

trees, was the ombala or capital of the Bihe's King.

Into one of these little houses, in the dusk of evening, plunged a dark, wild-looking African. There is only the red glow of a little fire on the ground, which he stoops to blow into a flame with his mouth before seating himself upon a tiny wooden block.

'Onye wa luluma uteka ulo?' the voice comes from a reed mat near the wall. Yet again the question is asked, 'What for do you tremble to-night?' 'Ha,' he replies, 'husumbako?' (is it not fear?) 'Has not the King's medicine man named Siawimbu for a sacrifice to the spirits of the great, and said that my own hands must slay him?'

'My father, my mother! Woe is me! I am lacking,' he groaned with a half wail.

'Nilako epito!' (shut the door), the strong voice replies in a dry whisper; our boy is waking.

'My father, my mother, what shall I do? I am lacking, I am lacking.'

'To-night we flee,' says the mother voice again; we shall flee far with the moonlight. Early in the morning we shall cross the plain; the day after to-morrow shall we not sleep under the shadow of another chief! Siawimbu shall live!

Silently, in the dead of night, the king's executioner made a way where the fence was rotten. Then he crept back for a bundle of his precious rubber, while the mother, with her treasure enveloped in an old horse blanket, slipped like a shadow through the night into the forest, cautiously feeling for the rut-like path with her feet.

Presently she was joined by her husband, who speedily loaded her up with a goat skin of meal, a gourd, and a small tusk of ivory. Then on they stole, silently past a neighboring village, through another belt of wood, across a little brook, and up through the rustling maize fields, where they found an empty store hut in which to await the rising of the moon. The distant howl of a hyena seemed to make their tiny shelter doubly welcome.

When the morning glory of the sun warmed their poor bodies they were far away on the rolling plain, and Siawimbu was saved from death.

Long afterwards, when listening to the missionary telling how the baby Jesus was saved from death, Siawimbu thought of what his mother had told him, and so he wanted to hear more.

By-and-by, when he learned God's only begotten Son really tasted death for every man, woman, and child, Siawimbu wondered still more. Then the gentle light of God's Spirit shone into his heart and showed him that sin brings death, but that the death of Jesus brought life to all those who would but accept Him. Siawimbu chose Jesus and everlasting life. Now he is a man preaching Jesus to his own people in Bihe.—H. Lawford Nicholls, in the 'Christian.'

### Rook Justic.

'Caw, caw, caw!' What a chattering there was, to be sure, up in the topmost boughs of the tall elm tree! 'Caw, caw, caw! Times are bad and worms are scarce,' said an old bird. 'What is to be done?'

'It really is a very serious state of things,' replied Mr. White-face Rook. 'The snow covers everything, the ponds are frozen over, and what is an honest hard-working rook to do, I should like to know?'

'Starvation stares us in the beak!' cawed Uncle Frederick.

'Oh, uncle, it is hardly as bad as that!' said a more hopeful nephew.

'Here is our Benjamin,' cried Mrs. Whiteface Rook, plaintively, counting up his ribs. 'There's ever so many of them, mother,' he said. 'Oh, he has fallen away sadly. "Mother," he said to me, "I really must have something of a wormy nature to keep me going!" and I said, "My darling, what can mother do? It is no use for you to sit and count your ribs; fly about, and just see what you can pick up." So he has taken my advice, and gone, but, poor dear, he could hardly fly, being so weak in the wing tendons!'

'I am sorry for him, ma'am,' said the old rook respectfully, 'and I'm sorry for you and myself and the whole colony. If we could but

moisten our throats with a billful of water what a joy it would be! But there, as you very sensibly observed, ma'am, it is no use to sit and grumble; the worse things are, the greater is the necessity for exerting ourselves!'

Just then there was a caw of surprise from Mrs. White-face Rook. 'Well, I never!' she said, 'if there isn't our Benjamin coming back

'Hurrah!' cawed Mr. White-face Rook; 'lead the way, my child!'

Off they flew, those six determined rooks, and kept a sharp look out.

'I see him over yonder!' said Benjamin, 'he has a feather—a rook's, too—in his cap! And look, in his arms he carried a loaf half as big as himself!'

By this time Master Miller had got about



'WHAT A CHATTERING THERE WAS!'

already, and I am pretty sure the dear child has news!'

'Father, and rooks all,' said Benjamin, as he alighted on the nearest branch, 'just give me a moment to get my breath!'

The birds waited in anxious expectations.

'News, indeed!' cawed the young bird; 'you must know, rooks all, that as I hovered by the mill on the look-out for anything eatable, the door opened and out came Mrs. Miller and her son, William Wallace Bruce Miller. "My child," said his mother, "I want you to go for me to Mr. Bangs, the baker, and fetch a quarter loaf. Here is five-pence to pay for it, and mind you don't lose the coppers!"'

'Rooks all, if you don't know William Wallace Bruce, I do! He is a horrid boy who robs nests, and what I say is this; as he robs us, let us rob him, and now is our opportunity!'

'Caw, caw!' cried the rooks, 'that is only justice; come along, friends, we'll be even with Master Miller!'

half-way home, and was now in the middle of a big field. The loaf was really a most awkward shape, and the further he went the more tired he grew and the more his arms ached.

Whiz! Whiz! Bless me, what in the world can that be? He gave a frightened glance upward at Mr. and Mrs. White-face Rook hovering close to his head, and the sight of four other rooks coming to join them increased his dismay. 'Help! help!' shouted William Wallace Bruce, and began to cry.

'Caw, Caw!' said the birds, 'if you don't drop that big loaf instantly, we'll peck you, Master William Wallace Bruce Miller.'

The boy did not understand rook language, of course, but the little birds' intentions were very evident, and promptly dropping the loaf, he ran off as fast as a stout pair of legs could carry him.

'I don't know what his mother said to him; but I know that William Wallace Bruce Miller was cured of robbing nests.—S. S. Messenger.'