

UGANDA.

UGANDA. By Philo-Africanus. Oriental University Institute, Woking, 1893.

In this able pamphlet, reprinted from the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, we think we can detect the hand of an earnest and devout Protestant friend of foreign missions, and one whose name commands widespread respect, as being usually well informed. It is by far the fairest statement of the ugly Uganda business from the Protestant side that we have yet seen. It is so difficult to disentangle the exact truth amid the contradictory testimonies in this painful affair that for some time we have thought it well to observe silence on the matter. The entirely unbiassed estimate of Philo-Africanus is all the more gratifying, after the wholesale condemnation of the evidence of Bishop Hirth and the Catholic missionaries, and the general eulogiums of Captain Lugard. The writer is pretty severe, indeed, upon some aspects of our Catholic missions and upon the "chauvinism" of at least some French missionaries who have "always la France" on the brain,—a fact we have ourselves had to admit,—adding:—The British, Spanish, Italian, Belgian, German, Roman Catholic (missionaries), never give any trouble.

But his condemnation of the methods of the Protestant Church Missionary Society and of much of Captain Lugard's proceedings is far more scathing,—stronger indeed than anything we have ever written. Nor is he sparing in his criticisms of the East Africa Company. "The less that morality is talked about since the agents of the East Africa Company entered Uganda the better." And he quotes the Rev. Horace Walker, "an admitted authority," who said in October 20th 1892:—

When slaves are seen going through that country in large numbers, I am ashamed to say that it is very often for the purpose of taking provisions from Mombasa to the British East Africa Company's headquarters in Uganda.

But the most telling of all the evidence Philo-Africanus adduces is that of another Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Edward Conybeare, who wrote in the *Guardian* (Nov. 11th, 1892) as follows:—

The extent to which here at home we have shut our eyes to the horrors in Uganda is shown by the letter of Bishop Smythe in your current issue. My account of what took place seems to him almost incredible—too ghastly to be true. But, as I mentioned, I took care to say nothing which was not from our own English and Protestant sources. Had I gone to the other side, yet more fearful tales would be brought forward, tales of the outrage and torture of Catholic women for refusing to deny their faith. These charges are brought against us by Monsignor Hirth, and have never, so far as I have seen, been contradicted. But as our side have said nothing about them, I said nothing about them either, confiding myself to the reports of our own authorities, civil and ecclesiastical. In these reports the account of the massacre is to be found only too plainly; given sometimes with *secretly veiled* *glare*, sometimes barely narrated, never with *one word of pity for the victims or regret at so deep a stain of Christian blood in our course*. And this is where the disgrace to our boasted Christianity lies—not nearly so much in the deed itself (horrible though it was) as in the spirit with which we have greeted the tidings. Captain Williams was but carrying out relentlessly the relentless orders of his superior officer to make the Catholics submit at all costs.

But Captain Lugard alone speaks of the proceedings as "deplorable." No diocesan conference, no church newspaper echoes that word. No—the murdered women and children, were connected with the "Italian Mission," and therefore beyond the pale of Anglican sympathy. No wonder that Roman Catholics say that we have shown what reality we attach to our claims to be Catholic also. Even the Israelites, at the most barbarous period of their history, knew better. Where they had slaughtered down the Benjaminites (richly deserved as the slaughter was) they felt the horror of their deed, and prayed for forgiveness. We seem not even to feel that we need pardon for our brethren's blood. We do not ask for it, and we shall not get it. Have Mr. Hirth, or the "White Fathers," or the French Catholic journals said anything as to this? Philo-Africanus says, "Reverse the position, and imagine a French officer having treated Protestant baptised converts in this fashion"; what would the English press and platform said?

"Up to this time," says Philo-Africanus, "the British have shed no Mahometan or Pagan, only Roman Catholic blood in these spheres"; and declares "I really am reluctant to describe what took place at the Island of Sesse in my own words for fear of being charged with exaggeration." He therefore again quotes the Rev. Mr. Conybeare (*Guardian* Oct. 22) who, among other things says "on the computation—I wish I could say the admission—of our Protestant informants, several defenceless fugitives, chiefly now combatants were thus massacred. Can we hope for God's blessing on our doings in Uganda while we allow such a deed to pass unrepented?"

Philo-Africanus elsewhere declares publicly, respecting the Protestant mission, and referring to a letter of one of their number, the Rev. Cyril Gordon, "we gather from his utterances the spirit of the mission: it wishes for religious and political supremacy by the help of British military power."

In conclusion we quote a pertinent question of the writer: "Where, they (the Protestant religious papers) say, can more competent witnesses be found than Captain Lugard, and the British missionaries? Is the evidence of Bishop Hirth and his French colleagues not to be taken?"

If it be possible to speak of satisfaction in so sad a business, we confess to a feeling of satisfaction that at least a non-Catholic writer admits what we have long felt, viz:—that it is preposterous to suppose that Bishop Hirth and his devoted Catholic missionary priests have been engaged in a conspiracy of monstrous falsehood.

We thank Philo-Africanus for his manly and generous words.—*From Illustrated Catholic Mission.*

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