

while each little person reverently made the sign of the cross. More late children came in, and the nurse's heart ached for the little bare knees, thumping down on to the floor, as the children made their reverences in passing the path leading up to the high altar.

But the nurse had her work to do, so refreshed by these short moments in church with the children, she quickly passed out and on to her first case—a young mother living in an attic, in a small crowded court named White Thorn Place—save the mark! The mother had much to say of her husband at the front; the nurse told her of the service she had just seen. Said the mother, "I have heard of that church, it does a deal of good with the children, and though I am a Roman Catholic, I often think I will send my boys there." As the nurse turned over two-days-old Patrick, to fasten his gown, and glanced at John, aged thirteen months, asleep on his mother's arm, she smiled and wondered.

Her work ended there, she sped on to her other cases, all equally interesting, all equally dear to the nurse's heart, till at last she arrived breathless at the Mothers' Home, only just in time to report the morning's work to the sister in charge.

February 18th, 1916, 8.30 a.m.—In the heart of Central Africa, on the border of the veldt, the sun was shining in all its strength. The hour was early, but the air was very hot, all the abundant vegetation was parched, and though occasionally the call of a tropical bird was to be heard, one could imagine that even the birds were feeling the heat this summer's day.

A nurse set out, in answer to a call, brought by two little African lads, to a distant kraal. The boys told her a man was very sick in his foot. He could not walk in to see the nurse as his foot was very fat and full of pain; the person cried all the time, he was so sick.

So the nurse put a few necessaries together, and, armed with a white umbrella, the little party sallied forth. As she followed her guides along a narrow sandy track, where she and her two boys were the only people from the beginning of that three-mile walk to the end, her mind flew back to the day, exactly twelve months ago, when she went out to her cases along the crowded streets of East London. Only, instead of crossing the Thames, she walked over the dry bed of a river; instead of her destination being Wapping, in this case it was the kraal of Hajisofu. There was no need to look out for budding trees, for the trees were out in full leaf, the maila stems and pampas grass met overhead and, between the stems, strange and beautiful flowers smiled at travellers as they passed by.

Presently the kraal of Hajisofu was reached, and to the nurse's joy, the people shouted "Sister, Sister," as she approached. That would not have happened three months ago!

It was the great man, Hajisofu, himself, who was sick and in pain. There he lay, in the middle of

the kraal, surrounded by men, women and little children, under the shadow of a tall bare tree, with a branch stretching out on either side, for all the world like a rude cross.

The poor man was moaning and swaying his body, his foot tied up with bark string and shells to show that it was the afflicted member and the whole foot plastered thickly with red clay and bad fish.

There was great excitement while the nurse washed the foot, made an opening for the pus to escape, put on a fomentation, and bound up the foot very firmly, stitching on the bandage, and placing the foot on a stool. The patient fought freely with his hands and foot; some of the women buried their faces in their hands, and rocked their bodies to and fro, others disappeared into their huts; the children fled screaming.

When all was done, the nurse sat down on a little stool, and tried to talk to her patient and his friends. The people are very courteous, and very quick at catching what white people falteringly try to tell them. Anyhow, Hajisofu and his friends understood the nurse and she understood enough to make their conversation very interesting to her. One by one the women came back, produced their long pipes for a comfortable smoke, and joined in the conversation. Very slowly the little children returned, and drew up close, laying their small hands on the nurse's dress, her hands, her hat, and even her hair; and as they knelt down beside her, thump went the little knees on the bare earth. It was getting late, already the sun was high in the sky, and the heat was intense. The nurse's work was done; but as she pressed the little brown bodies of the children against her, and promised to come again soon, the remembrance of S. Peter's Church, as she had seen it a year ago that very day, rose up in strange persistency before her.

Instead of the great church, it was only a big native kraal; a gaunt bare tree in the form of a cross, on the arms of which hung fish, and the carcasses of wild beasts drying in the sun, instead of the cross on the high altar; heathen men, women and children, instead of the little white children of the Church—the little brown knees thumping on the earth, in the efforts of the children to get close to their "Sister" instead of the white knees at Wapping, making their reverences before the altar, where one day they will come close to their Lord.

And yet may not that whole scene be a fore-shadowing, a parable, of a day that is coming in Mapanza when, not only the score or so of Christian boys on the station, but children from the kraals all round will gather together in the Cathedral Church of S. Bartholomew, and sing with the children of S. Peter's Church, only in the Chila tongue:—

Nda kulambila Mwami, Ndaku sun Tamina,
Undiswaye bubona, ✠ Wamuswaya Maria.

G. N. S.

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