

MISSION FIELD.

THE VICTORIA NYANZA MISSION.

The Rev. Canon Money writes: "The news has arrived of the death of another of the faithful band of Missionaries who, within the last ten years, have been laboring in the lake region of Equatorial Africa. It is but a few months since a telegram brought the sad news of the arrest of Bishop Hannington and of the order for his execution, and now the Rev. P. O'Flaherty has died of African fever while on his passage in the Red Sea.

"There has been something so remarkable about the history of the Nyanza Mission, the circumstances which led to it, and the thrilling incidents which have accompanied it, that I hope I may be allowed to recall them before referring more particularly to the missionary who has just died.

"Thirty years ago two missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Krapf and Rebmann, were on the east coast seeking to Christianize the land. Krapf had previously heard, while making his way along the coast in 1843, of 'a great lake in the interior,' and now a sketch map sent by Rebmann and Erhardt, also a missionary of the Society, appeared in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* of August, 1856, and excited great interest when exhibited at the Royal Geographical Society. The result of this was the expedition in the following year of Burton and Speke, and the discovery, first of Tanganyika, and then of the Victoria Nyanza, 'Nyanza' meaning lake. Subsequently, in 1861, Speke and Grant visited the two great monarchs, Mtesa, King of Uganda, and Rumanika, King of Karagwe, their large territories being on the north and north-west of the great lake.

"Twelve years now passed away and no other European stood on the shores of Lake Victoria, although Baker discovered another lake, ascending up the Nile, which he called the Albert Nyanza. At this time Livingstone was exploring west and south of Tanganyika, where he expected to discover the connection of the network of lakes and rivers with the Nile, and it was here, at Ujiji, that the memorable interview took place between him and Stanley in 1871. In 1875 the latter launched the first English boat upon the Victoria Nyanza and paid his visit to King Mtesa. Colonel Long, an officer attached to the staff of Colonel Gordon, then Governor of the Soudan, had, however, been the first to reach the lake from the north, the territories subjugated and kept in marvellous order by Gordon having brought the Egyptian frontier almost down to the kingdom of Uganda. Stanley found that this great inland lake was 3,300 feet above the level of the sea, and that it had an area exceeding 20,000 square miles. It was studded with numerous islands, and into a large inlet at the south-east corner, called Speke Gulf, flowed the river Shimeeyu, which

may be regarded as the head waters of the Nile. The country of Uganda, as the missionaries afterwards described it, was fertile and healthy and the people were superior to most African nations. But it was the King of this country who most attracted the traveller's attention, who set before him the claims of Christianity, and left with him a young African who had been at the Universities' Mission School at Zanzibar, and who read with Mtesa the Scriptures in Swahili. On the 15th of November, 1875, appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* Stanley's letter calling upon Christendom to send missionaries to Uganda. Three days after a sum of £5,000 was offered, quickly followed by another £6,000, and ultimately £24,000 was placed in the hands of the Church Missionary Society. One man who was in business in Newcastle, and who had a wife and children, seeing this appeal, said, 'If no one else responds I will go.' He formed one of a party of eight who in June, 1876, prepared to start from Zanzibar on their journey to the lake. He was the first to die. Of the rest, two returned invalided and five went on their way. But one of these, Mackay, was stopped by sickness, and only four reached the lake. Of these, Dr. Smith died at its southern end, and Lieutenant Smith and Mr. Wilson crossed the lake in a boat brought from England, after having received an invitation from Mtesa, written by the lad whom Stanley had left.

"On their arrival they were warmly welcomed by the King, but Lieutenant Smith, returning for Mr. O'Neill and the stores, was attacked and killed by the King of Akenewe because he refused to give up an Arab. Thus Mr. Wilson remained alone till joined by Mr. Mackay. Very soon, however, three missionaries joined via the Nile, helped most kindly by Gordon Pasha, and others came by Zanzibar. At this time Mtesa agreed to send envoys to the Queen, and after their departure the King acted with great friendliness, and much eagerness for instruction showed itself. But soon a change came, under the influence of a sorceress, and Christianity was prohibited.

(To be Continued.)



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