither read nor write. There is a symbolical language, by means of which one chief communicates with another. Cowries, calabashes, mats, feathers, and spice are used in the formation of these primitive letters.

Among the little girls of Mrs Jones' school was one she called Susan. She was about eleven years of age when Mrs. Jones brought her to school. Beautifully shaped was Susan. Among her own people she was regarded as a pretty child indeed. She would have formed a model for an artist's brush—so gracefully was she formed. Asendi loved Susan. Of all the girls she was the prettiest, the smartest and the best. Asendi and Susan would together carry water for Mrs. Jones. Together would they go to church—work together about the house. Susan lived with her parents, who were poor. She came only to Mrs. Jones in the day time.

“Susan, I'm glad I came to the Mission, aren't you?”

“Beni” (Yes,) she replied.

“I'm glad Missus came to tell us about Jesus. I thought no one loved little Asendi before. I used to go out to look at the moon, and then go home feeling so unhappy. I couldn't tell why. Now I know. God meant us to live like Missus and not like mother. I always want to stay with Missus, don't you?”

“Beni,” the maiden replied.

“Asendi, go sit with the Missus until I come back. Missus has the fever.” The speaker was Mr. Jones. Mrs. Jones had been sitting on the piazza but feeling uncomfortable had gone to bed. In an hour her temperature had gone up to one hundred and one degrees.

Asendi went to Mrs. Jones' room, entering on tip-

toe. "Missus sick?" he enquired in a hushed voice.

"Yes, Asendi, wet this cloth for me and turn my pillow." Quietly Asendi did as he was told. Then he sat like a stone by Mrs. Jones' bed.

"Asendi I'm afraid I shall have to leave you. Master says I must go to England. I'm getting the fever so often that I am too weak to do anything, and if I stay here I shall soon die."

"No, Missus, don't leave Asendi. You my mother,—Massa is my father. I love you."

"Yes, Asendi, Missus does not want to leave Asendi; but God does not want Missus to throw her life away. To stay means death. I am very weak. I could not live longer here. God will send some one else to Asendi."

"Asendi go with Missus?" he coaxed.

"No, Asendi, Master has no home to take Asendi to, or we would gladly take you with us."

"Tears came to Asendi's eyes, but he said nothing.

At that moment Rev. Jones came into the room with a letter in his hand. "From the board, Mary, they're sending Brother Brown and wife to the station, so you see the way is open for us to leave. As soon as you are well of this attack we start for England."

"All right, Edward," sighed Mrs. Jones as she restlessly turned on her pillow.

## Chapter Three

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### Asendi and David

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In a week Rev. and Mrs. Jones were on their way to England. Rev. and Mrs. Brown had not arrived in time to see them depart, so the school was broken up, and the children sent to their homes.

It was at that time that Sergeant Williams arrived a Ogbomoso from Oyo. It was the Sergeant's intention to penetrate to the Niger River. He had stayed a short while at Oyo, stationing a few police there. The African police employed by the English government are transported from the West Indies. They are found to be of more service than the white man in Africa, being themselves negroes.

The sergeant stayed one night only at Ogbomoso. As that was David's native town, he took an opportunity to see his friends. He saw Asendi who told him of the wonderful missionaries who lived like angel's; how happy he had been with them; and how God loved the black people as much as the white. David looked in wonder. He felt a longing to see a missionary. He had heard from the Sergeant that they were a lot of crazy people who wanted to make everybody miserable.



“And don't they eat peoples' brains, Asendi!”

“No. They won't even eat dead horses, Asendi replied.

“Well, I heard they eat the brains of dead people,” David remarked.

“They are good people. I wanted to eat a deer, which had died—but Missus was not quite sure if she ought give it to me.”

“Why not?” interrupted David.

“She was afraid I would get sick. When I told her I always ate dead animals, she gave to me, as I was used to it.”

“Well, good-bye, Asendi, perhaps some day I'll come to see the other Missus that you say is coming. She may not come, so I'll stay with the Sergeant. The missionaries only pay a shilling every week to go to school. I get twelve shilling every noon to cook for the Sergeant.” They parted, Asendi to go to his heathen home—David to his cruel master.

The next day at sunrise the Sergeant's caravan moved on. Thirty miles they traveled that day. At night the Sergeant had a high fever. He was first taken with a chill, which was followed with a rise of temperature. Rapidly the mercury in his clinical thermometer went up towards the danger-mark. Ransacking with anxiety his medicine case, and dose after dose of his medicine failing, he shouted to David in a hoarse voice :

“David, you dog, pray for me!”

Poor David understood English a little, but he never heard the word “pray” before. He did not know what it all meant.

“Damn me, I must die out in this cussed country. What will mother say when she hears that her Girard is—— Ugh! the thought stifles me. I can’t die! I can’t die!” he screamed, sitting up in bed. Suddenly he became quiet and fell back on his pillow. David, thinking he fell asleep, went quietly out of the tent. An hour went by. David came again into the tent, thinking it strange he had not been sent for. The Sergeant lay in the same position. David touched his hand—cold as ice. The Sergeant was dead.

## Chapter Four.

### Rev. and Mrs. Brown—Missionaries.

“So you’re going as missionaries to that forsaken land! Aren’t you afraid of the fever and those naked savages?” The speaker was a godless trader who addressed Mrs. Brown thus. They were on the steamboat “Jebba,” bound from England to the west coast of Africa. Rev. and Mrs. Brown were bound for Lagos. Mrs. Brown was the only lady on the boat. They were a young newly married couple going on their wedding trip to Africa, and had just been appointed by the Board of Missions. Mrs. Brown was a beautiful young lady, while her husband was a fine specimen of manly strength.

“No, indeed, I’m not. If God sends us, he will take care of us,” Mrs. Brown replied.

“Ha, ha! you think so. Others thought so, too, but they died or were killed. Why, only three years ago a dozen missionaries, with their wives and their children, were killed by those beastly savages.”

“Well, Mr. Forsythe,” Mrs. Brown said, “we are not afraid to die. We believe we shall live until our work is over, and that nothing can kill us until then.”

“That’s right, believe what your mother taught

you. My mother taught me such stuff, too; but I know better than to believe all I'm told now. Those niggers were never meant to associate with white people. They have no souls. Say, Mrs. Brown, can you tell me why their skins are black and ours white, if we all came from Adam and Eve?"

"Mr. Forsythe, I see various reasons. Perhaps God cursed the people for their sins. Perhaps it was meant as a wise provision for them to have black skins, in order to keep them well—as a black skin will absorb the intense heat of their bodies. I do not know the reason, but I can accept many things because God says it."

"How do you know 'God says it'?" queried Mr. Forsythe. You go on the assumption that the Bible is true. I don't think the Bible is true—but simply an allegory."

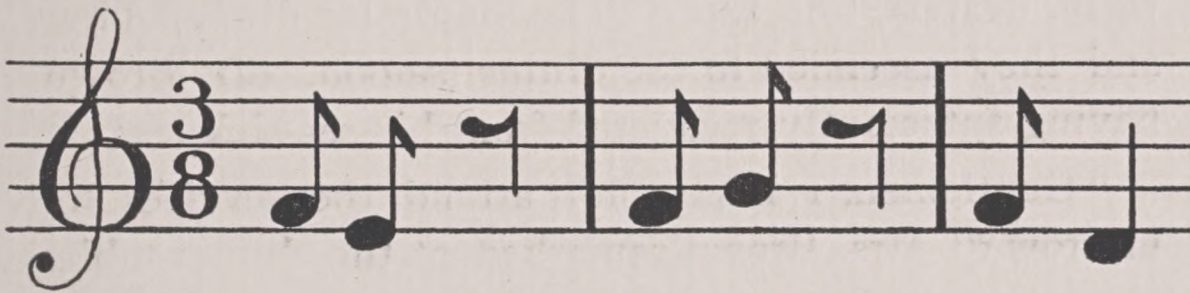
"Mr. Forsythe, if you thought it was true, you would be a more reasonable man than to claim to be an Atheist, when all Nature teaches us there is a God—even the heathen, to whom we are going, believe that," Mrs. Brown rejoined.

"No, Mrs. Brown, he's no Atheist," chimed in a young banker, "he says he is—but there's no such a thing as an Atheist."

The Rev. and Mrs. Brown went to their cabin, Rev. Brown felt seasick, so he lay in his berth disconsolate looking.

“Sweetheart, you look so downhearted ; cheer up. I’ll make up a song on you, shall I?” His wife had her guitar with her, and for amusement she attempted to compose a love song about her husband.

“Let me see,—how shall I begin?” she thought a moment :



“Eyes like the deep blue sea,  
Smiling so sweetly at me.”

“That’s all right, now what next—oh, I have it:—

“What a bliss it is to know,  
They are his who loves me so.”

“Now for the chorus :

“’Tis the one above all others that I love,  
So noble, true, as are the stars above.  
He shines for me with a pure and steady light,  
And he makcs my pathway bright.”

Her husband smiled. “That’s right, John chase the clouds away, now for the second verse.” She began :

“A smile like the roses in June,  
Setting my soul all in tune,  
Since Cupid made his arrows dart  
Into my wounded heart.”

CHORUS :

Third verse :

“A heart that is beating for me,  
As tireless as waves of the sea ;  
And the song it ever tries to tell  
Is, 'Darling I love you well !'”

By the time Mrs. Brown had composed her song, her husband was beaming with delight. “That’s all right, dearest,” he said. The bugle for dinner blew and they ascended to the dining saloon, Mr. Brown having sufficiently recovered from his sea-sickness.

“Gentlemen, I hope you’ll attend the services tomorrow?” Mrs. Brown remarked at the dinner-table.

“Not I, let others do as they please, but I want you to let me alone!” Mr. Forsythe was very angry. Mrs. Brown blushed, as she looked at the rest.

