

large number of women and of young people came and grouped themselves around us, and the work of God went on, while, inside the village, Satan reigned full master.

"But if we are sometimes ill received, most commonly it is otherwise. Permission obtained, we establish ourselves in the shade of an *oukoulou*, a dense evergreen tree, of which there is one in the centre of almost every village. The people gather around us, and we evangelize them as much by our hymns as by our words, for they love much to hear us sing. It is always a critical moment when, after an address, there is a transition to prayer, especially, if the one in charge requires them to kneel. They then begin to nudge one another, to make ridiculous remarks; little by little, they are seized with an inextinguishable fit of silly laughter, and it is a chance if they do not literally roll on the ground.

"I have once beheld such a scene of hilarity preceded by a general stampede of all the urchins, who foreboded something mysterious. I have more than once heard an individual exclaim, with a sigh of relief, after prayer, 'Ri séle,' i.e., 'Fair weather again.' It is not after a first nor a second visit to a village that we can expect conversions. We ought to have a more considerable nucleus of Christians than we have here, and to be able to divide them into groups, in such a way as that some villages might have gospel preaching Sunday after Sunday. For the moment our evangelization is still far too sporadic to afford hope of satisfying results. But we hope that the seed is dropping into some hearts, and pray God that he will do by His spirit what we cannot do by our word.

"If one from Switzerland should come to visit our native churches, he would be, I doubt not, not a little surprised to find how far our Christians are from answering the idea entertained in Europe. In some places at home people imagine that the Christian negroes are angels—that they adore their missionaries. But they forget what are the works of the flesh in a young church composed of members that have come out of heathenism and the deepest degradation.

"Our most sincere and faithful Christians have to sustain, in order to persevere in the good way, a daily and desperate strife against the pagan influence of their environment and of their own hearts. Then a great number accept the gospel simply as a doctrine and as a system of outward usages. But, despite the evil which is found in our churches, we are happy to note the powerful action of the gospel, and we can not but admire the love and the patience of God in this work of elevation whose steps of progress are so slow."

—The *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missions Blatt* for January, 1890, begins with these New Year's thoughts: "*Immanuel; God be with us!* This is our New Year's greeting to our beloved readers. In the midstream of the fleeting ages stands this immovable rock, 'God with us,' as our sure refuge. If He, the source of all goods and gifts, conjoins himself with our poverty, what a fullness of blessing then streams down upon us; his eternity gives to our brief duration of life an eternal worth, his righteousness covers our sin, his strength helps our weakness to stand, his life consumes our death—*Immanuel!* How consoling, at the portal of the new year, is the wealth of meaning in this name for all whose heart is in missions! Indeed, he has appended this name as his signature beneath his Great Commission: for what is the promise, 'Behold, *I am with you* all the days, even unto the end of the world,' except an amplified explication of the name *Immanuel? God with us and our work!* What need we have of this comfort! The longer one works in missions, the greater appears to him the task imposed upon them, and the higher the towering difficulties of this work seem often to rise. Doubtless, in the last decade, in the various missions, a considerable number of heathen has been converted. But this increase is counted by thousands, while the great mass of heathen peoples is yearly increasing by millions. Undoubtedly in this last decade Christian missions have, in the lands of the heathen, made victorious progress, but just in these last years has the reinforced opposition of Mohammedanism in Africa and the united opposition of the heathen in India, risen to withstand them; nay, even Buddhism in Japan and Ceylon appears minded to gather its strength for new conflict. And when, even out of the midst of the elder Christendom, many anxious apprehensions find a voice concerning the decrease of Christian faith and life, this decline cannot fail to lame the missionary activity of the church. Looking at these facts and at ourselves, we have no guarantee of success. Where do we find it? In the name and Amen (Namen und Amen) of *Immanuel*. Is He with us in our work? Then it must succeed. On his banner Victory never fails to perch."