

NATIVE VILLAGES—AMUSEMENTS OF THE BOYS.

I am sorry that I have been so closely confined to the school work, and such matters, so that I know little of the country round Blantyre. The only occasion when I saw a little of the country, was a visit to Soche in company with Dr. Macklin. There were several quarrels to settle with the old chief of that district. As we approached the district, I was astonished to find so many little villages. When the villagers saw us, they made a point of hastening up to say "Morning, morning!" which is their salutation to Englishmen. The men seemed to have all their time at their own disposal. With the exception of one man who was sewing a piece of cloth, we saw nothing to lead us to suppose that the men did any work at all. But the women were out grinding their corn or working in the fields. When we reached the village where the chief lives, we asked for him, but he could not be found. We thought that he was afraid to show himself at all. One by one his villagers gathered round us till we had a great assembly. Some of them had their bows, most of them had their knives, and one of them had a gun, so that they had nothing to fear, and we were without weapons of any kind. [Some of our friends in Scotland wanted to be told whether the boys in Africa had any amusements. I may mention, in passing, that I saw one boy here with a small imitation of his father's bow, and with little arrows to match it.] After we had waited a long time, the old chief came with a large clear knife in his hand. He sat down at a great distance from us; when asked to come near, he said *no*. He had sent over a present to us, and it had not been accepted, and he was ashamed to have it returned. Our interpreter went over and induced him, after a good deal of persuasion, to come beside us, and he sat down upon a skin under a large tree. I went up to shake hands with him, and I am not sure whether the poor old man did not regard me with suspicion, for while he gave me his left hand, he held his knife very firmly with the right. By-and-by the sending back of the present was discussed. The Mission had two complaints to make against him: (1.) His men had carried off from

Blantyre a slave woman who had come there for protection. (2.) One of the Blantyre boys when hunting was passing through the district of Soche; at one village the son of the chief and certain companions were drinking pombe; they took the gun from the boy and gave him a beating. But the inhabitants of this village were afraid that this would not end well. They reasoned that the English would say that this was done among *them*, and would come upon *them* with their guns and inflict a severe punishment. Accordingly they took back the gun after a struggle, and returned it to the Blantyre lad, whom they escorted home.

The old chief denied the charges of all these facts. He had just heard about them. After a little talking matters were settled in a friendly way, and we ended by inviting the chief over to Blantyre. He said he wished very much to see the white lady and to hear the harmonium, and he bargained with us that we must gratify him in these respects. He was much astonished when they told him that the white lady never *went out*—he thought it so strange that she should not be seen hoeing the fields and pounding the corn.

On our way home we passed the village where the gun had been taken away, and we invited the men who restored it to the boy to come over and see how the English people valued their friends. They came on an appointed day, and received a present of calico. The chief of Soche also paid us his visit and brought a present of fowls, receiving in return a blanket and a piece of calico.

On the 24th of August, Mr. Carr arrived at Blantyre station on his journey to Lake Nyassa. He made a series of observations to determine the exact latitude and longitude of Blantyre, which he states as about 15° 45' S. and 35° 14' E.

We have a magic-lantern for the entertainment and instruction of the natives. At first they looked on with a great deal of fear. When they were told that here they saw a man that lived long ago, they actually thought that we were bringing people back from the dead. But now they enjoy seeing English people and English buildings. It is a pity that we have so few slides. The other day we