“No sermons for me,” said Mr. Young, “I’ve found out by experience that missionaries are only in it for the money they get.”

Mrs. Brown said nothing.

“You tell me to get converted,” Mr. Forsythe added, “how can I with a skeleton in the closet?”

“Bring your skeleton along with you, Forsythe,” chimed in the banker.

The men were angry that a service was to be held on board the vessel, the chief steward told the missionaries. Nevertheless the Browns had it. Some came to the meeting; some stayed away. Mr. Forsythe

stayed away. The next day he remarked to Mrs. Brown, " Well, I admire your pluck. That's the first time a service has been held on this boat since I've been coming down the coast. We've had lots of missionaries but not one ventured to hold a meeting, the Sissies ! "

## Chapter Five.

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### Some Natives.

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Rev. and Mrs. Brown arrived at Ogbomoso to take charge of the mission station there. Asendi hearing of their arrival, came to work for Mrs. Brown. David applied as cook and was accepted. Mr. Brown's household consisted of himself and wife, David, Asendi, and two other boys, one of which was the house-boy. He used all the boys to work about the house and sent them all to the mission school. To David he paid twelve shilling a month for cooking—the rest he gave a shilling a week to buy themselves food. That was abundant means for the boys, as a man's pay is generally sixpence a day in the Yoruba Country—and a woman's, threepence. Mrs. Brown made all the clothing for the boys.

“David, take this shilling, and buy a basket of cowries!” The speaker was Mrs. Brown, who had arisen from the breakfast table.

The cowrie is a small shell which is the native currency of that country. The English threepence, sixpence, and shilling are also in use by the natives. The English gold is used on the coast—but not far into the interior of the Dark Continent. As it takes 1000



cowries to make a threepence and many articles of trade cost less than a threepence, the cowries are much in demand.

"Oh! Missus," said David, stammering and hesitating, as he looked at the shilling, "I'm afraid the people won't take it."

"Why? David," asked his mistress.

"Because they think it no good with this head on," the cook replied.

"What do you mean, David, this is a good shilling—it has one of the old Queens' heads on it, Queen Anne's," Mrs. Brown remarked.

"They no think good," David went on, "they want new Queen's head on."

"One like this, David?" Mrs. Brown said, showing him a shilling with Victoria's head on it.

"Yess'm," David answered.

"All right take this one," his mistress acquiesced and laughed to herself as David went confidently away with the right shilling.

"E'kabe," (welcome), "E'kare," (Good morning), "E'kunie," (salute you for being at home), the speakers were two native women, who entered the mission-house to salute Mrs. Brown, who sat in the dining-room reading.

"E'kabe, O'kujoko (sit down), the missionary responded. That was the extent of Mrs. Brown's

knowledge of the Yoruba language, so she had nothing more to say to her callers.

They did not understand English. They found their hostess could not understand Yoruba, so they had nothing more to say either. The callers and hostess sat and looked at each other for an hour, occasionally smiling to relieve the monotony. At last, to Mrs. Brown's great relief, the women rose to go, saying "O'dabo," (Good-bye), as they disappeared.

"Beatrice, look at David," Mr. Brown said to his wife as she joined him on the piazza, "here he comes with the pink shirt on I gave him. He wears it in the latest fashion."

David was approaching with the cowries. The part of the shirt which was meant to be tucked under the shocoto, he had falling over it in full view of everyone and the sport of the African breezes.

"John, I'll die with laughing at these natives," Mrs. Brown remarked to her husband, "did you see the man in church the other day with a pink bedspread thrown over his shoulders as a mantle?"

"Yes, anything from civilization pleases them," her husband replied.

"Missus sell me your cook-book? The suppliant was one of the training school young men whom Rev. Brown taught. Besides the school for the children he taught a class of young men who were desirous to be preachers. These young men were anxious

exceedingly to acquire knowledge. The young man supplicating Mrs. Brown for her cook-book had some time previously asked her to teach him rhetoric, as Mr. Brown's time was too much occupied. She taught him awhile, but both becoming sick she concluded that the African climate was not conducive to the study of rhetoric.

"Want my cook-book, Isaiah?" Mrs. Brown asked, amazed. "No, I need that myself, I only have one."

Isaiah smiled and bowed respectfully as he departed. He was a tall, stately young man, a model of manly beauty in physique. The Yorubas are a well-developed race physically.

"I wonder what that boy will want to learn next?" Mrs. Brown said to her husband. "Well I must go to work. I have lots of sewing to do to-day." So saying Mrs. Brown returned to the dining-room which table she used as a sewing-table.

She had not been seated long when some natives came in. They were amused at the thimble and scissors she was using. The sight of the clock on the wall attracted their attention curiously. Among others two women came in to sell their wares.

These native traders walk to Ibadan—the London of negro-land—and procuring their wares from English traders return to the inland towns and sell at a large profit. They always ask twice as much as they are willing to take. They are shrewd bargainers. They

also sell native articles. They showed—Mrs. Brown a beautiful native cloth—such as worn by the women—they offered it to her for twelve shilling. These cloths are two yards long and one yard wide. Sometimes they are a mixture of white and blue cotton, but generally are all blue. The women gather the cotton, spin it and with a dye which they make from the Indigo tree, they dye it. They weave it into a cloth on primitive looms. Mrs. Brown was desirous to have one of these cloths to take to America as a souvenir. She knew the price they usually set was eight shilling. She told the woman she would give her eight shilling for it.

“No twelve shilling,” said the woman.

“I will not give more than eight shilling for it, Mrs. Brown protested.”

The merchant folded the cloth preparatory to taking her departure. Mrs. Brown, going to her room, put eight shilling into her hand, then returned to the piazza to which the woman had gone.

“Twelve shilling,” the woman said, as a final sally.

“No,” Mrs. Brown shook her head, “eight shilling.”

The woman went to the steps as if ready to descend—then threw the cloth at Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown handed her the eight shilling and they both smiled.





## Chapter Six.

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Mrs. Brown

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She was sick with the African fever. It was the fifth attack in the six months since she had landed there. Each attack left her weaker, and the oftener she had the fever, the harder it was to bring her temperature down. Her husband was almost frantic as dose after dose of his medicine failed. Her temperature continued to rise. Going into the room where his wife lay, he threw the medicine bottle out of his hand onto the floor, and, sobbing, fell across her bed.

"What's the matter, my darling?" his wife asked, as she stroked his head.

"Oh, I don't know what to do for you," he answered, despairingly.

"Never mind, my pet. God can cure me if our medicine fail, can't He, dearest?" the wife rejoined.

"Yes," her husband answered.

"Well, then, let us pray to Him," Mrs. Brown rejoined.

Little Asendi, sitting beside his mistress' bed, fanning the feverish brow, said in a low voice, as he raised his black hand to heaven "Mast'r trust God—Mast'r Jones didn't cry when Missus Jones was sick.

Mast'r trust God. God will make Missus well." Then going upon his knees he began silently to pray. Rev. Brown fell on his knees. Mrs. Brown began: "Dear Father, if it please thee, make me well. Rebuke this fever and let it soon go down. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

"Amen," said Mr. Brown and little Asendi. Softly Asendi left the room. Mr. Brown seated himself by his wife's bedside. "Dear love, do you feel better?" he asked.

"Not just yet, sweetheart, but I believe God will cure me."

"Oh, darling, I could not live without you. Life would be misery. We are just made for each other, and I believe in heaven we shall be together too, don't you?" Mr. Brown asked his wife, as he stroked her hot forehead.

"Yes, sweetheart, I do. I want to be with you, my treasure. I believe God will give us to each other in heaven too," his wife replied.

"I believe when the Lord said there was no marrying and no giving in marriage in heaven, He meant there would be no sin there and so need of any contract. But for two souls to be joined together in love would suit heaven as well as earth," her husband rejoined.

That night the fever took a turn. Slowly but



steadily the temperature went down. By morning Mrs. Brown was normal.

"Praise the Lord!" shouted Mr. Brown, as he took the thermometer out of his wife's mouth.

A soft knock was heard at the door. Asendi and David were there.

"How's Missus?" they asked.

"Better this morning, boys," their master replied; then, continuing in a low voice, he said to David: "I want a chicken to-day. Here's sixpence. Get it as quickly as you can."

David demurred. "The people not killing meat to-day, sah," he said.

"How's that, David?"

"The English officers are in town, sah, and then people hide their chickens and sheep," he replied. He went on then to explain to Mr. Brown how the officers rob the poor people by paying but half the price. Mr. Brown reflected on the avarice of these officers. Receiving a large salary and ten shilling extra for each day they spend in the "bush," as the interior of the country is called, they rob the poor natives.

"The English government pays its men well for their services here in Africa," the missionary mused, as he sought his wife's bedside. "What must be the reward of the King of Kings to His servants, when He comes in His kingdom!"

In a few days Mrs. Brown was well enough to be at her usual duties but work was hard for her. She could scarcely drag herself around. Every day her husband would take her for a ride. On one of their drives, they came to a handsome marble monument, erected by some white man. Driving close to it they saw the inscription :

“Sacred to the memory of Sergeant Williams—who died in her Majesty’s service at Ogbomoso—June 20—1891.”

“I’m glad,” said Mr. Brown as his arm stole around his wife’s waist and he whispered to her, *our* King has power over the grave and would not let you die just yet in His service. Praise His Name !”

## Chapter Seven

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### The Bale

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It was the dry hot season. From November to March is the dry season. The rest of the year comprises the rainy season. Scarcely any rain falls during those months of drought. The weather is hot all the year, but the heat is rendered so much more oppressive through the absence of water. Rain is not seen for months. The water used by the white people comes from stagnant pools out of which the natives drink and wash themselves. It is carried to the bungalow in earthen jars. The women charge for one load enough cowries to equal an English halfpenny. The water must be boiled and filtered before fit for drinking. Vegetables which are scarce all the year in the Yoruba country are doubly so in the dry season. The white man can scarcely live on African produce exclusively. His supplies come from England. It takes three months from the time of ordering for a grocery order to come from England. The express charges for such an order are 50 per cent. It makes marketing tedious and expensive.

