

## The Midwife.

### Black Babies.

Miss D. S. Y. Mills, one of the early members of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, in a charming book just issued by the Mission, "Where We Live and What We Do," tells some delightful stories of black babies, of whom she says: "No woman who cared anything at all for children could withstand the fascination of a black baby, and yet I confess with shame that the first time I saw one I thought it a most repulsive little creature, but that was before they had crept into my heart, and taken possession of it in their helplessness and need."

Listen, mothers and midwives, who shield your babies from every breath of harm, to some stories of African babies admitted to the little Boys' Home, at Kilimani, Zanzibar, the boys of which Miss Mills mothered and taught.

"Tito's real babyhood must have begun upon board ship. There is a sad story told of his mother by the slaves who were in the dhow with her. She had two children, one of whom was even smaller than Tito: the poor little starved thing did nothing but cry and wail, and an Arab caught it on his spear and pitched it into the sea; the mother, mad with grief, jumped in after it, and they just let her drown. The boys when they told me this story added, 'And, oh, Bibi, it was a beautiful little child, and you would love to have had it!'

"The tender-hearted bluejackets took the motherless little Tito to their hearts, and could not do enough for him. They made him a little cot out of an empty oil box, and fed, washed, and nursed him by turn. But the one who specially fathered him consigned him to my care with tears in his eyes, saying: 'I would like to keep the little chap, but he will be better with you.' As to the baby, he roared and howled and kicked at being parted from his *baba*, and clung to him with arms and legs, terrified at the sight of my strange white face.

"We had quite a nursery after his arrival, for only a few weeks later Richard came from Masasi. He was taken prisoner in the Magwagara raid, knocked on the head, and left for dead by the roadside, where his father found him, and shortly after brought him down to Zanzibar. Such a timid, sickly mite; it was years before he showed any signs of real life.

"He was such a naughty mite, too—would hold his medicine in his mouth till we thought he had swallowed it, and then quietly spit it out when we were not looking. Once we found a whole lot of quinine tabloids hidden under his mat, and we had wondered why the quinine did not lower his temperature!

And on the top of these came baby Sefu. Sefu had the misfortune to be a *kigege*, which means he cut his lower teeth before the upper ones; he was the son of a small chief, or headman, who was a catechumen at Mamboia. This erratic tooth-cutting is supposed to herald fearful misfortunes on the tribe, which can only be averted by the death of the unlucky child. The tribe therefore demanded that the babe should be handed over for slaughter, but the chief, being a catechumen and almost a Christian, wished to save his child, so sent him away to the forest with an *ayah*, who managed to hide him for some months; then one of the headmen of the village died, and his death was quickly followed by that of another, both of which misfortunes were laid to the account of the hapless baby, and the cry for his death grew more and more clamorous.

"Then the poor distracted father smuggled the child into the missionary's house, believing it to be the only way to save him. The missionary's wife took tender care of him till they were able to send him safely down to Zanzibar with two women and another child. The baby was nine months old, the smallest scrap I ever saw for that age, with a little wizened, pathetic face, and one tuft of hair standing straight up on his head. How we loved that child!

"The boys almost worshipped him, and vied with one another in doing the hundred and one small jobs that a small baby entails. I believe we all knew that Sefu would not live very long, and perhaps for that very reason we loved him all the more. I could fill a whole book with stories about him, but most mothers have plenty to say about their babies, and it is not always interesting to their hearers."

When little Sefu died, Miss Mills writes: "Our hearts were very sad, and I, at any rate, grudged him sore; from where the presence of a little child is removed the gap gapes very wide indeed in the home. It had been so good for the older boys to have their baby brother, to whom they had to be kind and tender, and it took us a long time to get reconciled to his loss; in fact, I don't think we ever

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