

## MISSION FIELD.

## THE VICTORIA NYANZA MISSION.

(Continued.)

"In March, 1881, however, the envoys, who had been most kindly received by the Queen, returned accompanied by the Rev. P. O'Flaherty. This clergyman had had a remarkable career. He was at the siege of Sebastopol, and sometimes acted as interpreter, having a striking facility for acquiring languages. In the trenches a shell exploded, killing eight men, and leaving him, the ninth, with a fearful wound in his forehead. From the effects of this wound, which left a deep indentation, he appears at times to have suffered much. But when, in 1881, some one was required to escort these envoys back to their native country, Mr. O'Flaherty consented to go at a moment's notice. The writer of this letter will never forget a meeting in the room of the Rev. H. Wright, secretary of the society, when there were present the president, Lord Chichester, Mr. R. Cust, and Mr. and Mrs. O'Flaherty. From Lord Chichester there came a few earnest words of advice and encouragement, and then the missionary offered, Mrs. O'Flaherty nobly consenting, to leave home and wife and children, and to go forth upon a most difficult and dangerous enterprise.

"With the arrival, however, of Mr. O'Flaherty and the envoys, in March, 1881, a new era for the mission seemed to open. The King and Mr. O'Flaherty took to one another, and the mission work progressed. Portions of the New Testament was translated, and hymns and texts, &c., printed in 'Luganda,' and widely circulated. A house was built (Mr. O'Flaherty called it the first Rectory of the Country), the ground was cultivated, and all promised well. On one occasion Mr. O'Flaherty said to the King, 'Let there be a market for the people, where the peasants can buy, sell, make profits and get supplies—no butchery as at present. Let men who are convicts be made into gangs, under proper commanders, and be made to drain the swamps, to raise plantations and crops of grain, and feed flocks, herds, &c.; not to plunder, but to make the land produce; put an end to selling slaves,' &c., The King said, 'I am a man weakened with hunger, and you tell me to arise, and go a long journey, and do things impossible in my present state. If the Queen would do for me as she does for Seyyid Burgash of Zanzibar—that is, help me to carry out this great movement—I would gladly do it; and I am ill here. The wealth of my chiefs and people consist chiefly of this kind of property, and I have no right whatever to interfere with them.' 'But slavery is a vile, horrible, diabolical system. Surely your power might prevent the people from selling and the Arabs from buying slaves.' 'Surely,' replied he, 'you know better than to think that I have power to do this. I

might prevent the Arabs from coming, but who then will supply the great demand for foreign goods and grandeur which has lately sprung up in the hearts of my chiefs and people? If the English, who are honest, would trade with me, there might be different results. But, as far as I can see, I must have two things—first, English spades, mattocks, and implements as you have; and secondly, I must have a force of my own to enforce my commands,' &c.

"Such were the conversations which passed between the King and the man who had come a long and perilous journey to tell him and his people of the being of God and of a Saviour.

"On another occasion, when the chiefs entered, they performed the ceremony of swearing renewed allegiance, by prostrating themselves before the King, rolling their heads in the dust, and vigorously crying out 'Nyanza.' Mtesa asked Mr. O'Flaherty, 'How do you like that?' The bold and faithful answer was, 'I do not like it at all. You are not God, that men should worship you. You are only the servant of God. Why, then, do you allow men to give to you the worship due to God alone?'

"Thus the work went on, and, by the end of 1884, eighty-eight had been admitted by baptism into the visible Church. Among the baptised was one of Mtesa's daughters. But now a time of trial is approaching. On October 10, 1884, King Mtesa died, and the missionaries were warned to expect 'mutual and indiscriminate pillage, rapine and murder.' Mwanga, a young lad, had succeeded to the throne, and his sister, Rebecca Mugali, a baptist Christian, was appointed Queen. Contrary, however, to all expectations, there was no bloodshed. Such a thing was unprecedented, and was in itself a striking testimony to the Christian influence of the missionaries and their converts. The practices had been for the new King to kill his brothers and some of the principal chiefs. But soon the loss of King Mtesa began to be felt. Suspicions were aroused, intrigues began, and the old opposition revived. Some of the Christian lads were arrested and burnt to death, leaving behind them an example of Christian heroism and fidelity. Their deaths were not, however, without effect, and although, through sad misapprehensions at the young King's Court, Bishop Hannington soon joined the noble army of martyrs, and the lives of our missionaries were undoubtedly in peril, yet they have been able to continue their work unmolested, and reinforcements will, I am assured, be sent to those who, under these most trying and peculiar circumstances, have nobly held the fort in the heart of Africa. After the murder of the Bishop, and when it seemed likely that the missionaries themselves might be killed or have to leave, arrangements were made for the organization of the native Church; but soon a large hall was again filled

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by eager worshippers, the school also was well attended, and the number of communicants increased.

"It should not be forgotten that, in connection with this mission, four intermediate stations have been formed at Mamboia, Mpwapwa Unui, and Msalala, between Zanzibar and the Victoria Nyanza, distant respectively 170, 230, 530, and 650 miles from the coast. Within the past ten years the Church Missionary Society has sent out thirty-seven missionaries, and is now engaged in strengthening these important stations.

"Thus, then, in the providence of God, light is penetrating the dark continent, and the way has been wonderfully opened for the messengers of peace. But the admission to lands so long unknown to the traveller and the missionary must be a subject of interest, not only to those who are concerned in Christian missions, but to all who care for the interests and civilization of millions of our fellow creatures. The slave dealer must ultimately give way before the European trader as well as the Christian missionary. How noble, then, is the enterprise here presented to the philanthropy and the self-sacrifice of Christendom. Very soon we may hope to see existing barriers broken down, and vast changes wrought throughout those distant regions. Associated with these efforts will be the names of noble and intrepid men, who did not count their lives dear unto them, if only they might redress the wrongs of Africa, and teach her sons the way of peace. Among these pioneers the name of Philip O'Flaherty, the soldier catechist and missionary, will find a place.

"Although a member of the General Committee of the Church Missionary Society, it is right to add that the Committee is not responsible for what I have written."

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