The native food is cheap: eggs; four cents per dozen.; milk, two cents per quart; chicken, twelve

cents apiece; leg o' mutton, twelve cents for the whole. There are fine herds of cattle to be seen grazing on the African hills; but they are not slaughtered for food. The animals eaten are sheep, goats, deer, chickens and pigeons. Duck is used sometimes.

Rev. and Mrs. Brown had as their guests another missionary and wife who were stationed at Oyo. Having been so long without seeing a white face, they were overjoyed to receive these visitors from Oyo. The sight of a white woman did Mrs. Brown as much good as medicine. She stepped about the house livelier than usual.

One evening at supper, Mr. Johnson, their guest, remarked that it was strange that rain was withheld when it was so much needed.

"Why don't you pray for rain, Mr. Johnson. You believe in prayer," Mrs. Brown remarked.

"Oh, I don't believe God puts aside the laws of Nature to answer prayers," Mr. Johnson replied.

"Then you believe," continued Mrs. Brown, "that it is an unchangeable law of Nature for this part of the earth to be dry at this time?"

"I certainly do," her guest answered.

"Well, I believe," went on his hostess, "That, as God made the laws, He can change them at will, and that He would change them in answer to prayers of His people. For my part, Mr. Johnson, I've been praying

for rain to come soon, for I feel my health depends on it."

"Ha! Ha! Mrs. Brown, I see you are fanatical," her guest remarked.

"Not at all, but I believe in a great God who hears prayer," Mrs. Brown rejoined.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Mr. Johnson, "I wish it might be as you say." At that moment a fierce wind shook the house. The windows rattled. The table-cover was blown awry. Dust came in at the door.

"Why I believe a shower is coming," said Rev. Brown as he arose from the table. Before he had reached the piazza the patter of rain upon the roof convinced them all that his statement was true. It soon came down in torrents. The thunder rolled and the lightning flashed. It was one of the great hurricanes so common during the rainy season in Africa.

"Well," drawled Mr. Johnson, "this is certainly refreshing; I guess you were right after all Mrs. Brown."

"Look here, Johnson, there's a fire! I declare if the village isn't on fire! Beatrice, you'll excuse me if I go to see it won't you? Come on Johnson!" called Mr. Brown from the piazza.

The two men went to view the catastrophe. Several mud huts had their roofs burned off, and a number of grass houses were destroyed.

Many families were homeless. As the whole community seems to be one large family—owing to the practice of polygamy—the afflicted ones soon found shelter. The African is a hospitable creature. The white stranger is invited to take shelter and presented with a chicken or other gift. The native walking from town to town is granted food for the asking. The missionaries found out the cause of the fire. It was not the lightning, but the Balè the chief magistrate of the town. The Balè is inferior to the king in name only—in power he is superior. The Balè receives an increase to his bag of cowries every time a fire occurs in the town. The afflicted families must bring him the cowries. He sets men to work to create the fires—then his victims must pay the prescribed fines.

“The wretch!” muttered Mr. Brown. “I’m going to see the Balè some day. I won’t dare accuse him of this or our lives won’t be safe, but I’ll try to persuade him to do good to these poor people.”

Accordingly one day after the fire, and Mr. Johnson left for Oyo—the missionary went to see the Balè of Ogbomoso. Leaving his horse and carriage at the front gate with the horse-boy, he entered the Balè’s compound. The Balè’s grounds covered many acres. As he had three wives he needed many houses, to shelter them; consequently the whole compound consisted of houses owned by the Balè.

Mr. Brown was shown to the one in which the Balè was. Seated on a mat surrounded by scores of eunuchs and retainers was the Balè, dressed in his gorgeous velvet robes. Numbers of men and women, and children moved about the courtyard and surrounding huts together with sheep, goats, chickens and dogs, while gaily caparisoned horses pranced in the courtyard. Within the Balè's hut were skins of wild animals, mats, and among other furnishings was a string, whereon were tied the bones of former kings and Balè's of Ogbomoso. The wooden door swinging on hinges in European fashion, was carved to represent many idols.

"E'kabe, E'kabe" the Balè saluted Mr. Brown.

"O'kujoko," (salute for sitting) Mr. Brown saluted the Balè.

The missionary praised the beautiful horses, spoke of the numerous friends the chief had about him, congratulated him on his health, and asked him if one of the women standing just outside the door was his wife. The men roared! The word for wife and monkey are similar, a change in the accent only differentiating them. Mr. Brown put the accent for monkey on the word which he meant for wife. The interpreter explained his mistake. Then the missionary laughed too. Mr. Brown usually stretched his mouth from ear to ear when he laughed, showing his pearly teeth. One tooth however was of gold. It attracted the Balè's

curiosity, as he had never seen one before. He admired it audibly, but his admiration was somewhat checked as he asked his visitor if he could chew bones with it. Mr. Brown not being in the habit of chewing bones did not know. He said he thought one might chew bones with it. The Balè remarked he heard America was a good fighting nation. Mr. Brown smiled and told him of the great Enemy all had to fight. The Balè listened attentively. Mr. Brown arose to go. The chief presented him with a chicken. The missionary filled with gratitude remarked, perhaps thoughtlessly, "When I go to America I will send you something."

The Balè evidently had some knowledge of human nature when he answered, "May God help you to do so!"

He and his retinue followed the white man to his carriage. Mr. Brown asked him if he would like to ride along with him. But the Balè was afraid, so he refused. His interest in the carriage which was a novelty to him was hindered by the people of the town surrounding him and prostrating themselves on the ground before him. He forgot all else but the fact that *he was the Balè*.



## Chapter Eight.

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### More Natives.

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“Missus, two women here, who want to buy cans,” David said to Mrs. Brown one morning.

“All right, David I’ll be there.”

The women had been attracted by the empty vegetable cans lying on the piazza near the kitchen. Mrs. Brown had been about to throw them away. Seeing she could make some money out of them she asked what they would give for them. They offered her a load of wood for a can. A load of wood sells for three-pence and lasts for three days. The missionaries used wood exclusively for their fires, having no coal. Rev. Brown’s salary had been delayed. As he had only a few shillings, he and his wife were glad to make what money they could. So Mrs. Brown sold the women six cans. She then said to David, “Don’t throw these cans away, I want all of them.”

“Yes’m,” answered the boy.

“Beatrice, I’ll hitch up, if you’ll go to market with me,” Mr. Brown asked his wife.

“Yes, John, I feel like driving. This monotony kills me. I always feel better after seeing the people,” his wife replied.

“Beatrice, here we are eight thousand miles away from home, the only white people in a town of two hundred thousand inhabitants, and only twenty shilling for food. Pretty tight pinch, isn’t it?”

“You forget one item, John,” remarked his wife.

“What is it?” he asked.

“The Everlasting Arms of the One who promised to supply the needs of those who trust Him,” his wife answered.

“Yes, if it wasn’t for that, I should tremble in my shoes. I believe my hair would stand on end, her husband remarked.” Then he continued: “There’s no way of making money here. These people are so poor and do all their work that it is impossible to create a demand for anything we can supply, except from the operators and those few who have money. I went to see Raki this morning. He gets five pounds a month from the English government. He is considered rich among the natives. I sold him some clothes. I made some shrewd bargains with him. He said I must have been a clerk at Wanamaker’s. Ha! ha! These natives are so eager for anything from civilization. It’s amusing what large words they like to use. The larger the word, the better it suits them, it seems. Raki showed me a letter he had written to a missionary whom he had asked to buy something for him in England. It was an answer to the missionary’s letter telling Raki he

was unable to get the article after going from shop to shop in England. Raki asked me if his letter was all right. It read thus: "Sorry you had such a diabolical humbug trouble."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mrs. Brown. "did you tell him his letter was all right," she asked her husband.

"I told him he better put 'so great trouble.' When I wanted him to buy one of my books, he said 'it was too bombastically dear.'"

"Ha! ha! oh, John, don't!" exclaimed his wife, "you'll kill me with laughing. Ha! ha!"

"Only one more, dear. Listen! When I saluted Raki, asking how his health was, he said, 'I am of exhuberant health'!" went on her husband.

"Oh, John, I'll get well fast if you tell me such things very often," Mrs. Brown remarked.

"I wish you would, dearest," her husband replied, "if it's going to make my darling well I am exhuberantly glad that they use so bombastically, such diabolical humbug words," he continued.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mrs. Brown, "ha, ha!"

They passed, at that moment, an old blind woman sitting by the roadside, with a huge devil idol in front of her. The people passing threw cowries to it.

"See that tree with a string tied to it?" Mr. Brown asked his wife.

"Yes," she replied.

"That tree," continued her husband, "is sacred.

They worship it. See the lot of chicken feathers beneath it. They think some God is in the tree."

"Horrible," ejaculated Mrs. Brown. "And to think they can believe that Shango, once a man, could be the god of thunder."

"I was told to-day of a huge snake that made its appearance, and the natives hastened to worship it," Mr. Brown remarked.

"What is this parade for, I wonder?" asked Mrs. Brown, as a beating of drums was heard, and men and boys fantastically clad in clothes of all colors, came jumping and dancing along uttering stern sentences in false tones of voice. Some of the men had sticks or clubs with which they beat any one who didn't run away from the Egungun (return of bones). If any one came into bodily contact with this supposed bundle of bones, he or she is to be put to death. People are very careful not to get too near. After the day's sport a large feast is spread and then the priests divide the spoil. This feast is connected with the worship of departed men, for the Yoruba People worship their ancestors.

