

### THE YOUNG MARTYRS OF UGANDA.

You have heard of the kingdom of Uganda, which Mr. Henry M. Stanley described in connection with his first journey across Africa.

One of the missionaries in that region, Rev. R. P. Ashe, has written a most interesting book, entitled *Two Kings of Uganda*, in which he describes the life of the missionaries in that region while Mtesa and his son Mwanga were kings. It is a wonderfully interesting, though sometimes very sad story, for these kings were fickle and cruel, and though at times favorable to the Christians, yet afterwards persecuted them most bitterly. King Mwanga was specially bitter toward some of the boys who came to the mission premises to learn to read. To be a reader was equivalent, in the eyes of the king and his followers, to being a Christian. But, notwithstanding this, the boys, or young men we might call them, persisted in coming to the mission premises, and they were never afraid to confess that they could read, and did read in the Gospels, though to admit this exposed them to a cruel death. Among the first martyrs was Lugalama, who, when a little lad, was captured by a war party from Uganda, and was afterwards given to Mr. Ashe by a chief whose slave he was. The boy was remarkably bright and handsome, and became a general favorite. But one of the chiefs under King Mwanga, named Mujasi, was one of the most cruel men the world has seen, and he seems to have had a special hatred toward these Christian boys. Some of them were caught and imprisoned, and sentence of death was passed upon them by the king, Mujasi being the chief accuser. The sorrowful story of their execution we take from Mr. Ashe's book:

"And so the three boys, Seruwanga, Kakumba, and Lugalama, were led away to death, a mocking crowd following them. 'Oh, you know Isa Masiya' (Jesus Christ), said Mujasi. 'You know how to read.

You believe you will rise from the dead? Well, I shall burn you, and see if it be so.' These were some of the mocking taunts which they endured, and loud was the laughter which greeted such sallies. But the young Christians, as some reported, answered boldly and faithfully. Seruwanga was a daring fellow, and I can well believe that when Mujasi mocked he would sing, 'Killa Siku tunsifer' ('Daily, daily sing the praises'), as all were reported to have done. Kakumba, too, had to come to us when all others were afraid, and perhaps his voice joined in the song. But what could have been in poor little Lugalama's heart but the haunting, overwhelming horror of death, and such a death! What a *via dolorosa* was that which these doomed captives were now to tread! But there were none who dared to beat upon their breasts and show the sorrow that they felt, though there were many sympathizing friends who followed—many compassionate hearts that God had touched with pity which perhaps before they had never known. One of these was Kidza, commonly called Musali, and it was from him, gentle, loving, and brave, one of God's noblest martyrs, that I heard this story.

"He told me how the mob, carrying gourds of banana cider, wound on their way till they reached the borders of a dismal swamp called Maganja, a place I had often visited with Lugalama. Here they halted. Part of the crowd bring fire-wood, others make a kind of rough frame-work, under which the fuel is heaped. Then the prisoners are seized, and a scene of sickening cruelty is enacted. Some lay hold of Seruwanga, others of Kakumba, and others of Lugalama, brandishing their long curved knives, Seruwanga has committed his cause to Him who judgeth righteously, and the knife cannot wring from him a cry; bleeding, he is cast into the fire. Kakumba appealed to Mujasi. Mujasi believes in Allah the All-Merciful—he pleaded relationship with him; but, alas! there is as much mercy in the knife in the