The missionaries arrived at the market. There is a large open space in Ogbomoso surrounded by stately oak trees. The people use this as their market-place. There, thousands of natives congregate morning and evening to transact their business.

Mr. Brown alighted from his carriage, and soon a crowd was around them.

"You're the observed of all observers, Beatrice," said her husband.

"No, they came to see you, John," laughingly rejoined his wife.

It was embarrassing to have so many witnesses to one's purchases, but the missionaries made the best of it as their hearts were full of love to those poor ignorant souls. Among the things for sale at the market-place were Indian corn, Guinea corn, West India yams, two kinds sweet potatoes, cassada, rice, onions, beans, arrow-root, ochre, peppers, ginger, peanuts, sugar-cane, tobacco, cotton, calabashes. These calabashes grow so large sometimes that they are used as ferryboats by the natives. The fruits were: oranges, limes, bananas, plantains, soursops, paw-paws, pineapples, guaras, mangoes, tamarinds, cocoanuts and bread-fruit. Then there were gaily colored glass beads and cloth, and dishes from England; native cloths, earthen pots made by the women and used in their household work; leather goods; glass bracelets; mats and baskets woven by the clever Housa tribe (a tribe nearer the Niger River.)

"I want 100 cowries worth of beans (about a pint)". Mr. Brown told one of his interpreters, who was one of the training-school boys, and who had promised to meet him there. Counting out a hundred cowries

took time. Then for the woman to recount them took more time.

"This marketing business is the most tedious thing we have to do here in Africa," said Mrs. Brown to her husband, who nodded his assent.

They bought enough cassada to last three days and had to count out another hundred cowries, and have them recounted.

"That meat would look good if so many flies were not on it," remarked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes," answered her husband, "we'll leave the meat for David to buy, so if there are flies on it we at least shall not see them."

"John," remarked his wife, "I just happened to think that I never see flies anywhere in Africa but on the meat at the markets. Where they come from is a mystery to me. Here are thousands of them."

"They are like the English," her husband rejoined, "they like meat. For my part I wish there were more vegetables to buy here."

Seeing fresh-looking eggs they bought a dozen, and counted out six hundred cowries more.

"Well, I'm tired Beatrice," said the missionary to his wife, "let's go home. These people are too much behind the times to have much business dealings with them. Here's an hour gone and we only bought these few things."

"Yes, I'm tired too," replied Mrs. Brown.







## Chapter Nine

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### Mrs. Brown Again

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“ Look behind you, Beatrice, Mr. Brown remarked to his wife when they had gone a short distance from the market. Scores of children were following the carriage. They gradually fell behind and by the time the missionaries reached their home they had all disappeared.

“ Well, Asendi, did you get my bed-room clean ? ” Mrs. Brown asked the boy.

“ Yes'm, too clean, too clean, ” he replied.

His mistress knew that he meant ‘ very ’ clean, for once before when she had asked a native if he loved Jesus, he had answered, “ I love Him too much. ” “ Mrs. Brown smiled to think any one could get the room too clean.

“ What are you doing David ? ” she asked going to the kitchen.

“ Getting smoke off this pot, ” the cook answered.

“ But David, you'll rub the bottom off the pot with the smoke, I'm afraid. Let me see it, ” his mistress replied

Surely he had rubbed several large holes in the bottom of the pot in his zeal to get the smoke off.

Poor David looked dismayed when Mrs. Brown showed him the holes and told him not to rub so hard the next time.

"Just received a letter from England with five pounds in it, wife!" joyously exclaimed Mr. Brown at that moment, "so, little woman, we won't starve."

"Starve!" exclaimed his wife, "Why John, starve! We could trust God. Didn't the missionaries, months ago, say I could not live a month in Africa that I would be in the ground if you didn't take me home then. Here I am. Didn't they wonder why I ever came, saying, I was the weakest person ever in Africa?"

"Yes," assented her husband, "but darling, it isn't right to throw one's life away and you are getting weaker and weaker. I have been wondering if I ought to take you home."

"No, if God wants us home He will make it plain," protested his wife.

That night a pimple appeared on Mrs. Brown's hand. The next morning it was larger and more painful. The next day her hand was quite swollen, and of a brown and green color.

"John, I'm afraid gangrene is setting in and I shall lose my hand, perhaps an arm or per—haps—worse!" Mrs. Brown said to her husband.

"Beatrice, I am going to take you to Abeokuta. There is a doctor there who will lance it. I'm afraid

to attempt it. I'll get the carriers at once! So get ready."

Mr. Brown was off on a run. It was one of the malarial boils so common to that country which had appeared on Mrs. Brown's hand. Soon her husband was back again. "All right, Beatrice," he said, "the carriers will be here at six o'clock to-morrow morning. We must pack in a hurry. I'm going to pack all our goods and leave orders for some of the things to be sent to us in case we go to America."

"A-m-e-r-i-c-a, John? the brown eyes looked surprised.

"Yes my darling, America! You said if God did not want us here, He would show us. Perhaps he is showing us now," her husband replied.

"O——h!" was the answer of Mrs. Brown.

"David, get ready," Mr. Brown called to his cook, "wer'e going to Abeokuta to-morrow at six. Missus sick. We want you and Asendi to go. Tell Asendi."

David and Asendi soon appeared at the bed-room door with delighted faces. A trip to Abeokuta meant pleasure to them. Mrs. Brown packed a little but feeling fatigued, her husband had put her to bed. She could not sleep, however, but with sad eyes watched her husband do the packing.

"I wish I could help you, John dear," she said.

"That's all right, dearest, you go to sleep, and get some rest," her husband answered.

It was after twelve o'clock when Mr. Brown finished packing. At six o'clock the carriers came. They said they would not go. The reason they gave was that a sixpence a day was not enough for each man. Sixpence was their usual price, but seeing the urgency of the case they had demanded a shilling.

"Well," replied the exhausted missionary, "because you are here I will give you a shilling. Now get the loads and start off. Here's a trunk and this box, and this trunk—get the hammock ready. Let the men with the loads start off. Come, Beatrice. Take it easy dear. I'll stay right behind you, if you want anything call me."

"Yes, darling," his wife replied.

"Missus may I have the can"? David asked running to his mistress with an empty can in his hand.

"Yes, David, all you find," she responded.

Asendi, as happy as a lark, was on hand in his clean suit which he had washed himself the night before, his little bundle of clothes on his head.

## Chapter Ten

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### Mr. Maxwell

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The party reached Oyo that night. They stayed at Mr. Johnson's house until morning. There they met a young trader, Mr. Maxwell, who was going to Abeokuta, and who offered Mrs. Brown his hammock. He would go along on his horse, he said. He was a delightful young man from the United States. Dressed in the height of style, he would have been no despicable companion outwardly for any millionaire's son. His hammock was the best kind of a government hammock. One would hardly be jolted in it. Mrs. Brown was glad of the offer, for the missionaries' hammocks are at the best, poor, rickety ones, which bounce the inmates very badly. Mr. Maxwell was a great talker. His laugh was so hearty that it did good, like medicine, to Mrs. Brown's tired nerves.

"Well, how do you like the natives, Mrs. Brown? Ha! Ha! Ha!" he asked.

"Very much, Mr. Maxwell," she replied, "how do you?"

"I find them an independent set. The white man can scarcely get them to do anything for him," Mr. Maxwell replied.

"Well, we did not find it so," responded Mrs. Brown.

"Maybe, you missionaries treat them better than we do, Ha! Ha! Ha!" replied Mr. Maxwell.

"We try to treat them as brothers," said Mrs. Brown.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" roared Mr. Maxwell, "I wish I could, but they're too much for me!"

It was time for the caravan to move on so the conversation ceased.

"All right, Beatrice!" Mr. Brown's voice could be heard calling to his wife every few minutes.

"Yes, John," she called back.

Her hammock was a little in advance of her husband's. Mr. Maxwell followed them on his horse. They stopped at a village to refresh themselves. Mr. Maxwell had his tent put up and invited the missionaries to take lunch with him. While waiting they sat on camp chairs outside the tent.

"Put on your helmet, John," vehemently protested his wife as he took it off a few minutes to cool off.

"How devoted you are one to each other," remarked their friend.

The missionaries smiled. Little Asendi sat on a tree stump not far-distant. He looked in his bag to get something to eat. His bible was on top, so he took it out first, and carefully laying a handkerchief on a stone placed the Bible on it.

“See that youngster,” remarked Mr. Maxwell, “he seems awfully fond of the bible, Ha! Ha!”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Brown, “Asendi is an excellent Christian.”

“Ha! Ha!” laughed their friend.

“We had two French officers take dinner with us one evening,” remarked Mr. Brown. “One of them dashed me a handsome gun and cartridges—by the way, Beatrice, I left my gun behind. I would tell David or Asendi, they could have it, but one dare not sell or give fire-arms to the natives.”

“Do you have much game up your way?” asked their friend.

“Only partridge and deer,” replied the missionary.

“I’ve been gunning a few times, but never shot anything, Ha! Ha!” said Mr. Maxwell. “I never was so surprised as when I heard you were a missionary,” he continued looking at Mr. Brown, “you look like a sport, Ha! Ha!”

After lunch the caravan proceeded. Going through the heathen towns their eyes were refreshed once in a while to see a native who had something in common with themselves—who had been Christianized or civilized.

“It’s not so bad up this way,” remarked Mr. Brown, “as it was ten years ago. Why, I heard of a missionary who tried to cross the Ogun river. The natives would not take him across until he pulled out his

false teeth and put them back again. Then, thinking he was a God they hurried him across."

"Ha! Ha!" roared Mr. Maxwell. "That's not as bad as one I heard of a white man, whom the natives were going to kill. The poor victim frantically unscrewed his wooden leg and screwed it back again before his captors' very eyes, who fled from him leaving him unmolested."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the trio.

At that moment Mr. Maxwell's interpreter came to inform the party that the Balè of the town wanted to meet the white men. The Balè came out of his house to salute the strangers. He made a deep bow. In Africa, inferiors salute superiors by complete prostration. The Balè salutes none of his tribe. To the white man, as being worthy of respect, he deigned to bow. Learning one of the party was a missionary, the Balè wanted to know an important thing.

"Must we give up our wives if we turn Christians?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, a man ought to have only one wife," replied Mr. Brown.

"It's an awkward thing to give up our wives," he remarked. Then taking a handspring over a log like a boy, the whilom dignified Balè disappeared amid his laughing retainers.

"It *must* be an awkward thing," laughed Mr. Maxwell, "when a man has five hundred wives, as I hear the Balè has. Ha! Ha!"



## Chapter Eleven

John Asendi Brown

The party arrived at Abeokuta. The name "Abeokuta" means "under a stone." The city was founded by the English to resist the invasion of the fierce Dahomians into their territory. Abeokuta is sixty miles from the coast. A railway connects it with Lagos.

The missionaries parted from their new friend, and went to lodge at the mission station, which was in charge of Mr. Smith.

"Here's a letter already, Beatrice, from one of the boys," Mr. Brown remarked the next day, coming on the piazza where his wife was sitting.

"What has he to say?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"He says he is glad you escaped in such great danger."

Mrs. Brown smiled. "How I wish I could see the boys again," she said.

She had her hand lanced. Speedily it grew well. The change of scene made her better. She gained strength day by day. They had been at Abeokuta a few months when an important event occurred.

A little boy was born to Rev. and Mrs. Brown.

Only six pounds he weighed. He seemed to be nothing but skin and bones. "Listen, John," his

wife said, "to the piece of poetry I composed on my baby :"

This little baby boy  
Come to fill my heart with joy,  
And to be unto the world a blessing rare ;  
The Lord Almighty gave,  
In His wisdom and His love,  
Unto me, to be entrusted to my care.



Oh, my darling baby boy,  
You are now my pride and joy;  
And a Christian you must early turn to be ;  
For when ages roll away,  
And the earth and works decay,  
We must not be parted in Eternity.

These little hands and feet  
Have been fashioned very sweet,  
By the One who knoweth how to make things fair ;  
From stars in all their might,  
To earth's length, and depth, and height,  
Even down unto my baby's golden hair.

This tiny little mite  
Of humanity so bright,  
Lying in my arms was placed there with a plan ;  
His life might deeper grow,  
That he more and more might know,  
'Till he came, in truth, to be a perfect man.

The sun shows forth God's ways,  
And the moon shines out His praise,  
And the universe, in glory, sings 'Amen,'  
A man we want to see,  
Who throughout Eternity  
Shall surpass in singing praises all of them."

"That's all right, Beatrice," assented her husband "I hope our little boy will be a great man. I just received my salary from the Board, dear."

After the baby came Mrs. Brown was very weak. She could not sit on the piazza, lest a breeze should touch her, and a chill would immediately follow with a rise in temperature. Twice since the birth of her boy she had taken the fever. In the last attack her temperature had gone up to one hundred and four degrees. She could not gain strength. The doctor said if she took the fever again it might prove fatal. "You better take her to America," he advised her husband.

Mr. Brown decided at once. "Beatrice, we're going to America this week. Just as soon as we can get ready. There's a steamer that goes on Saturday. We'll try to make it," he said to his wife. She acquiesced. David had tears in his eyes when he heard the news.

"Mast'r take David along—me die if Mast'r and Missus goes and leaves David alone. You my father. No one ever sent David to school before. I love you and Missus," he said to Mr. Brown. Tears stood in Mr. Brown's eyes as he saw the sad face of David. Never before had he seen such a woe-begone face. He told David that it was impossible to take him along; that he and Missus would write to him from

time to time and send him things from America. David then resigned himself to the inevitable.

“Asendi cried to. He wanted to go along. “Don’t take Baby away from Asendi! Asendi loves Baby,” he said.

Mr. Brown tried to console him, but little Asendi’s face was very sad as he helped the missionaries pack. Asendi would stay up at night, to walk with the baby. He would rock it in his little arms, and sing his little song, “Oh! Jesù fè me, Oh! Jesù fè me, Oh! Jesù fè me, Bible so fun me be,” (“Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me; the Bible tells me so.”)

“If you go to America he said to Mrs. Brown, “you must call baby—‘Asendi’.”

His mistress explained that he was to be called after his father, “John Brown.”

“‘John Asendi Brown,’ said little Asendi with a smile on his face.”

“All right Asendi, the baby shall be called ‘John Asendi Brown,’ after you,” Mrs. Brown replied. Asendi stretched his mouth from ear to ear with delight.

“Here’s a card of buttons and a spool of thread for you and some needles,” Mrs. Brown addressed her little nurse-boy.

“‘Adupe’, ‘Adupe’, ” (thank you), the boy replied. He was thrilled with delight at the *handsome* presents

for they were handsome to his eyes. Mr. Brown came in at that moment. They decided to take Asendi to Lagos. The day came to leave Abeokuta. Amid the hustle and confusion, Mrs. Brown forgot to say good-bye to David. Seated in the train she felt some one nudge her elbow. It was David. He said, "Good-bye Missus, David do what you tell him. David obey God. Good-bye Missus, and Baby."

Mrs. Brown could hardly repress her tears, while she shook his hand good-bye. David's wife who had accompanied him to Abeokuta had tears in her eyes. She wanted Missus to stay. The train pulled out—parting souls never to meet in this world again.

Lagos is a death-trap. The death-rate is 15 per cent. there. The party intended only to stay over night at Lagos, and the next day start for England.

They had their passage booked on the "Fantee," to sail Saturday. When they arrived at the wharf on Saturday, they learned that the "Fantee" would be a week late—she had not arrived in the harbor yet.

"The 'Olenda' is in the harbor—a good boat—why don't you take her?" remarked a merchant who pitied the forlorn looking party. "They'll exchange your tickets. The tender is here," he continued.

"Yes, John, let's go on that boat. This is a dreadful place—we must get out of here," Mrs. Brown remarked to her husband.

Mr. Brown hastened to exchange the tickets. The

“Olenda” was a slow boat, but anything was preferable to spending another night at Lagos.

In her hurry to get on the tender Mrs. Brown forgot to say good-bye to Asendi. When her husband re-joined her he said, “Poor Little Asendi, he’s standing on the wharf, crying as if his heart would break.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Brown, “I forgot to say good-bye to him. He never got to say good-bye to Baby. It’s too late now. Poor little Asendi!”

## Chapter Twelve.

### Men on the Boat.

To get from the tender to the steamship, they were obliged to be put into a surf boat. The mode of entering the surf boat was by means of a tub let down by pulleys and ropes over the ocean. The captain took the baby out of Mrs. Brown's arms, and told her to get into the tub. She had heard they would not allow her to hold the baby as she descended, so she was prepared for the cruel ordeal. She landed in the boat among the native rowers. Mr. Brown was let down next. As a wave took the boat up nearer the trader, the Captain let the baby fall into its father's arms, over the mighty deep. Before he reached his father's arms, another wave took the boat down. But Mr. Brown had presence of mind and caught his infant, or it would have found a watery grave. Mrs. Brown shuddered as she witnessed the scene.

To be raised to the steamship, Mrs. Brown was put in the tub again. That time she held tightly to her infant in one hand, while with the other she held on to the ropes at the side of the tub by which they were to ascend. They were swung thirty feet in air above the ocean. Their lives depended on the firm grasp of

her one arm. If she should have lost her hold, they would have fallen into the depths below. Her husband held his breath as he watched them ascend. A sigh escaped all lips as the tub was pulled securely over on to the deck of the steamer. "Thank God!" ejaculated Mrs. Brown, as she sought her state-room. Her husband reached the deck all right. There were only two other white passengers on the boat. One of them was a young merchant who had been only two months at Lagos. During his last attack of the fever he had been so raving crazy as to almost jump out of the window. The doctor ordered him to take the first boat that came along. The captain of the "Olenda" called the baby "Little Bob."

"So little Bob's only four week's old—well, he's had quite exciting adventures already—poor little devil," he remarked to little Bob's mother.

Mrs. Brown shuddered as she thought of the cold ocean and how narrowly her babe escaped falling into it.

"Thank God, thank God!" she murmured to herself, as she viewed with satisfaction her darling lying snugly in her warm arms. "Dear little darling, isn't he sweet, Captain?" she remarked to the Captain.

"Pooh, pooh!" replied the Captain, "every mother thinks her baby pretty, if it's as ugly as mud."

"Of course he's pretty; mother thinks so, anyway!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.







She was glad that they had practically the whole boat to themselves. The baby's cries would not disturb anyone, and the sailors would be at her disposal to wash its clothes. The friends in Africa had filled their minds before starting with stories of former missionaries who had died of fever on shipboard. One man on the boat remarked to Mrs. Brown that another mother had brought her babe on board, but it had died.

"You must take care of yourself after you leave Sierra Leone until you reach the Canaries. Most passengers die between those places. The reason is, they think they are out of danger after leaving the coast of Africa. The weather being balmy, they take off their coats, and catch a chill. The first thing they know they have the fever," the Captain remarked to the missionaries.

Over a week was spent skirting the coast of Africa, taking in exports. These consisted of rubber, cotton, palm-oil, peanuts, ebony, mahogany and ivory. It was very tedious to the missionaries. The oppressive air of the tropics affected them. When Cape Palmas and Accra and Secondi were reached, guns were fired on land. Soon natives were rowing out to meet the steamship.

"Hi! hi! hi!" the boatmen sang, keeping time with their weird songs to the splash of their oars, as boat after boat came out manned by eight men—four

on a side. When the "Kroo" boys reached home, they tumbled their boxes into canoes. Sometimes the canoes would upset. The possessors would swim for their boxes, while other natives with their heads just above water would dip the water from the canoes. They did not care much who took possession of their things as long as they lived in the same community and it would thereby be benefitted. They would dive beneath the water for coins and catching them in their mouths would appear on the surface again. The "Kroo" boy is considered the best servant of the white man along the coast. He is distinguished by a broad blue band tattooed down his forehead, signifying that he would rather die than submit to slavery. The nigger minstrel had his origin in the "Kroo" boy. Little tots scarcely able to walk would paddle canoes out to meet the steamer. Natives came on board to sell souvenirs.

At Sierra Leone Mr. Brown wanted to go ashore, but he had the fever so badly that he had to lay in his berth quite miserable. Then they were off for the Canary Islands! In a week's time the Canaries were sighted. Arriving there, Spanish shawls, scarfs and trinkets were brought on board the boat by the eager merchants of Santa Cruz.

"Get off the boat! There's only one man to sell his goods here. That's this man! You other fellows must get off the boat," said the First Mate to a poor

Spaniard who was holding out a beautiful scarf for twelve shilling.

“Just see the poor oppress the poor!” said Mrs. Brown to her husband.

“It was only this morning that the same officer was complaining of the tyranny of the Steamship Company. He said they used their men too hard, never granting them more than a week home with their families, after each trip—and during which time they were obliged to be at the ship the whole of each day whether there was work to be done or not. I was pitying the poor workman. Now I see they are just as cruel when *they* have the authority,” she continued.

“Let him stay awhile, I want to buy this scarf,” said Mrs. Brown to the First Mate.

And they were off for England! No more steps until then!

Occasionally a whale was seen ploughing the waters like an iron monster. After being on the boat for almost four weeks the light-houses of England were seen. Then the lights of New Brighton sparkled on the English horizon. Liverpool was reached. One by one the passengers and crew came to say good-bye to “Little Bob,” who sat, cradled in his mother’s arms, in the dining-saloon.

## Chapter Thirteen.

### People of America.

Rev. and Mrs. Brown took a fast boat to America. Unlike the "Olenda," the boat was crowded. The first night John Asendi Brown cried. A man in the room next the Browns said with a growl, "Some folks want the whole boat to themselves. They don't want other people to sleep!"

A well-meaning old lady the next day remarked to Mrs. Brown, "It would be better to bury it on land than in the sea anyhow."

"I don't expect to bury him," thought the tired mother, "I expect him to be a great, good man."

They reached America in safety. Mrs. Brown showed with delight, her baby to her friends. "She'll never raise him," they said when she was out of hearing. "Such a little old man, he's nothing but skin and bones!" they said.

"And aren't you sorry now, that you went and had all that trouble?" asked one of her girl friends, who had meant at one time to be a missionary herself, but had given it up to be married.

"Sorry!" replied Mrs. Brown, "Never! We did our duty—that means a lot. We made some poor

souls happy. We're very happy." Her friend started as if pierced by a dagger.

Saying good-bye hurriedly, she left the room where Mrs. Brown was entertaining her guests.

What made Bertha start so? asked Mrs. Brown. "Oh she got married to Mr. Good, who worked for Andrew's wholesale house, and he appropriated the company's funds for himself and got in jail for embezzlement. He got out on bail, however. His friends helped him pay it back. Her two children both died too. She has had a great amount of trouble," one lady remarked to Mrs. Brown.

"Poor Bertha," sighed Mrs. Brown. "And how is Edna who did the opposite and gave up her sweetheart because he would not be a Christian?" she asked. "I never heard his name. What was it?"

"Maxwell," her friend replied, "a fine, jolly fellow. She broke his heart, so he went off to Africa for some trading firm. I hear he was converted out there. He has written Edna about it. The engagement has been renewed. She intends going out there to marry him and do mission work."

"How long ago was that?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Just recently," her friend answered. "I think he went to that part where you were—Yoruba country. Did you meet him?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brown.

Edna Lielson came to call on Mrs. Brown when she heard she had arrived home.

"So it's through you, Beatrice, I have my sweetheart again," her voice broke into sobs, as she hugged Mrs. Brown.

"How's that, Edna?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"He writes that through the words and influence of Rev. and Mrs. Brown, missionaries, he was led to believe in the Bible—and through the Bible, led to God," replied Miss Lielson.

"We did more good than we thought, Edna," responded Mrs. Brown. "One never knows the good they do, if in the path of duty. So you're going to take my place, Edna?"

"Yes," answered Edna Lielson.

"Be sure you hunt out little Asendi, whom we left in Mr. Smith's care," Mrs. Brown added. The friends parted. Several months rolled by, and Edna Lielson was ready to sail. She was a tall, stately girl, with a saintly character. Her sweet face beamed with joy. She was going to her lover whom she had not seen for two years, Her mother and father being dead, she had no family to leave behind. She was very happy. She was going alone on that long voyage.

Mrs. Brown often looked at her little boy and wondered if he would ever grow—he seemed so small.

When, however, a year had gone by, and the sweetest face beamed under a mass of golden hair—and



two chubby arms twined themselves about her neck—she realized that John Asendi Brown was as fine a specimen of a boy as ever was.

He grew to be a tall, handsome lad. Often would he come to his mother while she sat reading by night, and want to hear all about the wonderful times she and his father had in Africa—and all about little Asendi, who used to rock him to sleep.

“I had a letter from Maxwell to-day, darling,” Mr. Brown remarked to his wife one evening. “He says Asendi is to be ordained next month. He says Asendi is to be ordained next month. He says he is an excellent preacher and the people all love him.”

“How glad I am,” ejaculated Mrs. Brown. “He can do more good among his own people than many white missionaries.

Far away in Africa, Asendi was preparing to be ordained. He had returned to Ogbomoso with Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell. Finishing his course at the day-school there—he had entered the Training School and had graduated.

One little face was absent when he returned to Ogbomoso. Raki, the native operator there had stolen little Susan, and placed her among his fifteen wives.

Bitter tears were shed by Asendi; for, all of the girls, none were to him what Susan was. She was so congenial and so pretty—so smart and good. There was no little Susan any more to tell his secrets to, no

girlish companion to accompany him on his walk to church. As the years rolled by, and he ripened into manhood, he thought of Susan more and more. As he passed her hut on the way to the post-office and saw the sad pensive face of the maiden there—a lump came into his throat—and he yearned for Susan.

## Chapter Fourteen.

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Susan.

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Mr. Maxwell pleaded with Raki to give her up but he refused. There is no love, as we understand it, among the raw African lovers. They never kiss each other. The natives on the coast seeing the Englishmen kiss their wives, invented a word to describe the process, i. e. "fee fa fu," ("to suck mouth.") The innate love of a mother for a child is the only light that burns for love in that dark land besides the love of the children for their parents and for each other. The mothers dote on their offspring. They carry them on their backs until they are two or three years old. The women stay at home and cook for the family—with their babe on their back their arms are free. It seems that the women about the huts are always preparing food or eating. With a long pestle they pound the yams into a pulp, mixing it with water, they make a sort of puffy paste called "eyan." It is an excellent substitute for bread. Another food they prepare is "ekkaw," a preparation of Indian corn or maize. After the grain has been macerated until it ferments, it is crushed between two stones and then washed to separate the husks. The

milky liquid is then boiled in large pots until it becomes a little thicker than rich cream. In this form a large spoonful is wrapped in a portion of banana leaf and when it cools it becomes a jelly-like substance having a slightly acid taste, much liked by the people of the country. From four to six of these are taken at each meal with a few spoonfuls of the native sauce. Dried cassada made into flour and then cooked until it becomes a stiff paste is another favorite dish. The sauce which accompanies almost inevitably every article of food is a concoction of palm-oil, flesh of some kind, ochre, esculent herbs and the ground seed of native melon. "Palaver Sauce" is the name by which the foreigners know it. The natives call it "orbeh." It is generally eaten in token of friendship after the natives have settled any difficulty. Two very agreeable dishes are: balls of cornmeal dough, seasoned with peppers and fried in palm oil; and beans, stewed in this oil and highly seasoned in the same way. These peppers are very small and are anti-fibrile. The juice from the palm-tree is used as a beverage. It is like cider in flavor and not intoxicating until several days old. They also brew a weak beer from Indian corn and Guinea corn. Wild bees' honey, and taffy made from the juice of sugar-cane are the sweets which complement their more solid articles of food. Both women and men, blacken the margin of the eye-lids with pulverized antimony (sul-

phuretted) and the women dye their finger-nails, feet, palms of their hands with pulverized camwood. When about to take part in some sacrifice they frequently give the whole person a pinkish tinge. Beads, nose-jewels, bracelets of silver, brass, carved ivory, and glass form the ornaments. The rings are often worn on the ankles as well as on the arms. Men also wear necklaces of coral and beads, and bracelets of glass or metal. Tattooing in blue is practiced to a limited extent, and is so well done as to resemble figured cloth. All take especial care of the teeth, chewing a certain root to cleanse them. This is done every morning before breakfast. Everybody, except very small children carries a small quantity of snuff on their tongues, made from the black Brazilian roll-tobacco. It is ground with a small quantity of benin-seed and lubi, a kind of carbonate of soda found in the country.

It was at the door of the operator's house that Susan sat one morning, sad and listless. She had been beaten the night before by Raki—because she refused to take some food which had been sacrificed to Efa—the goddess of secrets. On her shoulders were scores of sores where the flesh had been lacerated. She was thinking of Asendi that morning and wondering how she could see him. "I'm going to leave here. I'm not his wife anyway," she mused, "I can't stand it. The bible says a man can have only one

wife—if he takes more it is adultery! I'm sinning to stay here. I'm not his property if he did give six sheep for me. Inanimate things can be his property, if no one's else—but human beings have a will to choose to whom they will belong. My heart belongs to Asendi, and *he* stole me unwillingly. I'm not his! I belong to Asendi!" Her musings were interrupted by a sound rap on the shoulders.

"Does the dog die when his master whips him?" sneered a woman, as she stooped over and leered into the maiden's face. "Shango will be down upon us in wrath if there is one absent at his sacrifice, the sun's high now, and you're not painted yet!" The speaker was Raki's first wife who was jealous of the beautiful Susan.

## Chapter Fifteen.

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### Asendi and Susan.

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Susan usually made some excuse to absent herself from the festivals; but when there was no other way she felt obliged to go and partake of the feast, lest she should bring down upon herself the wrath of the community. Her conscience, however, being at last disturbed too much, she decided to die rather than partake any more of meat sacrificed to idols. How should she escape the feast to Shango! "I'm going down, mother, to the farm to try to find Omiti. He ran away from his mother this morning and she is crazy about him. Shango will be satisfied with that good deed," Susan answered her tormentor.

The woman thought a while. Then as if glad to be rid of the hated presence of the girl, she muttered, "if he's not, may he send fire down on you, not us!"

"My boy! my boy!" shrieked a woman near at hand—one of the wives of Raki. "The evil spirits will get him and carry him away and he will starve to death. He forgot his bracelets." The bracelets are worn as charms to keep away the evil spirits. The woman tore her hair and went wildly up and down the compound, tossing her arms high in the air;

then prostrating herself before a huge snake that appeared, she implored it to send her boy back to her.

“Never mind, Sansi,” Susan interrupted, “I’m going to the farm to try to find Omiti. Pray to Olorum (Great Spirit) that I find him.” So saying Susan put her head-dress on. She left the compound in search of Omiti.

“When I return,” she said to herself, “I’ll go to see Asendi at the mission house.”

“E’rewa (salute for walking); E’kabo (welcome); A’kauro (good morning),” the women passing would salute her, bowing the knee to her as their superior. Some would prostrate themselves on the ground to her. Children would prostrate themselves.

“Did you see Omiti? did you see Omiti?” asked Susan of the passers-by. No one had seen Omiti. Sad at heart she retraced her steps. She took the road to the mission house; arriving there she asked for Asendi. He came out and stood before her as if abashed at her presence.

“Asendi,” she began, “I’m going to leave Raki—hush—don’t tell—I’m not his wife, Asendi. The Bible teaches a man ought have only one wife. He stole me. It’s a sin to stay. I am a slave, Asendi. I belong to God. I cannot stay. I belong to—to—some one—else.”

“Who, Susan?” asked Asendi.



"My heart is yours, Asendi," Susan replied.

Asendi started.

"Susan, it is as you say. I've often thought of it, of late. You are not Raki's wife. He has no claims on you. The few sheep he paid for you could be repaid him. My heart is yours, too, Susan!" exclaimed the youth.

"I can't live there longer, Asendi. I can't go to the heathen feasts any more, and they will kill me if I refuse to go," Susan went on.

"Where are you going?" asked her lover.

"I'm going to run away to the coast, then go to England," she replied.

"No, Susan, they'd capture you. You know the gate-keepers know which tribe you belong to by your face-marks," Asendi remarked.

"Well, I'll die sooner than stay," said Susan.

"Susan, I'll go with you. But mark you! we'll go into the interior; we won't go to the coast. We'll start missions nearer the Niger. If we go to the coast the English might capture us," Asendi said.

"But," protested Susan, "if they capture us they will kill you. I would rather go alone.

"Enough, Susan," her lover rejoined. "I cannot let you go alone. Don't mention this to any one. Mr. Maxwell is sick, or I would have him marry us now. I'll let you know, then you come over and we

shall be lawfully married. Then none dare separate us."

"All right, Asendi, good-bye."

"Good-bye, Susan," replied Asendi.

She returned to her compound ; but without Omiti. The little fellow had returned safe and sound, however, having gone to the river to fish a few miles away. His mother was hugging him, and had given him a sugar-cane stick to suck.

"The little imp!" shrieked one of the fifteen wives, hitting him across the face, "don't you know that the river gets angry if it loses its children (fish). We shall have no water now to drink, and we shall die of thirst."

"Let the child alone!" shrieked Omiti's mother, hitting the woman in the face with her fist. Then a fierce palaver ensued in which all the women joined. Blows were struck. Raki, coming in, separated them with a whip, which he carried at his side.

## Chapter Sixteen.

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### A Mother.

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Ena was sick. He was a little boy of Raki's household. One night at midnight a piercing shriek disturbed the quiet of the night air. Lights soon flashed about and men slaves were taking down their guns and powder-gourds. Then there was the cry of Ena! Ena! (Fire! Fire!) The noise was to frighten away the evil spirit, that was dragging away the little soul. The mother screamed and gave the alarm, when she discovered that her child was dying. The men ran for their medicine gourds and rattled them over the child to drive the evil spirit away. For some minutes the frantic mother continued to call its name while she forced apart its eyelid and breathed into its nostrils. Then it revived and all was quiet again, as if nothing had happened. "Poor souls," thought Susan, "if they would only accept Christianity, how happy they would be. How different Mrs. Jones the missionary acted when her little Robert was sick! She doted on the child; she seemed to live only for him; and yet, when he died she was very quiet. Her husband said, 'Mary, we'll see the little one in Jesus' arms some day—he's happy now, don't grieve too

much"; and she replied, "Yes, he's happy; God's will be done. Poor Traki! she has no blessed hope like that. How awful to believe like her that when a child dies an evil spirit takes it. Poor Traki! Poor Traki! Jesus make the little one well, Amen."

Morning dawned, and the women went about their occupations as usual.

One of the wives gave birth to a little girl. They tied charms on its little ankles and wrists to keep away the evil spirits. Then the mother wrapping it in her body cloth, placed it on her back and went about her work as usual.

"How's little Ena, Traki, this morning?" asked Susan.

"He's better, than Efa! I'm going now to take these nuts to Efa and the blood of this fowl to the devil to appease him. There's nothing like Efa's medicine. If your little girl gets sick," she said turning to the new mother, "I'll rattle some of this over her."

"Traki, it was not Efa, that cured Ena, it was Jesus. I asked him to," said Susan.

"Pooh," exclaimed Traki, "Those missionaries have turned your head! Who's Jesus?"

"You don't have to give anything to Jesus, Traki," continued Susan, "when you want his help. He only wants you to give up being bad."

"I must be bad," replied the woman, "can the fox help eat the chickens?"

"No, you can be as good as you want to be 'Traki, see the sun. It wants to be the most powerful thing in the heavens and it is. So we can be what we want to be," continued Susan.

"How?" asked the woman.

"Jesus made you, 'Traki, as he made the sun. He taught the sun how he will teach you," answered the little teacher. "Then I'm to give this fowl to Jesus—not to the devil; and these nuts to Jesus and, not to Efa!" 'Traki asked.

"Yes," 'Traki; answered Susan, "but this is how: poor Sanki is sick and has no cowries. She is hungry. Take her the chicken and let her eat. Give her the nuts. She can sell them and buy ekkaw."

The woman opened her mouth wide. "Is that the way to worship Jesus?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Susan, "then tell Jesus—for He can hear you though you do not see him—that you will not be bad if He will help you. Then, 'Traki, Jesus will make you happy and will take care of little Ena."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed the woman, "that seems good. But what if I am bad again?"

"'Traki, white clothes worn where palm-oil is made get soiled but they can be washed again," said Susan.

"Yes!" exclaimed the woman, "they can be washed and washed."

"Yes, Traki, replied the girl, "so every time you are bad tell Jesus to wash you and keep you clean."

The women parted. Susan thought how her own life had been changed since she had met the missionaries. Those heathen practices were once something to her. Since she has met the missionaries they seemed to her so absurd and so pitiable. She looked at the little children tossing and spinning shells in the courtyard, while heavy brass anklets rattled with every movement the little feet made, and she thought, "Poor little souls to be so burdened, as if those anklets will keep away the evil spirits. What are the children coming to! The girls to be slaves; the boys to be slaves, or what is worse, the keepers of slaves!"

Raki's household consisted of ten slaves and five pawns, besides his wives and children. The more wives and slaves a man had, the greater his importance in the eyes of the Yoruba people. The price he paid for a man was ten pounds. There is also a system of pawnbroking among the Yorubas. Instead of pawning articles, they pawn themselves. Sometimes a priest tells a man that his dead ancestor is displeased because he never made him a feast. The man borrows money for the feast. In time not being able to repay the loan, the creditor demands satisfaction. The poor man pawns himself to his creditor.

He works for him. The money he makes goes as interest on the loan—does not cancel the original amount.

One of Raki's daughters was to be married. A feast was to be held for three days at her father's house, as the custom of the Yorubas is. The maiden had been betrothed when five years of age, by her parents. She was now eighteen years old, and had never spoken to her future husband. He was of the Egba tribe and lived in Abeokuta.

Susan sent word to Asendi that it would be a good time to leave when the marriage rites were going on. Asendi replied that she should meet him at the native preacher's house, who was Sandale by name. Mr. Maxwell was so ill that he could not trouble him at that time. Sandale would marry them. Susan put on her best clothes. No one suspected anything but that she was getting ready for the maiden's wedding. Susan had good taste. Over a blue-and-white body cloth she slipped an orange-colored velvet shoulder-robe. Around her hair she twined a gaily-colored piece of velvet.

"You haven't painted yourself yet," remarked one of the wives to her.

"No," Susan answered, "I like it best without paint.

The marriage ceremony began. The priest performed some fetish rites over the girl. There was drinking and beating of drums. In the midst of the noise and confusion, Susan slipped away to Asendi.

## Chapter Seventeen.

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### The Gate-Keepers.

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Sandale had been converted to Christianity. He was a sincere godly man. He had a little church which the missionaries had helped him build. He had married scores of couples in the Christian fashion. He was a hater of polygamy.

“According to the Word of God,” he began, “you, Susan, are not the wife of Raki. He had a wife. He stole you to make you a slave. You are free to marry whom you will.” So saying Sandale put on his gold-rimmed spectacles, a gift from Mr. Maxwell, and taking out his Bible began the wedding ceremony. His wife and a few friends were there as witnesses.

“Asendi, do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you promise to support her, cherish and protect her, to cleave to her in sickness or in health, to forsake all others and love her only as long as you both live? Do you?”

“I do,” the deep voice of Asendi responded.

“Susan,” the minister turned to her then, “do you take this man to be your lawful husband? To obey, love and cherish him in sickness and in health. To



forsake all others and love only him till death do you part? ”

“ I do,” the sweet voice of Susan replied.

“ Then,” said the minister, “ I pronounce you man and wife. What God hath joined let no man put asunder.”

“ It behooves you,” Sandale continued, taking off his gold spectacles, “ to get out of the town as soon as possible, for Raki will soon miss Susan.”

Then noticing the beautifully silver-mounted double-barrel gun, which Asendi held in his hand, he asked, “ What’s this you have with you, Asendi? ”

“ Mast’r Brown forgot to take it with him when he went to America. I wrote to him about it; but he never wrote me anything about it,” Asendi answered.

“ I’m taking it with me to protect me, and Susan, Sandale,” he added.

The preacher nodded his head rather dubiously but he said nothing.

“ Come, Susan, we must be off!” Asendi said to his wife.

The couple departed, while Sandale remarked, “ If the English find him with that gun in his possession, he’s done for!”

Asendi and Susan took the road to Ilorun, a town of Yoruba, nearer the Niger.

“ Dear Susan, I love you. I would go anywhere for you. See the moon how pure it is, so is my love

for you! Susan, my wife," Asendi said, turning to his bride.

"Dear Asendi," she responded, "I love you too. We were made for each other as yonder bird was made for its mate."

"Yes, Susan," her husband went on, "you have been in my thoughts night and day, since Raki stole you. Nay, since you were a little girl and Mrs. Jones brought you to the mission house, I loved you."

"Susan replied, "I loved you too then. I dreamed of you at night. Once I thought you had died and I was starving to death. You reached your arm out of Heaven and handed me some ekkaw and a yam, when you were a little boy, Asendi."

"Dear Susan," her husband added, "I would have done it—had I known you were starving."

His arm stole around his wife's waist, and she leaned her head upon his bosom as she had seen Mrs. Brown do so often in days gone by to her husband.

They reached Ilorun in safety. The gate-keeper eyed them keenly, and noticing to what families they belonged, by the marks on their faces—he would have investigated their case, but the dignified bearing of Asendi forbade suspicion.

There was an annual festival in progress at Ilorun when the couple arrived. It was the feast of Oro. The object of the custom is the subjugation of the women. It is connected with the worship of

departed men. "Oro" means "a cry" and it is supposed to imitate the cry of departed spirits. The custom is carried out by men and boys. Its power is limited to a certain part of the town, and lasts for a week. This ridiculous custom compels every woman and child to remain indoors during the whole time of its observance, or they will be put to death. The noise called "Oro" is produced by whirling a flat piece of wood, from six to eight inches long, around in the air. The appearance of Oro is made the means of extorting money and stock from the poor down-trodden women of the Yoruba country.

The festival of Ilorun was being held in that part of the town through which Asendi had to pass to get to the Niger River, he saw he must be delayed, for Susan would not dare to pass through that section until Oro was over. He resigned himself to the inevitable. A cold fear crept over him that the delay was dangerous to himself and wife who ought to get out of the country as soon as possible.

When the week was over they resumed their journey. Asendi had about ten Pounds with him as money he had received for tutoring the boys at the Training School. At each town they were obliged to pay tribute, as the marks on their faces indicated they were strangers. They had gone but a day's journey from Ilorun when they were halted by the gate-keeper of one of the towns. He eyed them with suspicion.

Asendi watched carefully the manouvres of the man. He saw him motion to one of his slaves standing near. The slave brought to him some iron shackles. Asendi took out his double-barrelled gun and aiming it at the gate-keeper, said in a quiet voice, "Let us pass or you'll know what a Frenchman's gun is!" The man quaked. He handed the shackles to his attendant, and said hurriedly to Asendi, "Begone—but the fox is before you. Do you not fear?"

"We should fear Him who sends us with a message—not him to whom we are sent," Asendi replied, using a familiar Yoruba proverb. They passed unmolested through the gate.

"Come dear Susan, we must get out of here before night, Raki has informed the gate-keepers about us."

"Dearest Asendi," his wife replied, "I fear you will give your life for me—you should have let me go alone!"

"No, dear Susan," Asendi replied, "I believe all will be well. Come, hasten. If we reach the Hausa land we are safe. One town more to pass through!"

They passed the last town in safety. The gate-keeper looked keenly at them and smiled, but when Asendi showed the gun he let them pass. They were then out of the domain of Raki, for they were among another tribe—The Hausa people.

Asendi breathed more freely and planting a kiss on his dusky bride's forehead, exclaimed, "Thank God, we're safe!"

## Chapter Eighteen.

### Sergeant Graham.

Asendi settled down to build a church among the Hausa people. He also built a hospital for lepers, and a general hospital. The poor would go to his door, and he never sent them away empty. He tried to stop the traffic in slaves. He tried to put an end to the offering of human sacrifices.

Susan would take the title babes who were considered under the influence of the evil spirits (i. e. if they cut their upper teeth first; or if twins) and destined therefore to be put to death, by being buried alive, and she would hide them in her house and bring them up as her children. The grateful mothers would flock to the church to hear the wonderful story of Jesus and His love. Susan would make garments for the girls who went about with no clothing but a string of beads. The people loved the preacher and his wife. They would bring the yams and ekkaw and corn, and cowries and lay them at the little mud hut where Asendi and his wife lived. Years went by. Two babes had been born to Asendi—making his home very happy. A war then broke out between two of the tribes. The English tried to stop it. The Hausa

young men were getting ready for battle. All the men of war of Asendi's town assembled one evening to try their medicines. Each one put some medicine on his sword, then pounded his neighbor with the sword. The man who was least hurt at the end of the procedure, had the strongest medicine.

A young English officer arrived in the town the next day. Asendi received him graciously. The officer had some native men with him as his body-guard. At a signal from the Sergeant one of the men took out two shining shackles and clamped them on Asendi's feet.

"I hear that you carry fire-arms, Asendi. It is against the laws of England. You must come with me." So saying the Sergeant went out of the hut. Two stout men lifted Asendi from the ground and carried him out.

"Let me say good-bye to me wife, sah!" shouted the captive to the retreating officer. But the Sergeant was out of hearing, or had made himself conveniently deaf.

The men hurried Asendi away. They put him in the prison-house, among thieves and murderers. Asendi sobbed as if his heart would break.

"Poor Susan, my darling wife, and babes, how will they know!" Asendi had two Pounds in his pocket. He bethought himself of these, and handing one to

the officer in charge asked him to tell his wife where he was.

The man promised that he would.

Every day Susan would go to the prison with her baby, taking ekkaw and yams to Asendi, and water to drink.

To whom should he apply for aid? Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell both died from the fever shortly after Asendi left Ogbomoso. He did not know anyone else but Rev. Brown, and he might be dead too.

There was the baby—John Asendi Brown! he would write to the baby. “He must be a young man now,” Asendi thought to himself.

John Asendi Brown was a young preacher in New York City. The young people flocked to his church to hear him preach. Scores became Christians. Such a godly man and eloquent preacher they had never heard before. When he preached about hell, sinners turned white for fear; when he talked of Heaven, aged saints thought they were there. It was one evening as he went home for tea that he received Asendi's letter.

“A letter from Asendi, dear Asendi, I wonder how he is getting along. What's this! Eh?—in jail!—

Then turning to his mother the young preacher said, “Mother Asendi's in jail for carrying father's gun.” Tears came to their eyes.

“I must do something for him, Mother,” the young

preacher exclaimed. "I'll see the President. He can cable to the King. He may set him free!" he added.

Accordingly John A. Brown without delay went to Washington, to interview the President. He laid his case before him.

Six months had gone since Asendi was put in prison. His wife became thinner and thinner. She had scarcely strength to bring him food anymore. Her heart was breaking. Sergeant Graham had been stationed during that time in the town. He received word from His Majesty, to set Asendi free, as he had never used the weapon on anyone. He was to confiscate the weapon however.

But the Sergeant strangely forgot to liberate the prisoner.

One night as the sergeant was sleeping, a bunch of chickens suspended at his tent door, hanging over his head—for the sergeant was fond of chickens, and had placed them there customarily for fear they would be stolen elsewhere—a leopard smelling the fowls peered in at the door, and stretching his neck over Graham's body tried to get them. The startled officer awoke with a yell. Shivering from head to foot—he somehow remembered Asendi. The next day word was sent to the prison that Asendi should be set free.

Husband and wife embraced each other once more in their little home. The children skipped for joy,



that "Papa" was home again. Susan's happy face was seen again in the town. She gained strength rapidly.

John Asendi Brown continued to preach the Gospel of Peace and Love in his native land; which, entering the heart drives polygamy, superstition, slavery, and oppression away as gracefully and naturally as autumn winds do leaves from a summer tree.









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